



Headteachers' Newsletter

December 2023

Dear parents

So, here we are at the end of another term and the end of the calendar year. 2023 has not been without its challenges, but with Ofsted negotiated, the building works completed and a hugely successful fundraising effort, we think the school is in pretty good shape!

Mary Poppins



Last week's performances of Mary Poppins were an absolute treat, with every child from Year 1 to Year 6 performing with real confidence on the school stage in front of a packed hall. The quality of acting was exceptional throughout, from the birds, soldiers and ballerinas performed by the youngest children to the main characters, brilliantly acted by the pupils from Year 6, who captivated their audience. The singing has never sounded better as the showstoppers kept on coming. Congratulations to everyone who took part, and to our incredibly talented staff for making such an ambitious production come together so magically.

The Nativity



Congratulations to all the children from Reception and Nursery for putting on a spectacular performance of The Nativity this week. Our Nursery children genuinely shone as shining stars, the narrators projected their lines beautifully and the main characters from Reception all rose to the challenge. Well done to one and all!



Christmas Fair



Thank you and well done to our brilliant PSA team for putting on our final community celebration of the year – our hugely enjoyable, if never so slightly chilly, Winter Fair. With the barbecue fired up and the wine mulling, a bouncy castle to warm up the kids, DJ Nick on the decks and a visit from the man himself, it was the perfect way to start the festive season.

Nursery



It has been a fabulously festive December in Nursery where the children have been celebrating Hanukkah and Christmas. They have industriously created amazing artwork, enjoyed a variety of yuletide stories and helped to decorate the Nursery classrooms. And on top of that, the children have reveled in their post office role-play area. Luckily, nothing has affected delivery times to the North Pole. Most importantly, the children enthusiastically practised their singing and signing of the songs for this week's magical performance of the Nativity - and what a triumph! It has been a wonderful term for our youngest children.

Reception



As the Autumn term draws to a close, it is wonderful to reflect on just what a jam-packed first term our Reception classes have had. December highlights include the wonderful Mandarin sessions with our Chinese teachers, our trips to Highgate Woods and a memorable end-of-term trip to Jackson's Lane Theatre to see 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. With amazing acrobatics, dazzling juggling and some incredible break-dancing, this traditional tale had a very

strong message of inclusion and the importance of sharing our precious resources. The show was almost as good as our first performance on the school stage only the day before!

Year 1



December has been one long celebration for the children in Year 1! Following their trip to All Saints Church at the beginning of the month, they visited the Highgate Synagogue on the first day of Hanukkah and enjoyed a very dramatic telling of the Hannukah story which they learned is also called the Festival of Miracles. The children loved the Menorah being lit in the classroom at the end of each day. This week, Year 1 marked the winter solstice with a festival in the Peace Garden, at which they celebrated with hot chocolate and marshmallows, gingerbread, music from DJTB, lots of dancing and even a surprise visit from Santa Claus. With a Jackson's Lane theatre trip, the Christmas sing-along and a Pantomime to round the term off, the holidays have arrived at just the right time!

Year 2



It has been another great month in Year 2, during which the classes travelled into central London for a tour of the sights of the Great Fire of London. During the walk from Monument to St Paul's Cathedral, the children spotted all the historically significant locations including Pudding Lane and the amazing interior of Christopher Wren's masterpiece. On their return to school, the children have been exceptionally busy. They've written fantastic books about The Great Fire, built fires, baked bread and finished their Tudor houses ready for a spectacular re-enactment of the Great Fire. What an exciting way to finish the term!

Year 3



While the December weather outside may have been frightful, Year 3 children were able to bask in the heat of the Tropics on their trip to Kew Gardens. At the world's most famous botanical garden, the children learnt all about the value of rainforest plants, not only for the local population but for advances in medicine and science around the world. The children discovered that giant banana leaves not only make great shelters for humans but also stop the tree's roots from getting waterlogged, found out how to use berries for face paint and learnt how to make an excellent toothbrush from the toothbrush tree! Experiencing a rainforest and seeing a living cacao tree was a fantastic way to round-off the topic 'Chocolate'.

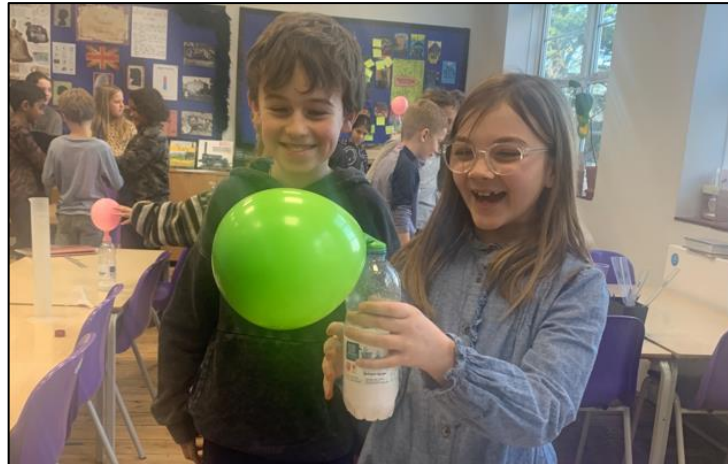
Year 4



What a busy month it's been in Year 4! Impressive end of term guitar and violin concerts have been performed, the final swimming lessons of the year have been swum and in English, a dramatic reading of Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man* has been enjoyed. Snare drums, tambourines and cabasas have been banged, shaken and investigated to explore how sound is produced - allowing for

a riotous afternoon's scientific experiment making an ear-splitting din with purpose! The children also discovered how to make invisible sound waves visible by using a tuning fork and its vibrations, with a bowl of water and a ping-pong ball. The children learned how to construct simple circuits, and what materials make effective, and less effective, conductors and insulators. Not to mention the end of term show, 'Mary Poppins' as laughing boys and female campaigners for Edwardian women's right to vote? I think Year 4 definitely deserve a bit of rest!

Year 5



The second half of the topic 'What Price Progress?' brought with it investigative science and experimentation. The children tested the materials that might be used to make everyday objects like teapots, road reflectors and er... bullet-proof vests, and used Venn diagrams to group materials according to their properties. Beyond science, the class completed an in-depth analysis of the Michael Morpurgo classic short story 'The Giant's Necklace'. The class generated open-ended questions about the text, explored the use of language and analysed sentence structure, before crafting a personal response. PSHE also kept the children thinking as they discussed the value of diversity and explored mental well-being and self-worth. The next topic 'Our Place in Space' is going to have to be pretty spectacular to surpass the excitement of 'What Price Progress'

Year 6



Year 6 have been working as hard as Vikings all through December. In English, the children researched and reported on aspects of Viking Life and discovered that there was much more to these Norsemen than raiding and marauding. In History, they created their own Anglo-Saxon chronicles, mapping out key events in the Anglo Saxon and Viking era and brought their work to life with beautiful illustrations and illuminated lettering. Delicious smells wafted from the cookery studio when the children made scrummy Jamaican patties to celebrate our island's

immigrant populations. In the art studio, the children designed and created beautiful and intricate coin reliefs based on Anglo Saxon motifs. And finally, building on their performance success with Beowulf in November, this cohort showed us that they are now completely at home on the stage. They took on major roles in Mary Poppins and wowed us with their resilience, professionalism, dedication and sheer talent. We couldn't be prouder of them!

Family Centre



Our baby and toddler groups in The Family Centre are thriving! The babies have been enjoying sensory play and the toddlers have had fun with messy play, construction, role play activities and singing. Our baby group for 0-1s runs on a Tuesday from 9.30-12 noon and our toddler group for 1-2s runs on a Wednesday morning from 9.30-11.30. Please do come and join us next term

In the meantime, have a happy Christmas, a great holiday and a good rest in time for the children's return to school on Wednesday 3rd January!

With best wishes

William and Becca

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