



St. Nicholas C of E Primary School

East Challow, Wantage, Oxon, OX12 9RY

Life in all its fullness John 10:10
Belonging, Compassion and Resilience



Friday 13th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

This was the first full week back at school, and we welcomed in OFSTED on Wednesday. Thank you to all of you who participated in the Parents Survey as part of this and those of you who spoke directly with inspectors on the day, to help them with their judgements. As always, the children's passion for their school shone through and many children had the opportunity to talk directly with the team about their learning and experience of life at St Nicholas. The final report will hopefully be with us before the end of this term and I will share it with you as soon as I am able to.

This week Mr Campbell came into school to work directly with children who would like to participate in Festival of Voices which will be on 29th March. It was lovely to have so many children put themselves forward for this opportunity and if your child is one of them, I will be sending out a letter with further details.

This term we will begin holding our class cake sales again. This was a great way for the children to be involved directly in a fundraising activity which benefits them and the school as well as having a say in how it is spent. They are held in the penultimate week of each term, with Red Kites in Term 3, Owls in Term 4, Robins in Term 5 and Wrens and Kingfishers in Term 6. Dates for the next two terms are below.

Science Week and Family STEM Challenge

Following on from the success of last year's Family STEM challenge of elastic band powered vehicles, this year we will be holding out Family STEM challenge on **Thursday 16th March** and it will be to design and **make an air powered rocket**. There are lots of clips on Youtube to help you with your ideas and to ensure all families are able to participate if they wish, we will have plastic tubing in school for you to have if you need it. As with last year, we will also have curriculum information available and light refreshments. Rockets should be made in advance of the evening. This event will coincide with Science Week in school.

Dates this term

Thursday 2nd February – Small Schools netball competition (hosted here at St Nics). This will be for the netball club only.

Friday 3rd February – Red Kites Cake Sale

Thursday 9th February – House Sports (Reception, KS1 and KS2), Red Kites Bread Making Day

End of Term 3 – Friday 10th February at 3pm

Thursday 2nd March – World Book Day. We will be doing a range of activities across the school and your child can come in dressed as their favourite book character if they would like to.

Saturday 4th March – Friends Social Evening at the Legion (details to follow)

Thursday 16th March – Family Science Event

Friday 24th March – Owls Class Cake Sale

Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th March – Parents Meetings with teachers

Wednesday 29th March – Festival of Voices (time TBC but will be evening)

Thursday 30th March – Easter Service in church

End of Term 4 – Friday 31st March at 12pm



Headteacher: Mrs H. Richards
Telephone: 01235 763858
Email: officesn@stnicholasce.vale-academy.org
Web: www.st-nicholas-pri.oxon.sch.uk





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What's been going on around the school

Wrens and Kingfishers

What a fantastic start to the new year we have had. The children have come back to school ready to learn and were excited to share what they did over the holidays.

In Nursery the new children are settling well into the routine and are enjoying exploring the nursery space. We have started doing a 'Hello song' before registration and are learning to sit on a circle on the carpet to talk and listen about what is planned for the day. The existing nursery children have been very welcoming to our new starters and have been keen to show them what we do at nursery. We listened to and identified environmental sounds as part of phase one phonics and the children were very focused and engaged in this activity. We have been working on our scissor and gluing skills whilst exploring junk modelling and are learning how to effectively join materials. In the outside provision, the children have been digging in the sandpit, painting on the easel and washing the bike tires in the water tray. This links with our key text 'Mrs Armitage on wheels' which the children listened to well and discussed what happened in the story. We have used up our supply of spare clothes and ask if all children could come to nursery with some spare clothes, just in case. Next week we plan on going for a learning walk around the school grounds and it would be great if all the children could have a pair of wellies, thank you.

In Reception we've immersed ourselves in the new theme- 'Marvelous Machines'. We have discussed which machines we use regularly, enjoyed role playing in the 'bicycle repairs shop' and had a go at drawing and labelling a machine of choice, some even invented their own. 'Mrs Armitage On Wheels' has been a great hit and inspired the children to think about what their 'ideal' bike would look like. We have learnt about the features on a polaroid camera and used one to take pictures of each other and write captions for these photos. As a team, we are so impressed with how far the children have come with their reading. We will be focusing on letter formation over the next few weeks and if you would like another laminated copy of the letters (lower and upper case) to practice at home, please let me know! All practice that the children get is beneficial. Thank you for all the support you give with reading their books at home. At the end of each day we do 'dough disco' to strengthen our fingers and help with fine motor skills and writing. In maths we have been subitising (visually seeing a number of objects instantly without needing to count them out one at a time) and grouping numbers from 1-5. They have worked fantastically in partners and have secured their subitising skills. The word 'affirmations' is new to our vocabulary as we learn that we need to say kind things to ourselves, as well as to others. We are practicing saying what we are good at and what we are proud of and understanding that mistakes are ok and part of learning. As a class, we have set goals that we'd like to achieve in 2023, these include reading, writing, learning to cook and how to fly. As you can imagine, some will be more achievable than others. During lunchtimes, we are now joining the rest of the school on the playground and it is lovely to see the children looking for familiar faces and siblings to play with, the older children have been wonderful at looking after us and making us feel safe.

Ms Dyet, Mrs Betts and the Early Years Team

Robins

This week has seen the launch of our new Island Detectives project. In English, we have enjoyed creating a class imaginary island and then began planning our own islands imaginary islands, thinking carefully about the theme of the islands, the kind of features it has and the other creatures that might live there. In geography, we visited mapping skills, looking for physical and human features in the school grounds, as well as looking at the oceans and continents of the world.

In maths, Year 1s have begun work on ordering and understanding numbers to 30, whilst Year 2s have continued to work on adding two digit numbers, using their knowledge of number to help them work out easy ways to add.



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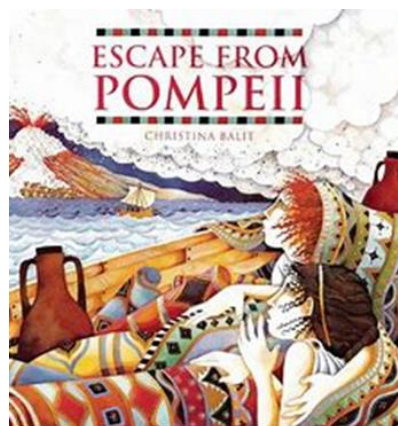


Although the weather wasn't very kind to us on Wednesday, we managed to get outside to explore the grounds. Fingers crossed for better weather next week! Thank you for providing warm clothes for the children.

Ms Winter and Mrs Miller

Owls

This week in Owls we have started our new topic in RE. We are focusing on Hinduism and discussed the parable 'The Blind Men and the Elephant'. The children focused on the parable and remembered all the key aspects of the story. This was all about perspective and how everybody see's different attributes in people. Owl class made some fantastic comic strips around this and were able to write a description as to why it was such a powerful story.



In English we have been focusing on our new writing text 'Escape from Pompeii'. We did some research regarding Roman times and how Pompeii was seen as a mountain that protected them. The book supported our knowledge by depicting typical Roman life based on the perspective of the main character Tranio. We have a brand new Big 6: Volcano, Pompeii, perspective, eruption, intent and recount. This will be our focus vocabulary for the term.

As a class we thought about the effects of a volcano on the public and how we would react if it were us. The children worked in groups and did freeze frames, whilst others had to guess how they were feeling or the actions they would take first if a volcano occurred. The class did a phenomenal job in their groups and most decided to end their scenes with unavoidable death!

In Art we have been looking at the artist L S Lowry. The children created an information page based on the artist and finding out facts about the artists life and artistic history. The children sketched examples of L S Lowry's paintings and drawings to understand how complex their work can be.

Miss Batty

Red Kites

Following two research lessons on Monday and Tuesday, Red Kites had the opportunity to put their learning about Antarctica to the test on Wednesday in a quiz written by the British Antarctic Survey. As a collective, they got almost every question correct and learned some surprising facts along the way- I had never heard of 'green-out' before I did it.

The children have also been challenged to write the script for a 1-minute video clip of the Antarctic, introducing it in a manner similar to David Attenborough...We saw Bonny and Sennen's first go on Wednesday afternoon and I for one was a little traumatised by the description of the penguin chicks demise...

We have also started our new science unit today, learning about why and how scientists classify living things. We used our observation skills to describe pictures of berries to 'experts' who then

helped to identify them. Some of the berries had some very nasty side effects, so learning to identify them correctly was really important.

In English, we started to read William Gill's Shackleton's Journey. We looked at some of the photographs taken on the voyage and mapped out the emotions Shackleton may have had during his adventure. When it came to plotting how he felt at the end, we concluded that his return will have been bitter-sweet. Despite our knowledge of how the expedition ended, on Thursday we started to write adverts to encourage people to join the crew. Next week, we will start to think about what might have been written in some of the letters of application he received.

Mrs Mallinson and Mrs Richards

High 5's

Wrens

Amber for showing off her creative skills and Otilie for settling well into nursery.

Kingfishers

Francesco for playing alongside others beautifully and Georgina for her brilliant engagement in phonics lessons.

Robins

High fives this week Sofia for fabulous segmenting to spell in her writing and Huxley for great blending in his reading.

Owls

Bearin and Arthur for being so incredibly helpful as assistant coaches in PE, supporting others and looking after our school equipment.

Red Kites

Joshua for being inclusive and ensuring that all members of the class are involved in group activities and feel that they belong. Lewis for his continued drive to improve his maths, Mrs Ambrose and I have both commented on his resilience.

Have a lovely weekend,

Best Wishes

Heather Richards and the St Nics Team