



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 27th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Last week when I met with Mrs Rooke as part of our handover I asked if she would write something for our newsletter. We will continue to work together over the remainder of my time here to ensure the transition is smooth, and I know you are looking forward to getting to know her as much as the children are.

Message from Mrs Rooke

I am absolutely delighted to be able to write my first letter to you, to introduce myself as the new Headteacher of St Nicholas Church of England Primary School from Term 5. I feel extremely excited and privileged to have the opportunity to build upon the success your children's school has already achieved under the leadership of Mrs Richards.

I have worked for 8 years at Charlton Primary School in Wantage, as part of the leadership team and just over two of those as Head of School. Previous to this, I have also had experience of teaching and leading in a secondary school setting but decided to return to my primary 'roots'.

Being a mother of two girls, I am very much aware of the responsibility that schools have in ensuring that the highest standard of teaching and learning is achieved, whilst also developing the 'whole child' through a nurturing, caring and safe environment.

The children will always be at the heart of school life and central to any decision making within the school. I strongly believe in providing the children with exciting, creative and meaningful enrichment experiences, which build their passion for learning and I hope to provide children with the tools to make good decisions, treat people well, respect themselves and be a part of the community as good citizens.

I am excited to be part of your whole school community; one which thrives on mutual respect and values positive relationships. I feel passionately about developing long lasting and meaningful relationships with children and their families. As parents, you play a key role in supporting your children with their learning, and you should feel informed and part of this exciting, and sometimes challenging, journey. By working in partnership with parents, children will experience school as a positive and rewarding experience. I feel that it is important that you have a voice and that, as a school, we are approachable and allocate time to listen to your concerns, worries or thoughts about the school.

As I settle into life at St Nics, I will endeavour to ensure that all children have the happiest learning experience, enriched with exciting opportunities.

On **Wednesday 8th February**, I will be spending the day with the staff and children. Please do come up and introduce yourselves outside school!

I look forward to meeting more of you in the coming weeks.

Children's Mental Health Week 'Let's Connect' February 6th – 12th, 2023



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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Children's Mental Health Week is organised by the Place2Be charity and is taking place from Feb 6th-12th. This year's theme is 'Let's Connect' to encourage children (and adults) to look at how we can make meaningful connections. When we have healthy connections – to family, friends and others – this can support our mental health and our sense of wellbeing. In the lead-up to the 6th of February, we would like to reach out and see how far our connections as a school reach. We are asking members of our community who have any family, friends or colleagues in another part of the world to ask for a post card or message which we can add to a display in the school hall. The plan is to display any messages around the map of the world on the wall so that we can see the connections that we as a school have to the wider world. If you have any messages or cards, please can they be passed to class teachers/Mrs Mallinson.

What's going on around the school

Wrens

This week the children have celebrated Chinese New Year, we have made Dragon puppets, lanterns and we had lots of fun cutting up vegetables for our stir fry on Wednesday. We also tried fortune cookies and we read the verses to the children. The children learnt about how people celebrate Chinese New Year e.g. cleaning their homes, wearing new clothes, the colour red being lucky for good fortune for the year ahead.

We have also practiced walking in a line around the school field and learning where we need to stand on the playground in preparation of a fire drill.

Mrs Betts and the Early Years Team

Kingfishers

What a brilliant week the Kingfishers have had. The children have been really engaged in their learning and have impressed us each day with the new skills they are mastering. We've immersed ourselves in the Chinese New Year with many exciting activities. Starting the week by creating playdough dragons, adding detail and features to their designs. We practiced our scissor control when making lanterns and enjoyed sticking together dragon puppets (all to strengthen their fine motor skills). We learnt about how people celebrate the Chinese New Year around the world which led to a discussion about what our favourite Chinese food is. The following day the children spent the morning chopping vegetables for our delicious stir fry, a lot of them were confident in their cutting skills and enjoyed sharing their experiences of helping their adults to cook at home, which was lovely to hear! We pretended to be in a Chinese restaurant for snack and devoured the noodles as well as breaking open fortune cookies and having a go at reading the messages. I'm always amazed with how quickly the children remember new information, they enjoy saying hello in different languages whilst doing the register, they now know hello in Spanish, Polish, French, Italian and Chinese. With Mrs Merryweather, the children created a wonderful wishing tree adding their hopes and desires for the new year and finally we will be dancing with ribbons to Chinese music in PE.

The books that we have read have included; The zodiac animals and the great race, Yi-Min and the ancient Chinese elephant and I want a dragon.

We took it in turns to guess which animal might win the race and why, the children were creative with their ideas and suggested that the fastest animal might not necessarily win the race as some of the other animals might



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outsmart them. Yin Min sparked conversation about hunting animals, why the law was changed to protect the animals and looked into which animals are endangered.

The Maths objectives for the week have been around taking away up to 5. What has been lovely to see is the children being independent thinkers, using resources around them and their fingers to work out the answers and problem solve. Whilst working in partners they are using fantastic terminology to explain what they are doing for example; “my total is 5, I am showing you 3, how many am I hiding behind my back”, have a go at playing this game at home with them!

In the outdoor provision we have been writing Chinese numerals with mud and water, building houses with bricks and “searching for Pokemon”. In outdoor learning the children made a huge slushy with crushed ice and greenery. Some were the ‘mixers’ and others were the ‘collectors’, they are brilliant at deciding roles for each other listening to their friends ideas about the game.

During phonics we have learnt W & X and our hard work in correcting letter formation is paying off. Whilst writing the message to go inside the origami fortune cookies, a lot of children used capital letters, finger spaces and full stops and all had a go at writing a sentence independently. We are very proud of them!

Ms Dyet and the Kingfishers team

Robins

This week, in English, Robin Class have been enjoying imagining more details about their fantasy islands and drawing and describing a creature who lives there. They began to use all the information they had created to start creating a setting description of their island, focussing on creating vivid mental images through interesting word choices.

In art, we continued to explore the work of Angela Pozzi, beginning to create a giant jellyfish, using our recycled objects in interesting ways to create different effort. Lots more work to do next week though!

The children had a great time with their outdoor learning, exploring the different areas and discovering ice in so many hidden places. They loved using the swings, mud kitchen and ladder and tyre climbing areas, in particular.

In maths, Year 1 has continued to work on their understanding of the place value of two digit numbers, whilst Year 2s have begun to explore subtraction. In music, we have been focussing on tempo, listening to Vivaldi’s Four Seasons winter piece and learning a song and chant about winter weather. It’s been a busy week!

Ms Winter and Ms Miller

Owls

This week in Owls we have been focusing on precise nouns and expanded noun phrases. The children found this to be a challenge with being precise and the construction of noun phrases. They worked extremely hard as a class and really focused on creating strong phrases with powerful adjectives. It was lovely to see the children enjoy each other’s writing and used words they were impressed by that their peers had come up with.

In Science we focused on exploring rocks and the reactions of rock with the acid from vinegar. The children had a fantastic time watching the effects of this and had a great discussion about what kind of rock would cause these reactions. They also tested these rocks with water and had to work hard to ensure they were pouring accurate measurements to ensure a fair test. They improved with lots of practice and were amazed

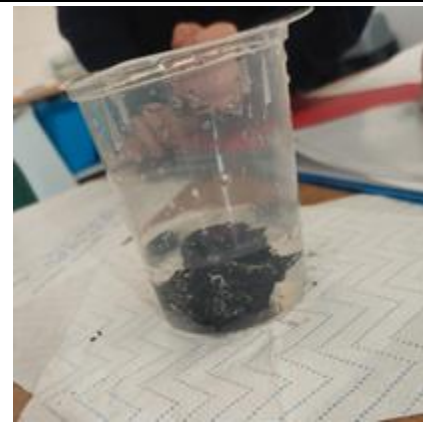


at how some rocks were floating and how porous they were.

Continuing our study of L.S

Lowry the children were tasked with creating a picture in the style of L S Lowry's 'Coming Out of School'. The children observed their own school setting and thought about what the playground looks like at 3.30 when adults come to collect the children. Although they could observe

the school structure they had to use their imagination and really picture what this looks like. They then had to sketch this and use oil pastels to mirror L S Lowry's work with their own creation; using dark, dull colours to represent the feel of the art work.



Ms Batty

Red Kites

This week the children in Red Kites have written in role to Ernest Shackleton to apply for a job as part of his Trans-Antarctic team. Jobs applied for include cook, ship's captain, geologist, surgeon and engineer. Using the learning from the past few weeks, the children have been thinking about how they can make their letters as persuasive as possible through the use of superlatives, modal verbs, rhetorical questions and some of the more challenging words on the Year 5/6 spelling list.

Year Six have continued investigating adding fractions; they are able to articulate clearly what makes some pairs easier to add than others, including when there are mixed numbers. Meanwhile, Year Five have begun to learn how to multiply two 2-digit numbers using formal long multiplication. I was really impressed by the focus of the group I worked with on Thursday afternoon to talk through the process.

In Science, Red Kites have made Top Trumps cards about polar animals they have investigated. They have also learned how to use a dichotomous key to identify animals from a group. This was after they had sorted the animals in both Venn and Carroll diagrams, which enabled us to compare the effectiveness of each way of identifying animals. Next week, we will have a go at making our own keys to help with identifying different penguins.

Mrs Mallinson and Mrs Richards

High 5's

Wrens

Isabella PT for showing kindness and concern for her friends.

Jaxon for being so enthusiastic about learning about Chinese New Year, making his dragon puppet and money envelope with lots on concentration.



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Kingfishers

Savannah for great partner work in Maths

Benji for asking such interesting questions about a story he had listened to

Robins

Milla for tackling some tricky maths challenges with a great attitude and **Oscar K** for using his phonics really well in his writing

Owls

Sebastian Z for being the best he can be always trying hard independently and with others.

Emma for being really helpful and caring for the school environment.

Red Kites

Leo for his brilliant letter in role as someone looking to work with Ernest Shackleton.

Ewan for working hard in his extra maths sessions.

Have a lovely weekend,

Mrs Richards and the St Nics team



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