

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER 5th OCTOBER

Coming up next week

Sunday:

Tuesday: Year 1 & 2 trip to Caldicot Castle

Wednesday: Phonics workshop for reception parents at 9.00am & 3.30pm
Year 5 & 6 at Gemini gym

MESSAGE FROM MR TUCKER

Dear Parents/Carers,

“Mrs H, would you mind if I come down to check how Reception are settling in? Nothing heavy, just want to see how they are getting on.”

“Of course, Mr T, come on down. Thursday morning at 10:45 would be good, we’ll be doing Dough Disco.’

“Sorry, what?!”

For the uninitiated, Dough Disco is a programme that Reception utilise to help build up the strength in their hands and fingers which will then support their handwriting. It is absolutely brilliant. To music, they pinch, kneed, pull and roll playdough to build those fine motor skills so that pencils can be gripped and controlled more effectively. They really loved it and were very proud that they could perform all the complicated manoeuvres with their fingers. It was far too quick for me to keep up with. If you have a lazy five minutes, and you would like to learn a bit more, do look it up on Youtube. I warn you though, it is highly addictive.

My Tuesday was considerably brightened by spending an hour or so with Year 1/2, watching them in their maths lesson. We are having a real push with our maths this year, looking to develop a ‘Mastery Maths’ approach where the emphasis lies on deepening their understanding rather than accelerating too quickly, before fundamental principles are clearly understood. They were on fire; articulating really clearly lots of different ways to represent large double digit numbers or explain what was happening in a number sequence. This deepening approach was then followed up by Mrs Harris, on Friday, when the class gave the brand new I-pads their first test run. They were used to capture 2D and 3D shapes in our environment and then to film the children explaining what they had found and *how they knew* what sorts of shapes they were. As adults, we understand that our world is made up of a variety of shapes but for them, it was like a veil had been lifted from their eyes – they could not believe what they were finding all around them. It was a genuine delight to watch them.

Poor old Miss Madge was unwell at the beginning of the week and was not with us on Monday or Tuesday. On Wednesday, however, normal service was resumed, with the dulcet sounds of Enya wafting out from her classroom as the children created storyboards of the latest chapter from the *Ice Palace* and then popped up to the hall to dance to fiddler music (in the book the music is all part of a cunning trap set by set by the baddie). She has been back in the school for 2 minutes and the children are already stimulated and enjoying their learning. That is not how we roll here. Not at all. So why? Why bother with the story mapping and the dancing? Well, when the children come to pen their recounts tomorrow as if they are one of the children who has been carried away by Starjek, they will be able to draw on the immersive experiences of the last few days and really write as if they were that little boy or girl, thus giving their writing a far more nuanced and realistic quality. Hmm, maybe there is something in this creative approach after all.

Through Monday and Tuesday, Year 6 had their Bikeability. It was all fine to start with, especially while they were still confined to barracks on the school field, giving their bikes safety checks and learning some of the basics of road safety. The next day, they went down to

Blackthorn Drive area, taking their cycling proficiency tests for real on the roads. If I am honest, I was a bit nervy and if you had seen Woody on a bike, you would have been 'nervy' too. However, when I popped down to see them in action I was greeted by a sight I never expected to see: 15 children all showing great control, understanding and road sense. Do not get me wrong, I shall not be driving anywhere near Nailsea ever again but you know, Rome wasn't built in a day.

Back at the ranch, the other half of the class were further investigating materials as part of their Science topic. Now, anyone who has ever played with corn flour and water (or watched QI) knows that by mixing these two substances together, something rather unusual is created: strike the mixture and it turns solid, yet if you pull your fingers through it, it reverts back to liquid and runs freely. It is a non-Newtonian substance, don't you know? (and I did not until Mr Khanna told me) They were fascinated by this and had the time of their lives investigating this unusual mixture. The only downside was that they came out looking like they had spent the day in a bakery, with barely a square inch not covered in flour/icky paste. On the plus side, Mr Khanna has offered to take all their clothes home over the weekend and wash them (as long as the items are here by 3:20 this Friday).

This time our Stars of the Week are Frank & Sonny in Reception, Zachary & Jamie in Year 1/2, Rose, Beau, Fin & Phoebe T in Year 3/4 and April & Jess p in Year 5/6. Very well deserved. The house with the most conduct marks and work marks was Phoenix.

Have a lovely weekend. Play safely and take care. We have our Harvest Festival at All Saints on Sunday morning; you would be most welcome if you would like to come. Obviously, last year I forgot to bring the bag of food I had put to one side and had to take some of the Reception children's offerings. I did not feel good about it but significantly better than if I had gone up with nothing! Try not to make the same mistake as me.

Mr Tucker

FWSA

New Date for your diary

19th October - Welcome Picnic ('Bring and Share' style) - immediately after school

Textile Recycling

We finally have the date for the delivery of our new textile recycling bank - 10th October. We have instructed the company that they must deliver before 14:45 to avoid interfering with school pick up.

This will replace the ad hoc textile recycling collections that we have previously held. We are working with the church, as the bank will sit in the church car park and be available for both school and church people to use. We will still earn money for the FWSA for any donations made into the bank, and it earns good money for us, so we hope you will use it often! This is a trial as we work out if this system is suitable for us, and to be sure we don't suffer from some of the problems experienced by other textile recycling banks. Thanks for being patient and hanging onto all of those clothes your kids outgrew ages ago! And a thousand thanks to Maggie for taking the lead on this for so long.

FWSA Committee Roles

We had a fantastic AGM last night; thank you to everyone who attended, and to Mr Tucker, Mrs Hayward and Beth, who all took time from their 'off the clock' time to come along. Notes from the meeting will be available soon.

We had a number of people agree to take on formal roles as part of the committee, and we are so grateful to them. But also in the interests of being fair, we wanted to give anyone else who might be interested but who couldn't make the meeting last night one last chance to come forward. The description of roles is (hopefully) attached to this email, so take a look and send an message to me (jessicavallentine@gmail.com or 07904 876 707) if you are interested. There are lots of options for people who want to take a role from being a formal committee member or event lead, and we still need volunteers from each class to be a class rep, so we'd love to hear from you. Thanks!

Christmas Fayre

"Don't talk about Christmas, yet!" I hear you cry. Too bad, it's coming! Make sure you've put 8th December in your diaries! It'll run from 11-2 at the Long Ashton Community Centre. More details soon (but not too soon, so don't worry, Scrooges!