



School News

Dear Parents & Carers,

It has been a short but busy half term.

On the first day back, teachers and other staff from all the schools in the Multi Academy Trust joined forces for a morning at The Warriner to share our ideas for how working together as part of the academy can benefit all the children and young people across all the schools. We came up with lots of ideas and I will keep you informed about some of the initiatives we develop as they happen. I continue to meet with the other three headteachers at least once a fortnight to share best practice and develop opportunities.

This half term, I have had the chance to spend some time teaching in every class, something I sometimes miss as the headteacher. It has been a real pleasure to get a sense of how much the children have moved on in their learning since the beginning of the academic year, at first hand. All of our staff work incredibly hard to develop varied and interesting learning opportunities that will engage and inspire the children and our pupils respond with a very positive attitude to learning which is a pleasure to see.

This term children from across the school have been able to attend workshop sessions on the Life Education Bus as part of Healthy Week and have been engaged in all sorts of cross-curricular activities during Weather Week, including a whole school rain dance in the school hall. For details of this, and all sorts of other things that have been going on, please visit the school website at www.sibford-gower.oxon.sch.uk.

Have a lovely holiday.

With best wishes,

Jane O'Sullivan, Headteacher



Painting on a BIG scale during Weather Week.



KS2 children developed storm art inspired by the work of Benjamin Britten



All the children had a chance to visit Pamela on the Life Education Bus. They took part in a wide range of age-appropriate workshops exploring themes ranging from Friends and Feelings to My Wonderful Body, and Decisions. We also had very special guests in school, including a doctor, a dentist, an ear specialist and an eye specialist. Thank you to Dr Herd, Mrs Greenhalgh, Mr Court and Mr Downes.

Healthy Breakfast was a fun way to end things. Special thanks to Miss Blake for organising Healthy Week.

Is homework worthwhile? Can homework be fun? Read this newsletter right up to page 10 for details of an exciting homework competition.



Best Class attendance this month: Willow **97.6%**



Children return to school on Monday February 22nd



Acorn Class



It has been a very exciting term in Acorn class as our classroom has been home to a castle! The children have been learning about what life was like in castles and also features of a castle, including Gothic styles where Gargoyles play an important part of the architecture. We decided to create Acorn class gargoyles! What do you think?



The children have been particularly interested in the jobs which people did in castles. As a result we made Medieval soup, which was inspired by a discussion about growing food to eat. We were lucky to have Cook Blake and Cook Heather visit our class to help us.



It was very hard work cutting the carrots, potatoes, celery, radishes and onions, but we did really well.



When we had cut all the vegetables we put them into a great big cooking pot. We added salt and pepper, vegetable stock, lentils and two bay leaves to season. After it had cooked we mashed it to make it smooth and ate it! It was delicious!

We talked about Shrove Tuesday, Lent and we practised counting to 40 in tens as that's how



long Jesus fasted for.

We talked about giving up unhealthy things for Lent.

Our outside planting is thriving during the unseasonably warm weather and we have a whole pot of daffodils already. We are exciting about using our outdoor area a lot more after half term.





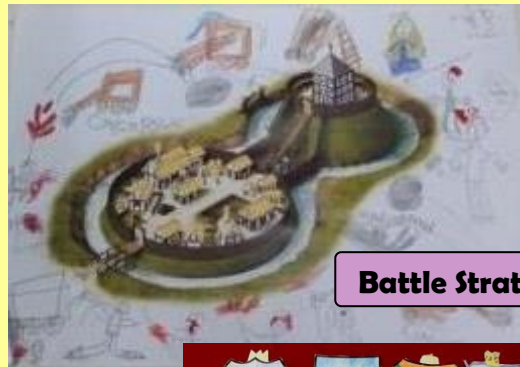
Beech Class News



What a busy half term! So short but SO much to do! The children of Beech class have been doing lots of learning about their topic of 'Towers, Turrets and Tunnels!' In literacy they have used their imaginations to write about what might be at the end of the tunnel.. We have linked our learning to traditional tales, e.g. making multiplication arrays into towers for Rapunzel, looking at the story of Jack and the Beanstalk and the alternative version which develops the idea that Giants have feelings too!



The children made exciting spaghetti towers out of marshmallow and spaghetti. They investigated how shapes can help make a structure stronger despite using brittle materials.



Battle Strategy

Through our topic we have been looking at where the capital cities are in the countries of the UK, locating our own castle and developing our own battle strategy to attack a Motte and Bailey castle! We have explored the different colours and symbols used in heraldry, and used this new knowledge to design our own coat of arms. What an exciting half term, I hope Beech class are as excited as I am to visit Oxford Castle next half term!



In Art lessons, Beech class created their own version of Paul Klee's 'Castle in the Sun' oil painting using wax resist and watercolour or collage.



Willow Class News

We have had a very busy term learning lots about school life at Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School in the past. We learnt how to write an informal and formal letter. We then wrote to various people who live in and around the village who came to school here.

We are beginning to receive some replies. It has been fascinating to find out about the things children got up to many years ago.

We found out that the toilets were outside and squares of newspaper threaded on a string were used as toilet paper. We also discovered that the infant teacher, whose name was Mrs Tilly Tarver used to fall asleep in the afternoon by the stove. Once some naughty boys tied her to the chair!

We also thought that making an ice slide on the playground when it was frosty sounded great fun. The headmaster used to throw a bucket of water onto the ground and as it froze the children skidded on it.



We have collected many memories and made a memory tree.



In art we have drawn pictures of the school buildings. We took photos and then used these to make sketches.



We finished them using watercolour paint and used ink pens to bring out the detail.



In maths we have been learning to measure in cm, m, g, and kg as well as learning times tables, fractions, column addition and subtraction.

We have just finished writing stories that are set in the past. They take the children back to school one hundred years ago. It's amazing how many of them include punishment by ten whacks of the cane or having to wear the dunce's hat.

In PE we are learning to do country dancing. We have just about mastered the steps for the Durham reel and we are now trying to learn the Bridge of Athlone. It keeps you very fit!



After all this hard work, we are all looking forward to a week's holiday!



Maple Class News

2016 has started with a bang. The term may have been short, but we've still managed to fit a fair amount in and there is yet more to come after half term! We have been delighted to welcome Joanna to Maple Class, although we have also had to say farewell to Bethany.

Maths

As well as continuing to develop written and mental calculation skills, we've been learning all about fractions this term. The children have made fractions using different equipment and divided our maths display board into different fractions! On top of that, our strange in-house Fibonacci-obsessed spy, S.O.55, has set a number of pretty tough challenges for the children based on the golden ratio... with the promise that he/she will reveal their true identity!



The children followed map co-ordinates and a coded letter to find a cash box in the orchard containing notes to each of them from... S.O.55!

P.E.

Swimming: Our Monday mornings are starting with a burst of energy at the moment as the children have swimming lessons in the pool at Sibford School.

Dance: We do have a recording of the "Staying Alive" dance, which I will manage to upload onto the website eventually! We are now working on another high-energy dance routine - this time to "A Little Less Conversation" by Elvis Presley.

Computing

Along with the research that the children are involved in with the Sibfords Walking Trail, we have also been looking at podcasting. The children will be writing and recording their own podcasts on some weird and wonderful topics over the coming weeks, and we will let you know when they are available to listen to!

English

Our class novel this term - *The Phantom Tollbooth* - has been following the adventures of Milo and a watchdog named Tock. The children have been creating artwork based on the many colourful characters in the book, which are about to go on display. In SPAG, the children have been learning more and more about the myriad of grammatical features of the English language in The Grammar Game, and we have also been looking carefully at spelling patterns. Writing has been all about adapting fairy stories, some of which we will be making into films. The children have risen to the challenge admirably, producing some of the best (and most entertaining) written work I have seen from them.



In Science, the Year 4s spoke to each other down telephones made from string and plastic cups.



The children struggling up a part of their Sibfords Walking Trail...

Year 4 Science

We have been looking (well, listening really...) into the topic of sound this term. The children are now experts on how sounds are produced, how they travel and how they are received. We are now looking into solving a very real practical soundproofing problem between Maple and Willow Classes, and there have been some fantastic ideas on how to stop the busy sounds of learning from travelling from one room to the other...



We then tried the same with a hosepipe and some funnels, but it didn't work!

Topic

Our contribution to the Key Stage 2 project on The Sibfords is to create a walking trail around the villages, complete with a map and information about the various points of interest along the way. We have been out and about in the Sibfords in the mud and the sunshine plotting the route, and we are making very good headway. We hope to unveil the trail in the next few weeks. In connection with this, we have been looking at map co-ordinates and symbols, and the children set each other a map quiz in groups.

... and plotting the route back in the classroom.





Oak Class News



This term the children in Oak class used the space in the school hall to further develop their speaking and listening skills. Here groups of children can be seen devising some dramatic retellings of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. With only a limited amount of time to prepare their dramas, the children worked well together and produced some wonderful dramas with a rich range of styles and interpretations.



Our Year 5 and 6 children were invited to take part in a Forensic Investigation at Bloxham School. Four girls from the sixth form devised a crime scene investigation which involved the children, working as scientists, trying to solve a murder mystery by using various scientific techniques including: microscopy, finger print analysis, chromatography and flame testing. All our children enjoyed these hands on experiences and they especially enjoyed being able to use the Bunsen burners.



As part of their preparation for the transition to secondary education, the pupils in Year 6 went to The Firestation at Rewley Road in Oxford, where with two other schools they took part in the Junior Citizenship training event. Here they were exposed to various life-like scenarios in which they were given the opportunity to negotiate in a safe environment.



They all also had the opportunity to make a 999 call!



Our Year 6 pupils were also fortunate to be able to go to Horton Hospital to receive training about general health issues and in what to do should they come across a medical emergency. Some of the areas covered included: healthy living, the importance of X-rays, how to treat broken bones, the mouth to mouth resuscitation technique and how to administer CPR using an automated resuscitation device. In order to make a contribution to the funding of the I.M.P.S. programme they children in Oak class organised and ran a Cake sale to raise money for a donation to the programme. They are all stars and the current Year 5 pupils will hopefully undergo the same training next year.



BONNE FÊTE!

It's been a rather busy start to term where our French learning has been concerned. We kicked away those 'first week back' blues by celebrating with our own 'Fête des Rois' (Epiphany) - here you can see children in oak playing a game to collect all the ingredients for their 'galette' - including that all important 'fève'!



Our next celebration came in the form of our whole school 'healthy week'. Each class made healthy fruit salads to take home to share with their family and friends - but only if they could ask for their ingredients in French of course!

Finally, we joined with our French friends once again in order to celebrate 'la chandeleur', or Candlemas. In France, la chandeleur is celebrated with crêpes, candles and coins! Here are some children from willow enjoying a game where tossing a special crêpe can bring you extra luck on your next turn!



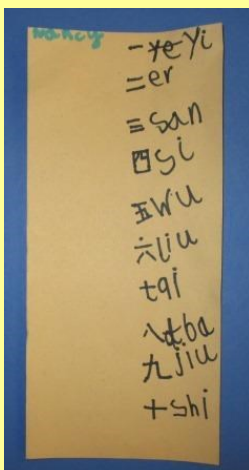
Happy
Chinese New Year
2016



TO JOIN IN WITH CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS, THE CHILDREN TUCKED INTO A SPECIAL CHINESE MEAL PREPARED IN OUR KITCHEN BY CAROL, LOUISE AND THEIR COLLEAGUES FROM FRESHSTART. THERE WERE FORTUNES COOKIES FOR EVERYONE AND THE FOOD WAS DELICIOUS!



On a similar theme, a group of Chinese students from Sibford School were the guests of Maple Class for a morning. They talked about what it is like to go to school in China, and a range of aspects of Chinese cultural life. They even showed the children how to write their names in Chinese. A huge thank you to Sibford School and to school governor Nicky Sena-Cullen for making this possible. And to Maple Class for being so welcoming.



THE CHILDREN IN ACORN CLASS MARKED CHINESE NEW YEAR BY LEARNING HOW TO WRITE NUMBERS TO 10 IN CHINESE (USING SYMBOLS AND WORDS) AND BY MAKING BEAUTIFUL CHINESE DRAGONS. THEIR CLASSROOM IS LOOKING VERY BRIGHT AND COLOURFUL.



Cameron's Corner

The Orchard in late Winter

Life in the orchard continues to evolve: the trees don't have leaves or fruit on them now, and the wind-fall apples have mostly been eaten by visiting and orchard dwelling animals.



Plant life is mainly dormant, though some spring daffodils are popping up very early!



Snuffle holes



Entrance to the sett

Cameron Cullen has been keeping a keen eye on the badger sett: he has recently observed 'snuffle' holes made by foraging badgers. These are little holes made in the ground, just big enough for a badger to poke his nose in to try and grab worms or grubs!

The Orchard Project

Thanks to Julian and Amanda Ransom, parents of Thea, Imogen and Flora, there are lots of things planned as part of the Orchard Project. Many of these are funded by our fantastic PTA.

- Ransom family to stimulate the use of the Wildlife Camera through using it regularly and supplying images to the school.
- Create a new viewing area above the steps installing a simple bench.
- Supply and install 2 hedgehog homes, PTA funded.
- Build a reptile hibernaculum, 4th Corner
- Carry out general tidy of whole area, Orchard and Pond side, 4th Corner.
- Steps to pond area, new walk-chip around pond and clear for access, PTA funded.
- Fresh walk-chip on all paths where needed, 4th Corner.
- Planting of new plants to replace those lost and to increase interest and wildlife, PTA funded.
- Create small area of planting for specific biodiversity study, Amanda
- Supply a split Hazel hurdle with viewing holes to view wildlife, Ransom family donation
- Ransom family to buy portable hide which the school can use.
- Amanda will liaise with the school and advise on Wildlife Trust School Outreach programme.



Why Reading at a Young Age Matters

"First, it is difficult to overstate the importance of getting children off to an early successful start in reading."¹



15 minutes / day
of independent reading can =
1 million+
words in a year.²

Reading to a child in an interactive style raises his or her IQ by over **6 points.**

Daily reading to children puts them almost **1 year** ahead of those who are not being read to.⁴

Children without basic literacy skills when they enter school are **3–4 times** more likely to drop out later.⁵

"For the majority of young people, enthusiastic and habitual reading is the single most predictive personal habit for the ability to achieve desirable life outcomes."⁶

The U.S. Dept. of Education maintains that avid reading promotes:

- ✓ Speech
- ✓ Confidence
- ✓ Memorization

#1 better skills acquisition

#2 superior grades

#3 a desirable life
as measured by income,
profession, employment⁸

Good readers often have more financially rewarding jobs. They are **2.5x** more likely to earn \$850 or more a week.⁷

Children who read 3,000 words per day will be in the top 2% of standardized tests

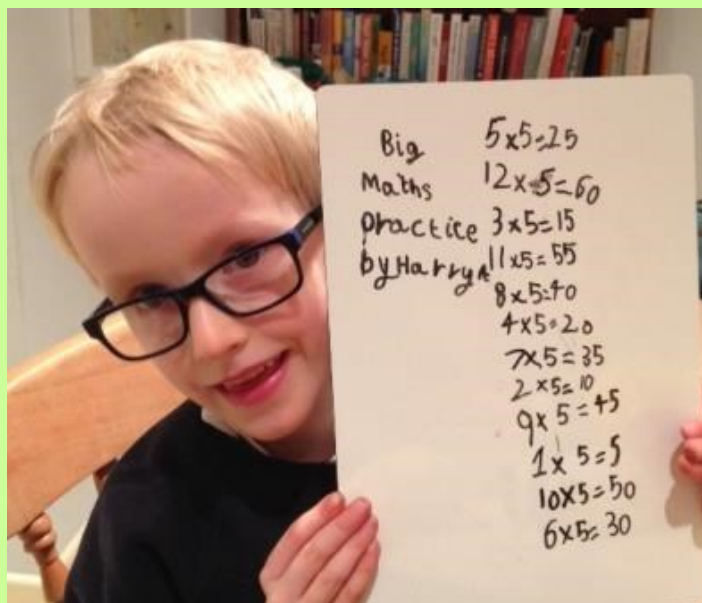
Children who read 20 words per day will be in the bottom

Browse our books and resources at harpercollinschildrens.com



The key homework priorities we set for your child are daily reading, regular spelling practice and maths 'learn-its' (published on the homework page of the school website) **Parental support makes a very noticeable difference and has a clear impact on children's progress at school. While we realise it is difficult to practise these things every day, if you make it a family priority, it will benefit your child now and in the future.**

WE WANT YOUR HOMEWORK PHOTOS !



This photo of Harry Allen doing his 'learn-its' practice at home has been the inspiration for a competition.

We invite you to send in printed photos of your child either reading a book or practising their spellings and/or 'learn-its' in an unusual place (just to show how easy these things are to practise anywhere!).

We will ask an impartial panel to be judges of which are the most unusual or interesting and **there will be prizes!**

The overall winner will receive a £15 book voucher. The two runners-up, one from EYFS –Y2, one from Y3 –6, will receive a £10 book voucher each. The deadline for entries is Friday 26th February and we will announce the winners in assembly on Friday 11th March.

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