

Dear Families,

We have now completed three weeks of phase 2 phonics with the GPC i, n, m, d, g, o, c, and k covered over the last two weeks. Hopefully everyone is beginning to get into their routines for practising at home. Thank you for all your support. I'm pleased with the children's progress, particularly in their oral blending and many of them are already remembering all the GPC we have learned so far.

We completed White Rose Maths Block 2 last week, 'Talk about Measure and Patterns' this included thinking about repeating patterns through lots of different media. We then began Block 3 this week, 'It's me 1, 2, 3'. This block continues next week and we have been identifying, representing and matching items with lots of different representations for the quantities 1, 2 and 3 (as the name suggests). We have also been subitising up to three, which is a long word for identifying the quantity of a small group of objects without having to count them.

We talked about the shape of Christmas Trees this week, it does seem early for that I know, and the children made their transient art PTA Christmas cards using Christmas tree shaped boards. Before getting started they had the opportunity to examine all the beautiful jewels I had collected for the job and they practised using the jewels to make repeating patterns. Some of the children chose to incorporate this new skill in their Christmas tree designs. They all took a great deal of care with their creations and it always astounds me how beautiful and unique their designs are. The art work is coming home tonight for you to order on line if you wish. I can highly recommend the quality of the cards, gift tags, wrapping paper and other items available to order with your child's design on them and they will be here in plenty of time to send to friends and family.

In RE we talked about the story of Noah and his Ark last week, you may have seen the photos of the children sequencing the story on the notice board. This week we thought about our wonderful world, celebrating it through the signs and colours of autumn. We had a brilliant time on Wednesday morning when we visited Harewood Estate to meet John and learn about the beautiful countryside on our doorstep, as well as looking for signs of autumn and learning how animals in nature prepare for the coming colder months. The weather turned out not too bad on the day, but thank you all for preparing the children so well with suitable clothing and wellies. They were fantastic during the visit and all did really well, even though they had to do a lot of listening and a lot of walking. The photos are on the notice board and I will try and put some on Tapestry over the weekend for you. We have been looking at the autumn things we collected and this afternoon Miss Grantham worked with the children to mix autumn colours and do some leaf printing.

*Mrs Jarvis has given me the following information about her music lessons: In music we continued learning about sounds. We went on a 'sound walk' round school to see what we could hear. Some interesting sounds like taps running, people typing and balls bouncing. We watched a Sonic Explorers episode and realised how many different sounds are around us, without us even realising it. We made some fabulous percussion instruments which will make their way home soon but we are going to use them in class next week. The children*

*drew some beautiful pictures and had great fun deciding what combination of different pasta or lentils to fill their tubes with. We then listened to the shakers and realised how different they all sounded. We are in for a great lesson next week with my 'band of shakers'! To finish off our rhythm and pulse topic next week, we are going to experiment to see if we can make different sounds with just our bodies. We will investigate using patterns to make different sounds with different parts of our bodies. I will lead some patterns and then the children will take a turn. We will use our wonderful shakers when we read the book, Tanka Tanka Skunk. We will practise the rhythm and then the children will join in with the Tanka Skunk rhythm with their shakers at the right bit in the story. I hope you will enjoy seeing their shakers, the children are very pleased with them, and that they might inspire some more instrument creations at home over half term!*

Next Wednesday we are back to normal PE. Please send the children in their kit with their uniform in a bag to change into, unless they are in Green Group. Mr Ratcliffe announced today that Wednesday is the day when they are able to wear their own choice of clothes for the day (this is because Green Group had the most team points of all the teams in school over this half-term). If Green Group want to come in PE kit they are of course welcome to do so and we will help them change into their own clothes after PE, which is always in the morning.

It's the last week of the half-term next week and the children are not in school on Friday. There will be some pumpkin themed activities over the course of the week, including pumpkin carving and we will squeeze all our maths and phonics into the short week. On Thursday we will celebrate the end of the first half-term with our annual Pumpkin Party, immediately after school, and all the children are encouraged to come to school in their party costumes for the full day. I know that the first school party can be a little daunting for some, especially when there are older children in costume, but I will be staying for the duration of the party to make sure all the Class One children feel safe and have a good time. I would like to thank our wonderful PTA for organising the party and for all they do to support the school.

I won't be sending extra homework at the end of next week for over the half-term break, but would like the children to look back over the GPC we have covered so far, making sure they can remember them on sight and also have another go at practising the letter formation. I can provide additional resources to anyone who feels their child is struggling to remember them from the homework sheets – please just let me know in good time.

It's hard to believe the children are already nearing the end of the first half-term of school life. They, and you guys, have all been amazing – thank you so much for the positive start and all your support. There are parent meetings (the link went out yesterday to sign up), so we have chance to talk about your wonderful children, after the half term and I look forward to seeing you all then. In the meantime, have a very happy weekend and we will have a fabulous final week!

Kind regards from Mrs Watts.