

Dear Families,

There has been lots of real writing for a purpose in Class One over the past two weeks to support role play in Santa's Grotto. Last week we finished writing our Christmas party invitations and this week we wrote our Christmas cards. The children also used their maths skills to create beautiful art work using rectangles and squares for the front of their Christmas cards. There have also been Christmas challenges relating to fine motor skills, phonics and maths.

We started Phase Three in phonics last week with the GPC 'j', 'v', 'w' and 'x'. There were no new GPC this week and we will be doing week 2 of Phase Three after the break. I did my assessments and the children are all doing brilliantly. In maths they have been doing two different kinds of subitising. The first, is perceptual subitising, which they have been doing since they were born and practising a lot in our maths lessons since starting school. The second is conceptual subitising, this is where they begin to see larger patterns and can break down an amount of objects into smaller groups using mental maths strategies e.g. if there were six ducks, you might subitise by splitting the group up into two smaller groups of three, or even three groups of two. This is a really important skill to develop because it enables the children to develop important maths concepts, such as odd and even numbers and number bonds, as well as doing mental arithmetic in their heads as they get more confident. We have also worked more on number bonds to five, as well as one more and one less than a given number or group of objects. Our Christmas maths challenges this week have also involved identifying numerals to twenty and recording numerals to ten, identifying rectangles and squares (knowing that both have four sides and four corners but that a square has four equal sides). The children also began learning about 3D (solid) shapes such as cubes and cuboids through gift wrapping for Santa's Grotto.

We all had a fabulous time on party day making our own decorations donated by the PTA, playing musical statues for chocolate prizes and enjoying a delicious Christmas dinner. We also prepared and wrapped the hyacinths, which we planted at the beginning of this half-term. We also had a visit from Santa in the afternoon and each of the children received a gift. In the family celebration today we said a sad goodbye to Miss Grantham and gave her one of the hyacinths we planted as a gift, as well as a card made by the children. We will miss her but hopefully she will be able to come back to see us in the summer when her next two placements are finished.

Because of our rehearsals, there was no music lesson on Tuesday this week but both Mrs Jarvis and I were very proud of the children during the Nativity performances on Wednesday. They were their wonderful, adorable selves throughout and I really hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

The children were all so eager to have a new reading book today that I decided to let them take them home. There is no pressure to do school work over this very busy holiday time, but I did put a little extra in the homework books at the beginning of the week, if you get time. It would also be really to hear about your Christmas break via Tapestry when we return to school. Maybe the children could help you decide the photos to upload and the comments to make. We will make this the focus of our show and tell for the first week back.

Thank you so much for all your kind words and the very generous gifts. It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know your wonderful children and you all. Have a very joyful, safe and peaceful Christmas break and a very happy new year to you all.

Kind regards from Mrs Watts.