

Dear Families,

Last week we were asked to choose two class members to join the already established Eco Committee. Each child who wanted to join put their name forward and told their friends why they would like to be on our school Eco Committee. Then we had a secret vote, where they couldn't vote for themselves, to find two representatives. Congratulations to Axton and Milli, who had the most votes. They will be joining the Eco Committee for the next meeting. The reasons they gave for wanting to join were "Don't waste things" and "I want to clean the bins". We had lots of other brilliant reasons expressed, such as "I want to save electricity", "I want to save the whole planet", "I want to feed the plants", "I want to water the plants", "I like to clean up", "I want to help the planet", "I want to look after school" and "I like to go to meetings". The children who weren't chosen this time will get the opportunity to put their names forward again in September and well done to them all for having a go and for voting for their friends in a very democratic way.

In RE over the last two weeks we shared the parable of the House on the Rocks and began learning about the Easter story. Even though we do the Easter story in a child friendly way, the children do often start thinking and talking about what happens after we die, as this is often the most important part of the story for children. Many told me that they know or have known of someone who has died and shared their thought about this. It is quite normal and very healthy for them to start asking questions, so please don't worry. In school we talk about what Christians believe happens after death and what happened to Jesus in the context of the story, but we also explain that it is normal for people to have different beliefs around this subject depending on their religion, culture or family traditions. If you have any concerns, I'm happy to discuss them with you and, likewise, if the children say anything in school on the subject, which we feel may be helpful or of interest to you, we will let you know.

In maths we have concluded the three week phase, 'Building Nine and Ten' by thinking about number bonds to ten, odd and even numbers and also doubling. I introduced a new maths game last week called 'Shut the box', which all the children have played with an adult and then with each other. I highly recommend this game to help children with their subitising and calculating skills and it's only about £10 on Amazon, if you're interested in getting one for home. Up to now we have just played by recognising individual dice numbers by subitising or adding the numbers together, but we will extend this to subtraction later in the year. We have also started the next White Rose Phase about 3D shape and have been thinking about identifying and naming a cube, cuboid, sphere, cone, pyramid and cylinder. The children have been excitedly bringing me different shapes from all over the classroom and garden, so don't be surprised if they do the same at home.

Last week we met Bobby the police bear and also his friend Watson, who presented some of our PSHE through a scheme called Pol-Ed (produced by West Yorkshire Police). We were thinking about how to keep ourselves safe when playing and also, through our MindMate lesson, we thought about stranger danger, in particular how it's not possible to tell who is good and who is bad. We explored this theme through a great book called, "Who's Good and Who's Bad - Little Red Riding Hood?" by Steve Smallman (it turned out the cute bunny was the bad guy), as well as similar stories where traditionally 'bad' characters are the good

guys and vice versa. Also in PSHE we thought about recognising that we all like or are good at different things and that it's okay to be different from our friends and not like the same things as other people. We explored how this links in with our school rules, Christian values and British values. In addition to our PSHE curriculum, this week has been a Down Syndrome feature week for the whole school and we have talked at length about differences and supporting our friends who all have different strengths and things they may need help with. We also learned some Makaton signs for key vocabulary, which will help us communicate better with people who face challenges with their expressive language. Thank you for your support of our 'odd socks day'.

In phonics over the last two weeks we have we have learned the final Phase Three GPC 'ure' and 'er' and done lots more practise on the GPC from recent weeks, particularly 'air' and 'ear' which some of the children found difficult to remember. We have started doing simple dictation to see if the children can remember a short phrase or sentence, hold it in their head and then segment the words they need to write it down. This is a complex task and we will keep practising over the coming weeks. If they do writing at home, remember to praise all efforts and let them use their 'have a go writing' which will invariably, at this stage in their learning mean there are a lot of spelling errors. Remember, we can only expect them to write the GPC they know and as long as they and you can read what they have written, they have achieved brilliantly.

Mrs Jarvis' has given me the following information about her music lessons over the last two weeks: *We have continued our topic on Vivaldi's Spring. We thought about spring related words and clapped the words and phrases. The children took it in turns to think of a word or phrase and clap it for the rest of the class to copy. Then we developed these phrases and used body percussion to tap out the rhythms. The children learnt a new musical word, 'tempo', the speed of the music. We decided the speed of Vivaldi's Spring was fast as it is a happy and joyful piece of music. We listened to lots of different pieces of music from different genres and decided whether they were fast or slow.*

I couldn't prepare the Class One Lending Library Books as I had planned last week because of the printer situation. However, this week all the children who wanted to have brought home a book of their choosing. You should have received an email explaining the new routine for the library books on Tuesday. The books are clearly not phonetic and are for you to share with the children, although they are getting very good at spotting familiar tricky words in different texts and would be able to decode many of the words phonetically. However, I don't want to put any pressure on them and would just like them to enjoy the stories. You may keep the books as long as you wish but the children won't get a new one until they are returned. Changing once a week on a Thursday would be the ideal situation. Each Thursday from now on the children will have the opportunity to change their book if they wish, with support of course initially, but the system is designed that they will be able to do it independently in due time.

There has been so much fabulous child initiated play and learning over the past two weeks it would be impossible for me to fit everything in one update. However some of the highlights for me were when last week the children requested the dinosaurs, who live on top of the cupboards come down to play, we discovered spring had sprung in our garden, K-nex

creatures and inventions, cars, trains, busses and boats being built in the garden and amazing writing to support interests and role play. We also had a focus on colour mixing and started observational paintings of flowers for a special occasion coming up soon.

Finally, you may have heard that Mrs Minshull, who covers the class for me on a Monday and Wednesday afternoon is retiring at the end of this term. The children love her and she will be sadly missed. I just wanted to let you know because she hasn't been in school for a couple of weeks and the children don't know yet that she is leaving. I thought she would want to tell them herself when she is back in on Monday.

Have a lovely weekend everyone. Kind regards from Mrs Watts.