

Dear Families,

Last week we went for our Spring Walk around the village, I was very proud of the children and put some photos on Tapestry for you to see. They children also did their amazing flower paintings for the Mothers' Day card, I hope you enjoyed your special day.

On Wednesday this week we had a special visit from D:Side Dave, learning about who can help us and how we can help to keep ourselves safe and healthy. In PSHE we have been thinking about things we like doing and are good, as well as how we have improved over time. We thought about understanding that not everyone feels happy when we do and not everyone enjoys the same things. We thought about different people having different strengths to work, on as well as their own talents and skills. We also talked about managing our feelings when they feel angry or upset, who or what can help us and how we can learn to relax. We listened to some lovely relaxing music and revisited our bunny breaths.

In RE we have been remembering the life of Jesus as a man and a teacher. We shared the parables of the Sower and the Lost Sheep, The latter was lots of fun when, after listening to and talking about the story, we had to find 100 sheep in the garden. This also involved some tricky maths work when we put the sheep into groups of five to help with our counting calculation. The children then had a go at either re-telling the story with pictures or drawing the sheep for me. Their drawings depicted two groups and we used our maths skills again to see how the total number was split into two parts (either side of some tall grass in the middle of their picture). Next week we will be beginning preparations for Easter by sharing the Easter story. Many of them will already know elements of the story and even though I tell it in a child friendly way, the children do sometimes start thinking and talking about what happens after we die. 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. Most just take the subject in their stride.

We have played lots of maths games on the IWB, as well as through activities and our White Rose maths revision on numbers to ten. We have also started a White Rose Phase about three dimensional (3D) shapes, which can also be called 'solid shapes', as opposed to two dimensional (2D) 'flat shapes'. We have been thinking about identifying and naming a cube, cuboid, sphere, cone and cylinder and will continue into next week as our focus, although we will keep revisiting through the year.

I introduced the Class One Lending Library to the children this week and we prepared our library cards together. Next week, when everyone is in, they will get the chance to borrow their first book. The books will need to be returned to school, ideally the following week, for friends to borrow. However, if you do want to keep them for longer, just let me know so I'm not chasing the children up. They will be told it is their responsibility to look after the book and bring it back but they will of course need your help with that. The books are intended as an activity for you to share simply for pleasure and are not intended for the children to read themselves. They may want to do a bit of decoding independently or spot some GPC and tricky words (please don't let this stop their or your enjoyment though). They can choose a new book once the previous one has been returned.

In phonics over the last two weeks we have we have learned the final Phase Three GPC 'ure' and 'er' GPC 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. 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. There has been some lovely self-initiated writing in the classroom. 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. We are also having another big push on pencil grip, letter formation, finger spaces and controlling the size of letters – all easily forgotten when you're trying to remember a sentence and segment the sounds. Many are very close to having the

correct grip, many are using a static tripod grip (a three finger grasp, where the index finger, middle finger and thumb all work as one unit). The next stage for these children is the dynamic tripod grip, using only the thumb and index finger to grip the pencil, with the middle finger behind to support and the remaining two fingers in the palm. I reminded the children that they have a picture of the correct grip at the back of their phonics cards in their homework folders and they should all now know how to reset their grip, if it goes wrong, by placing the pencil on the table facing them and pinching it with thumb and index finger before tipping it backwards and supporting behind with the middle finger. Please do remind them and keep them practising the correct grip so they don't slip back or further consolidate old habits. Many of them are very close but do revert back to the static grip sometimes, they just need to be more consistent before I can give them their certificates.

Mrs Jarvis has given me the following information about her music lessons over the past two weeks: *We have been using Vivaldi's Spring Concerto to inspire us to use our imagination. We thought about all the things Vivaldi might have seen or heard as he was going on his walks. We closed our eyes and listened to Vivaldi's music, trying to imagine what he was trying to describe in his music. We particularly listened to the sections with birds having a conversation in the different violin parts, the stream getting bigger and bigger as it headed downhill and the spring rain and stormy weather. The children could hear these different sections in the music when we listened to the first movement. The children created a beautiful spring picture inspired by Vivaldi's music. They asked to bring them home to show you, so I hope you have enjoyed looking at them. This week we have been looking at the violin as the solo instrument in Vivaldi's Spring Concerto. We looked at the violin and thought about what it was made from and how to play it. The children learnt about the different ways of playing the violin and the different sounds it can make. We watched a demonstration clip and then we all had a go at pretending to play the violin. We listened to the different sounds the violins make in 'Spring' and what they made us think about. We thought it was very clever that the violin could make such different sounds. We finished off by learning about Nigel Kennedy and watching him play the violin in Vivaldi's Spring.*

Eid to all our families celebrating today and have a lovely and hopefully sunny weekend everyone. Kind regards from Mrs Watts.