

Newsletter



EYFS

The Reception children have all started reading phonics books and working on their blending and decoding skills. They love joining in with our daily phonics lessons and hearing different stories throughout the day. In Maths, Reception have been looking at developing spatial reasoning and shape by building train tracks, making 3D structures with shapes and using different objects to make pictures. They have also explored the make up of numbers 5-7, counting things that we can see, hear and counting on to a track.



Class 2 in Focus

It has been great to see all children in Class 2 showing such a great love of reading for pleasure. The children in the class have access to our own class library, which has a range of books from picture books, graphic novels, poetry, non-fiction books and chapter stories. As a class, the children take enjoyment over recommending books they have read to others. We are also lucky to have a larger school library, which promotes new authors to us and hosts a great choice of books.

In Geography, the children have built upon previous knowledge of the world and its continents to explore climate zones and climate change. We were able to relate this learning to the extreme weather conditions we have experienced recently, including

the flooding in Down Ampney.

We have also been able to make connections between our learning in Science and Geography as we undertook some Geographical fieldwork, detailed later in this edition.



Term x Clubs

Monday

Choir Club

Tuesday

Christmas Craft Club

Wednesday

Champions of Antarctica
Geography Club

Thursday

Christmas Craft Club

Friday

House Bake Offs

Spirituality Day

On Wednesday 23rd October Class 3 travelled to Hatherop School for a Spirituality morning. We talked about what Spirituality means and how it shows us that we need relationships with other people, nature around us, and the ability to understand that there are some questions that we cannot answer. We were encouraged to understand the 'wows; of life, the 'ows' of life and the 'nows of life. We did a series of activities to bring these things to life. We used a giant ball and tied ourselves up in knots to understand that we work better together. We used a drawing game to create our own creatures, and collected coloured leaves to turn into artwork about nature. We really enjoyed exploring the area with magnifying glasses to get up close to the natural things around us. It was lovely to see the children working in teams and taking time to appreciate the world around them.



Term Value: Courage

Each term we have a value for the whole school to focus on. This term it has been courage. Every day we see examples of children displaying this value. It can be in big things like representing the school at a sports tournament or seeing the house captains being brave enough to lead their teams. However, in every lesson we see children showing examples of courage such as by having a go at a something they feel is difficult or standing up and sharing their work to help others. Term 1 is also when we see many children showing courage as they start in reception, move to new classes or taking on more responsibilities as they enter year 6. We are proud of every little example of courage we see each day

and encourage each other to always try to be brave and have a go at whatever each day may bring.

Construction Club

In construction club this term we have been looking at different types of structures using a variety of resources. Each week there has been a different focus, for example, building bridges using paper and straws, constructing a recycling machine, making a tunnel that a Be-Bot could travel through and finally our end of term showstopper that showcased the children's individual interests. The children have worked collaboratively exploring various techniques needed when designing and building structures.



Eco Club

In Eco club this term, the pupils have been looking at the importance of looking after our environment, specifically through the study of nature. We made great use of our forest school area during our first session in order to capture the beauty of nature with photographs. The children took turns using the iPads to take pictures of flowers, plants, the pond and even a dragonfly. We then began to explore the ways we can help protect our environment. One idea the pupils came up with was an 'Ocean Cleaning Machine'. We utilised the 'Lego Wedo' in order to program and construct our inventions. We



finished our last session with a scavenger hunt – the challenge to find something in nature to spell out Down Ampney!

Stories

Each day, class one are reading a 'vote book'. During the morning, each child votes for a book they would like to read, and the book with the most votes will be read before lunch. The children enjoy the responsibility of voting on a book and using their maths skills to work out which book has the most votes.

We discuss the illustrations and story line as well as learning vocabulary, singing songs and playing games that relate to the story.

One of the games we play is called 'Freeze Frame'. The children show on their face how they think a character is feeling on a page of the book. During this game the member of staff will use words that the children may not be familiar with to describe how the children are feeling in their freeze frame, this is a great way for them to hear, understand and start to use words they may not have heard before to understand and describe emotions.

Some of our favourite songs to sing are Sleeping Animals and Row, Row, Row the Boat!



Sports

In multi-sports club this term, the pupils have been practising a variety of skills including footwork, throwing, catching, and balance through a range of activities. In the first few sessions, we used circuits that developed these skills, utilising the gym equipment in the hall. The pupils particularly enjoyed coming up with their own challenges, such as balancing bean bags on their heads to enhance the difficulty of an activity. The children loved working together in teams as it meant they 'all got to have a go.' We finished the final session with the 'Beep Test' in which the children worked together in threes or individually to race against time and beat the beep!



In sports club this term, we have centred our activities particularly around netball. Our initial sessions focused on throwing and catching, using games such as 'Save the space' to reinforce the importance of accurate passing within the game. The children had to prevent the netball from landing on

their side of the court by working together to catch the ball. The students also enjoyed developing their defending skills through a challenging game where they had to make 5 safe passes without having the ball being intercepted. However, one of our favourite games to play involved shooting the netball through the hoop. We challenged ourselves to get as many shots in as we can before the person in front of us could catch up!



Some pupils from year 5 and 6 attended the Bee Netball afternoon last week at Kingshill School in Cirencester. The session included a wide range of drills and activities, run by the year 9 sports leaders from the secondary school. The children had great fun practising their passing, shooting and defending skills through these games. The children enjoyed these games so much we incorporated them into our warmups at sports club! The pupils enjoyed working in a team and it was great to see so many young people taking the initiative to run these games. The pupils that attended were awarded with a certificate, sticker and wristband



that highlighted one of the School Games values; 'Passion'.

Subject in Focus: Geography Fieldwork

As part of their Geography learning, children undertake regular fieldwork. Fieldwork engages children with real-world learning, connects them to their local environment, creates memories and helps develop a curiosity about the world around them. In Key Stage 1, children explore their immediate surroundings; the school grounds and local area that can easily be accessed on foot. In Key Stage Two, children go further afield and explore a wider area that relates to their lives. At Down Ampney, we have developed a progression of fieldwork skills and techniques to allow children to learn new skills and practise them over subsequent years. You can read our fieldwork progression document on our website on the geography page.

Here is a snapshot of some of the fieldwork we have done over the last year.



As part of their Geography unit on the local area, Class 1 have been looking at OS maps and identifying the symbols used. We then drew our own maps of Down Ampney, following our walk



around the village, adding symbols to represent significant places.

Children in Class 2 undertook some fieldwork related to their Science unit on Sound. They asked the question, How do the noise levels change around the school? Children set out to record the sound levels in different parts of our school environments. They used

dataloggers to measure the sound in decibels and recorded their results in a table. Bar charts were then used as a way of showing results.



KS2 asked the question, How do we map small areas? The children decided to investigate the location of headstones in the churchyard and whether they were organised in particular ways. Using a 30 metre centre line, children measured and recorded headstone distances using scale diagrams. They then used Ordnance survey maps to find the grid references of churches in the local area.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Monday 4 Nov - Bring in donations of second-hand uniform
- Tuesday 5 Nov - KS2 webinar with Joseph Coelho as part of the year of reading
- Thursday 7 Nov - Class 2 Stroud Book Festival Time Travellers Webinar
- Thursday 7 Nov - Class 3 Stroud Book Festival - lifts needed to and from Deer Park
- Thursday 8 Nov - Year 1 and 2 Stroud Book Festival - lifts needed to and from Deer Park



Academy Update

We are on track for the academy conversion to still take place on January 1st. Progress this month has included Mrs Gray attending Corinium Education Trust leadership meetings, finance teams working with Mrs Woodruffe to ensure smooth transition of purchasing and payments, behind the scenes legal work around transferring the lease of school and land from GCC and the Diocese to the Corinium Education Trust, and teachers from each school within the trust meeting regarding subject leadership and curriculum development. It continues to be a very exciting step forward for the school.

Year of Reading and Embedding Vocabulary joint projects

As part of our ongoing inter school collaboration with other schools in the South Cotswold School Development Group all staff have just completed some amazing training from Chris Such about reading fluency. The children will also be joining other children from local schools for a variety of in person and online book festival events next term. We are also about to launch our embedding vocabulary project and will be holding a parents' information evening about this later next term.