



## HEADTEACHER NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2021



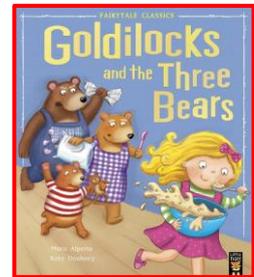
Imagine Believe Persevere Achieve

It has been a really exciting term in school. With parent consultations in person, parents in for Year 5 and Year 6 curriculum work sharing, as well as Foundation Stage, Year 1, Nativity and Choir performances, it has been great welcoming families in, in as safe and sensible way as we can.

I will update on the Covid 19 situation around schools later in the Newsletter, but first wanted to share some lovely updates about what the children have been working on in class.

### FOUNDATION STAGE

We have had such a fun term in Foundation Stage. Our topic this term was "Terrific Tales" and we enjoyed reading stories such as Goldilocks and The Three Bears, The Gingerbread Man and The Three Pigs. On our Fairy tale journey, we stepped into many different roles. We became detectives when we followed clues to find the Gingerbread Man, designers when we created a new chair for Baby Bear and fabulous team players when we all worked together to create our Christmas Nativity. We are so proud of all the children and they definitely deserve a well-earned break. We can't wait until next term when we explore some of the amazing animals in the world.



### YEAR 1

Another amazing term in year one that has seen the children continue to develop across all aspects of their school life. We have seen the children growing in confidence with their reading, whether it is with first steps or now reading to the whole year group. This improved confidence we hope you are seeing at home and have to thank you all for the time you have been putting supporting your children's reading at home. Maths has seen the children apply their skills learnt with smaller numbers on slightly bigger ones and also a trip into the worlds of 3D and 2D shapes.



As a year we have also continued our exploration of the world around us, looking at algorithms in computing and sounds and voice in music. We also explored the world of animals, finding out and creating reports and books on bats, as well as, learning about animals that hibernate and how animals survive in frozen ponds. Low Energy Day had us in the dark while finding out about how we can help the world and also working on our DT skills making windmills.

The whole term has finished with a fantastic festival of festive singing which the children were amazing at and so many of you were able to come and see. The children worked very hard and deserve a long rest before we kick it all off again in the New Year.

### YEAR 2

Year 2 have continued to learn about Brazil. We have developed our understanding of the impact that deforestation is having on the native tribes that live in the Amazon Rainforest and how that is now having a negative impact on the whole world. We have also learnt that this is causing the loss of hundreds of habitats for the animals in Brazil, which means that lots of animals are now becoming endangered.

Over the last two weeks we have become travel agents and have used Ipad to video our travel guides to Brazil. We have included facts about the country, had a go at being weather for-casters and even included some crucial travel information such as; it takes over 11 hours to fly from London to Brazil! Some of the children have said that they were nervous about recording their programme but have really enjoyed it and definitely want to do it again.



Harry said "I've enjoyed learning about the different places in Brazil and learning about the big Statue of Jesus, it looks like it would be a good happy place to live".

We are continuing our Read, Write, Inc programme across Key Stage One and the children are making good progress in both reading and writing.

From all of the Year Two staff we wish you a very Merry Christmas!

### YEAR 3

Year 3 have just finished reading Pugs of the Frozen North and have enjoyed learning about North Europe, especially The Arctic and Norway. We have produced our own travel scrapbooks all about Norway where we have published our writing and included illustrations to accompany the text. Our chalk pastel art work has culminated into a picture of The Northern Lights which we will use as our calendars. The iPads have been used to learn how to programme using Scratch and the children have learnt new skills whilst programming. The children have enjoyed learning about the different instruments in the orchestra and listening to The Nutcracker Suite. We've even been out to the library on the mini-bus and had The Dogs Trust to visit us in school. What an exciting term!



### YEAR 4

It's been another busy term for Year 4. The children have continued to explore our concepts of responsibility, sustainability and change, thinking about how we can enjoy wildlife around us responsibly as part of our science work 'Living Things and their Habitats'. They have visited Capstone Country Park to learn about how the park is looked after and managed, observed wildlife we are fortunate enough to have visit our school grounds, and have taken part in a visit from a local RSPB representative to inspire their DT project making small-scale bird hides during which they learned about how to make stable structures. Well done, Year 4!



## YEAR 5

This term, Year 5 have continued reading 'There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom'. We really enjoyed this story and were relieved to discover that Bradley had learnt to control his behaviour and finally earn his gold star at school. After finishing off our North America topic, we moved onto our Science lessons. The children have conducted many experiments involving friction, water resistance and gravity. Recently, we had great fun making our lanterns for the Glow Festival held in Maidstone. We're looking forward to seeing the children's work illuminated in the night's sky during the Winter break.



## YEAR 6

Year 6 have continued their explore project by reading the book Holes. They have also created some amazing art using pastel techniques. Their DT for the term was to create a weather vane using wood, saws, drills and screws! An exhibition of Year 6 work was held earlier this term and the parent feedback was extremely positive.



Well done, Year 6!

## SOME FRIENDLY REMINDERS – DOGS, CARS AND PLAY EQUIPMENT

We have had a couple of our children arriving at school quite shaken and scared, because they have been barked at or growled at by dogs as they arrive at school. It would not be my advice to bring dogs on the school run, let alone if they are growling at children. Lots of children love and have pet dogs, others get scared of them and we need to look after all our pupils.

Can I remind parents parking in local roads, to do so as sensibly and safely as they can. We have had reports of driveways being blocked and pavements being unpassable due to cars being abandoned at the start and end of the day. I appreciate that it is not an option to pull up at the school gate and parking is needed, but we would rather people were doing the right thing by local residents and making it possible for all families to get to school safely.

The children know they should not be playing on the play equipment before or after school but it helps if parents remind them. They get plenty of time on the equipment during the school day and should not be using them at this time. This is also the case for the equipment at the back of the school for any pre school age children. Thank you for your help in these matters.

## FACEBOOK PAGE

A reminder that we have a very informative and active Facebook page. This keeps parents up to date with latest events and happenings in the school and Wow! Moments related to special days and achievements of the pupils. We will continue to look at other ways we can keep parents informed over the next term.

## SCHOOL CHOIR

Thank you to our really brilliant school choir, who have helped to brighten up Christmas. They were amazing last week at the Church, singing to our Dementia Cafe friends, as arranged with AgeUK and I was very proud of them. Since then, they have sung outside and also been part of two performances in the school nativity play.

Thank you to Mrs Orridge for her hard work in supporting our keen singers and for Mrs Miller and Mrs Stubbs for helping to put the performances together.



### **A Message from The Chair of Governors**

Firstly, I'd like to publicly thank Mr Moir and his team for keeping the school operating through what has been a very challenging term. It is such a difficult balance between trying to keep life normal and consistent for the children, ensuring they can enjoy a full experience at this magical time of year, whilst making sure they, and the staff stay as safe as is possible given how persistent and infectious this virus is. It only seems like yesterday when I sat and wrote to you all just before the end of last December, explaining how staff shortages due to Coronavirus had made it all but impossible to keep much of the school open. I'm proud to be able to say that this last term, our attendance has been better than we'd expect in a "normal" year. All of that of course isn't possible without your support, so I'd also like to thank all of you for helping us stay safe and keeping our children and staff well. I've seen lots on the school Facebook page about the fantastic celebrations and concerts that have happened, as well as some of the brilliant work that your children have done.



**WE ARE RECRUITING A  
NEW PARENT GOVERNOR  
– CAN YOU HELP?**

We have a vacancy for a parent governor to join our team.

We are looking for a committed parent governor who can bring energy, new ideas and enthusiasm to help drive the school forward.

We would especially welcome applications from parents with a background in finance, accounting or premises management. No prior knowledge of the education system is needed.

- Do you have an open and enquiring mind?
- Are you able to challenge and hold the school to account as a critical friend?
- Would you like the opportunity to support your school community and improve the educational outcomes for all our pupils?
- Can you commit to attending meetings and visiting the school?

If so, please contact us via the school office to find out more about the role!

**Mr Terry Wildman  
Chair of Governors**

### **WEBSITE**

In January, the website will change! The content will remain the same, but we will have a new look website, which we think will be much more user friendly, look more modern and be far easier to use on phones. The website will be fully compliant and contain most information needed to answer any initial questions about the school as well as include contact details and a helpful 'Who's Who'. The web address will remain the same.

### **COVID 19**

As parents will be fully aware, Coronavirus is once again severely impacting upon our daily life. As someone who has had to self isolate for the past few days with my family due to Covid in our household and therefore missed some of my favourite events of the school year, at Christmas, it has hit home to me, how present and persistently frustrating it can be. However, feeling frustrated is not a reason to stop doing the right thing in order to keep others safe. We have been really careful in the school to keep the show on the road for the children and wherever possible their families, by doing all we can behind the scenes to be sensible, cautious and safe.

A combination of good judgement, risk assessing and probably some much deserved luck, after last year, has meant that the impact of Covid on Parkwood, has been limited during this term and numbers of confirmed cases have remained low compared to other schools, locally and nationally.

Advice to schools in terms of testing, has changed. But it has changed with very little time before the end of term, and involves the use of lateral flow tests, which aren't always available. As the new term approaches and given the many further changes which could happen between now and the new year, I will fully update parents at the start of January on anything and everything you need to be aware of, in regard to Covid and the school. As ever we will follow Government Advice and wherever possible, take on board the local context when making decisions. I want to thank our families for being so supportive of the school and making sensible decisions for their own families, especially over the past few weeks.

### **MRS BOREHAM, MISS MOORE AND MRS CROSFIL**

We would like to say thank you and give all our best wishes to Mrs Boreham as she prepares for promotion to a new role at a local secondary school. I know she will be brilliant!

We would also like to say congratulations to Miss Moore and Mrs Crosfill on the recent additions to their families. I'm sure it will give both families a really special Christmas.

### **CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS**

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank parents, the staff, governors and especially our pupils, for all their support and hard work over the past term. From all of us at Parkwood, we want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and a safe, relaxing and healthy winter holiday.

**Mr A Moir**   
**Headteacher**



### **DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR**

17 <sup>th</sup> December	Last Day of Term
4 <sup>th</sup> January	Staff Development Day – No Children in School
5 <sup>th</sup> January	Term 3 – Children back to School