



9<sup>th</sup> October 2020

# Pre-Prep News

## Dear Parents and Guardians,

I would like to start with a thank you to you all for your patience and flexibility at drop off and pick up. As Giles Lane is being used by Junior School and Pre-Prep it is getting busier. We also sometimes have some staff cars parked in odd places which does cause a little confusion. We are working on making sure this doesn't continue.

We have had another super week of creative learning. All staff are developing children's curiosity by following their interests, using imaginative resources and having time to talk about what they see around them.

We have Teams parent consultations next week and you should have an invitation already or in the next couple of days. This will give parents a 1:1 chance for a discussion about their child's work and hopefully see some of their books on screen.

Thank you for your Harvest donations, they will be well received by Catching Lives. I hope you liked the Harvest presentations - we had a lot of fun putting them together!

At lunch time today we had a farewell (socially distanced) for Viv Rose who has worked at the school for 35 years. The Pre-Prep children know her as the lovely lady who served our lunches. She retired in the Summer for a well-deserved rest. The children presented her with beautiful cards, chocolates and flowers. We wish her well.

We have some places for holiday club at half term so if anyone is still thinking about it, even for just a couple of days entertainment, let me know!

Just a reminder that if you child has a temperature of over 37.5 with no explanation such as tonsillitis you need to arrange for a Covid test and obviously keep them and any siblings off school until you receive a negative test result. I believe there is an efficient walk in testing centre at Rutherford College at the University.

Have a great weekend.

Head of Pre-prep



## Ladybirds

As the school tractors are a source of great distraction every day when we pass them, by the pavilion, we decided we needed to find out more about them. We looked closely at the school tractors and discussed all the details such as tread on the tyres and why they need it, wing mirrors, number plates, different shaped lights, how many seats they have, how they work etc. The children were very interested and came up with lots of great answers. They then painted tractors and trailers and thought about what would go in their trailer. We wanted to make a very long line of trailers following a tractor, as it linked to our maths work, and tried printing. The children each drew a picture of a trailer on to a polystyrene tile, pressing firmly and then we used printing ink and rollers to create a print. When we peeled the paper off the children were delighted to see their picture. We then put the trailers together in a long line on a zig zag book for display. We also made tractors out of junk materials with the children choosing which details to include and thinking about how best to stick the boxes together. For our cooking session this week we made chocolate tractor shaped biscuits which I believe were very tasty.

In maths we continued learning to write numbers to 10 and many enjoyed the farming counting activity. The class looked at long and short and tall and short. They made a really long line of conkers in the Ladybirds garden, threaded long and short strings of beads, sorted the wild animals into long and short and completed a beanstalk height cutting activity. All of the class had a good understanding of the terms long and short and tall and short.

In literacy we spent time choosing different story books and reading them, discussing the pictures and story. We thought about rhyming words for different farm animals including real and nonsense words. Using the farm dressing up clothes we encouraged the children to make up farm-based stories with each other. This as you can imagine was very funny. It is so lovely watching how friendships are developing and how their language is developing.

We have spent time outside collecting more conkers, looking at the changing colours of the leaves, going for a baby buggy walk and splashing in puddles. As well as watching tractors! A super week, well done Ladybirds.



## Honey Bees

The Honey Bees have had a very busy week and have continued with their learning about bees; in particular the life cycle of bees. We have shared non-fiction books to learn new facts, watched film clips about bees and then made our own bee life cycle books in class by sequencing the pictures in order. The children were set the challenge to design their own bee pictures by cutting out the bee shape and then measuring the paper before cutting out its stripes. The children demonstrated wonderful manipulative skills and measuring skills to ensure the stripes fitted properly. On Thursday the children had a wonderful time sampling different types of honey. They were fascinated to discover that some honey is runny and others are set, and that all were different colours. The children enjoyed spreading their own toast and then choosing which honey to try, and all of the children much enjoyed the munching and sticky fingers involved! We also decided as a group that one way we could try and help the bees was to plant some flower seeds for next year; and on Friday we did just that! Wellies and coats on we ventured out to plant some 'bee friendly seeds bombs' in various planting beds around the garden and we very much hope to see the bees attracted to them next year.

In maths the week began with the children learning about different times of the day and differentiating pictures and activities between morning, afternoon, evening and night-time. We then began learning about the days of the week and have been reciting them in order. The children all made a 'days of the week hanger' to take home and practise moving the peg onto the next day each morning to help them learn the days. The children also began learning and using positional language and much fun was had moving 'buzz buzz' the bee into, under, next to, in front of and behind a chair.

In literacy the children have recapped their learning of the phoneme and grapheme 'p' and have also learnt the phoneme and grapheme 'i', along with the high frequency words 'it and 'is'. They have practised writing each grapheme in different ways; enjoying the sand trays, rainbow writing, white boards and even beginning to write them on a line.

We enjoyed our first wet Forest School on Wednesday! The children were fascinated to learn about ripples in water as we passed the pond just as an acorn fell from an overhanging oak tree into the pond! The children had a fabulous time enjoying learning how to whittle elder wood in order to make beads to thread; and you could have heard an acorn drop from their silent focused work! Afterwards the children took the offcuts of leafy elder stems to use as brooms to sweep up in their den! It was wonderful to see the children working so imaginatively using very simple natural materials but having such fun doing so. We all then enjoyed a warm snack taking cover under the trees from the rain before heading back to the car park for pick-up.

Thank you, Honey Bees, for another amazing week.





## Cricket's

The Cricket class looked like a toy shop from the 1980s this week. The children explored all types of toys from the past and the forces that are used to make them work. Some toys they recognised and others, they were mesmerised by. Popular items were the Etch-a-sketch, magnetic puzzles and wooden puppets. The children watched clips of Victorian children's toys and made comparisons with their own today. They wrote descriptions about their favourite toys and drew them. In maths the class have been ordering, sequencing and estimating amounts. They made reasonable estimates and then counted sets of objects to find the actual totals. This became harder with larger amounts. In art, the children have learnt to create different shades of colours and marvelled at all the range of shades they mixed with paints. They explored effects and shading in computing and learnt how to amend their work and save and print it too. In DT, the children used thick card to create a car chassis and measured and cut axles (safely using hacksaws) and attached wheels. They are now eager to add more details. The Nick Sharratt books have inspired the children to read aloud to one another and predict language. This has been wonderful to listen to.





## Dragonflies

The Dragonfly topic has focused on "Castles" this week - we have learnt about the defensive features of castles, pouring over non-fiction books and watching information videos. The children have each written their own non-fiction book about castles - numbering the pages clearly and making sure to include a contents page; they are now working hard to populate their book with interesting fun facts.

We are using our knowledge to construct our own model castles. Boxes and tubes were carefully selected and attached using a range of fixing techniques - including the hot glue gun! The children made their models stronger and stiffer using paper and glue and are ready to add defensive features - such as arrow slits, battlements, portcullis and drawbridges - what a fun project!

We have been doing lots of Science investigations this week - exploring the properties of materials and recording the results in tables. We were able to use this information to decide appropriate materials to make armour and build castles.

In Maths we have been ordering very large numbers on unmarked and marked number lines - this has been quite challenging - but was particularly fun to do in the playground with chalk! We have also been using and  $<$  and  $>$  signs to compare numbers.

