



ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL

CANTERBURY



Pre-Prep Newsletter

Michaelmas 2020

Dear Parents,

It is great to have all the children back in school after the half term holiday. I hope you and your children have had some time together relaxing and making memories despite the current situation. The classes have settled back into school well and are already enjoying their new topics.

Over half term a huge amount of work was carried out on all the outdoor learning sites across the school. Mr Kincaid the Head of Outdoor learning in the Senior school organised for a giant tepee to be erected on the meadow below the music school which can be used by the whole school. Mrs Burden the Forest School leader from the Junior school brought in some big tractors and diggers from her farm and dug out the pond, created an island with a bridge to it and an area for pond dipping as well as levelling off some of the land. Mrs George our Pre-Prep Forest school leader also cut back some of the plants, put in a see-saw, mud kitchen table and stepping logs. The Junior and Pre-Prep sites now look amazing being much more open and well resourced. We are very grateful to all those that have worked so hard to make these outdoor resources so special and accessible by all classes in Pre-Prep. As you will read in the class information, we have already spent a lot of time in these sites this week.

We had a great deal of fun at the Pre-Prep Holiday Club. We have hunted for dragons, dressed up as pirates, made beautiful nature wreaths, rolled in mud at the Forest School site and played with a huge variety of toys to name a few activities. Miss George did an amazing job of planning all the themed days and fun activities. We are now planning for the next one in December. We will be running a Holiday Club from Friday 18th - Tuesday 22nd December, if possible, taking into account the Covid situation then. All being well I will send out a booking form nearer the time. There will be no holiday club provision after 22nd December taking into account the school being closed for a week, bank holidays and first aid training for all Pre-Prep staff. The Lent term starts on Wednesday 6th January.

As I'm sure you can imagine it is really important that for many reasons the school staff are protected as far as is possible from coronavirus and we would appreciate your support in keeping a close eye on your children's health and keeping socially distanced at drop off and pick up. Please can you help your child to get in and out of your car but then socially distance from staff as temperatures are taken and hand sanitiser is administered. Please can you return to your car as soon as possible. Some staff may be wearing masks at this time. Thank you in advance for this support.

Please can I remind you all that we have some vulnerable children in the Pre-Prep and parents who, for many reasons, don't want their or their children's details shared with anyone on social media including WhatsApp. Please can you be aware of this and take every step you can to protect our children.

We have a few dates for your diaries:

- **Wednesday 18th November** Kic theatre drama session for each class, Covid precautions will be taken in line with our school's risk assessment. There will be a small charge for this session which will be added to your bill.
- **Tuesday 1st December** Flu vaccinations for Honey Bees, Crickets and Dragonfly classes. You will be sent letters about this from the local health authority.
- **w/b 8th December** Nativity plays. We are planning to go ahead with Nativity plays as normally as possible and will film them so you can watch at home.
- **Wednesday 17th December** term ends at 1.00pm

Best Wishes

Julia

Ladybirds

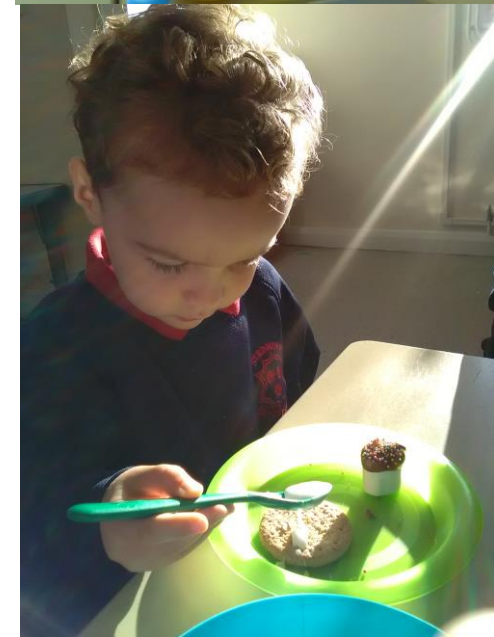
We have packed a lot into this first week back after the holidays. We have started our new topic of celebrations by learning about The Gunpowder Plot in an age appropriate way! We have listened to the story of Guy Fawkes, visited the school cellar to imagine what it would have been like, watched a film of a firework display, made 3D rocket fireworks and designed invitations to a firework party in class, where we watched a firework story and listened to a firework song. We made some firework food to eat at our party with breadsticks dipped in chocolate and covered in sprinkles to represent sparklers and iced biscuits to be fireworks.

On Thursday afternoon, to support our topic work and because it was National Outdoor Learning Day, we went down to the new giant school tepee where Mr Kincaid, Head of Outdoor Learning in the Senior school, made us a fire inside it. We observed strict safety rules to keep away from the fire but the children loved watching Mr Kincaid start the fire and build it up in a pyramid shape. Once the fire was going Miss George and I toasted some (actually, lots!) of marshmallows for the children and staff to eat. We put a pan of popcorn kernels on the fire and heard lots of explosions in the pan as the popcorn cooked. We also had some hot chocolate to drink. Mr Kincaid showed us a tripod that he had made with the older children earlier in the day and used it to boil up some water. We had a wonderful time and came back full, tired and smelling of smoke.

On Friday after we had found out about James I in the Gunpowder Plot (the children loved his gold shoes in the picture we had of him) we talked about other Kings and Queens especially Queen Elizabeth II. We made crowns and dressed up as Kings and Queens and imagined what it would be like to be one.

In class the children have been learning about cylinders, cones and pyramids which they are now pretty good at identifying in the environment. We have started some work on phonics looking at the initial sounds of their names. They have also greatly enjoyed the new orange playdough Miss George has made and at the beginning of the week made lots of pumpkins.

A busy, tiring and brilliant week. Well done Ladybirds!



Honeybees

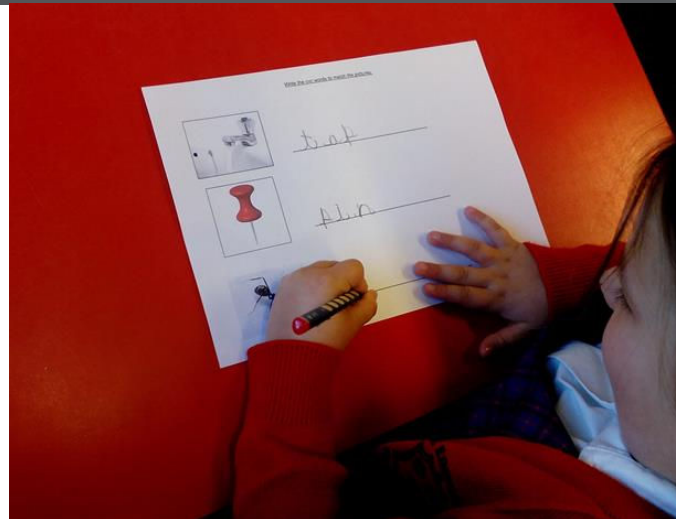
What a wonderful first week back at school! The Honey Bees have begun the second half of term with the topic 'All About Autumn'. This week we have explored what Autumn means and looked at the different seasons. We have shared several non-fiction books to further their knowledge, along with the wonderful story 'Fletcher and the Falling Leaves' by Julia Rawlinson which really got the children talking about the changes that take place in Autumn. The children enjoyed collecting large sticks to turn into wonderful autumn tree pictures. They then used watercolour paints to make an autumn colour wash before hot gluing their 'tree' onto the paper. Once dry the children then decorated their 'trees' with autumn coloured tissue paper, conkers and smaller sticks to represent an autumn scene. The pictures are quite magnificent and all unique.

Thursday saw us celebrating the national Outdoor Learning Day and Bonfire Night - and what a gorgeous day it was! After P.E we visited our Forest School site and lit our first fire at the fire pit. This was incredibly exciting for the children as we have spent weeks building up their fire safety knowledge in order to get to this point. They watched the fire 'take hold' and were even more fascinated to watch and hear the water boiling in the Kelly kettle. Of course, we stayed long enough for a warm drink before returning to school for lunch. In the afternoon we went on a seed collection hunt to gather sprouting acorns ready to plant. We really hope that we might be able to grow some oak and horse chestnut saplings that can be planted at school for future generations.

Forest School earlier in the week was great fun as the children explored the new resources that had been placed at the site over half term: (log see saw, new den and a natural balancing walkway).

In literacy this week the children have learnt a new grapheme 'm' along with new high frequency word 'I'. They have now finished their first set of graphemes and we recapped them all, with the children doing some wonderful independent writing of cvc words to match pictures they were given.

In maths we have focused on measuring and size differentiation. Lots of practical activities with the children being introduced to new vocabulary, such as 'wider than/narrower than'. The children also explored capacity, using terminology such as 'empty', 'half full' and 'full'.





Cricket's

It was wonderful to see the Crickets return after their half term break and hear all about their adventures such as being mermaids, visiting castles and new pet hamsters. The sock challenge was an immense success and the children proudly presented their characters to one another, discussed their joining techniques and evaluated their finished puppets. Well done all of you, you have used lots of skills including sewing and plaiting! They are all displayed in the classroom and being admired. We started off our senses topic with touch and the children explored a wide range of materials and sorted them according to their textures. Using a canvas and Modroc, the children created different textures and loved manipulating the wet Modroc. Once dry, they painted their canvases using autumn shades that they had seen on autumn leaves and tree trunks. In English, the children learnt about similes and created sentences to describe and make comparisons. In maths, the children used their knowledge of positional language during outdoor learning and labelled areas in the Pre-Prep. They also compared teen and –ty numbers and represented these using Numicon and bead strings. This helped them to begin to see the place value of digits and tens and ones. The class heard about the life of Louis Braille and discovered how he had an accident when he was a young boy. This resulted in him going blind and later on he invented a code of raised dots to represent letters so that he and other blind people could read. The Crickets wrote their names by following braille and used raised sticky dots.





Dragonflies

The Dragonflies have had a very exciting week! We "travelled back in time" to 1605 and learnt about King James I and Guy Fawkes. The children re-enacted the Gunpowder Plot in a drama session and then wrote letters pretending they were Guy Fawkes hiding in the cellar with his 36 barrels of gunpowder, waiting for the king to open the Houses of Parliament, finishing the letters by signing them with a quill and ink! Later, we used the computers to make fantastic firework pictures and we created wonderful bonfire pictures with different fiery adjectives in each flame.

As we were learning about the Gunpowder Plot, we had a wonderful Science Workshop with Dr Horn and Mr Wright from the Senior School. Although we were unable to visit Dr Horn in the science labs as they are in a different bubble, Dr Horn resourcefully relocated in the Pre-Prep bubble and arranged some socially-distant experiments to delight the children. First, he showed the class how to make fireworks different colours using chemicals - we really loved it when he squirted copper on the flames and turned the flames green! The iron, magnesium and zinc created very exciting sparkles and flashes. Then, the children were all given their own sparkler - and lots of them immediately recognised the sparklers contained magnesium - super scientists! Finally, Mr Wright set off some very exciting rockets - and the children watched the fireworks fly into the sky, the class shouting out the chemicals used to make the exciting colours. We drew quite a crowd and everyone was very impressed with the clever Dragonflies.

