



ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL CANTERBURY



Pre-Prep Newsletter

Michaelmas 2020

Dear Parents

The Pre-Prep staff hope you are all keeping safe and well and are finding ways to cope with this difficult situation. At school we have your wonderful children to keep us busy and cheer us up if we feel low but we are mindful that there are unprecedented stresses on all families at the moment. It makes me sad that I can't have regular conversations with you all but I am here if you ever want a chat.

We have been creative with pallets recently which we have used to create a mud kitchen area in the playground, a table for the Forest School area and the Ladybirds garden and a bus for the children to play on. We have been recycling in the Ladybirds classroom finding wooden tables, then shortening the legs, and chairs to replace our older plastic ones. We have used a large cable reel to make a nature table and smaller ones to make into toadstool seats. (We are looking for a couple more wooden tables and a few children's wooden chairs if anyone has any lying around!)

We celebrated St Edmund's Day this week in the traditional way of eating doughnuts and drinking hot chocolate! We also watched a service created virtually by the Chaplain, Steve Bennet. The children enjoyed watching themselves singing in the service.

As the cold weather is definitely coming if anyone needs a school hat, scarf or coat I have a few in the second hand uniform cupboard. Just email me with what you need and I will sort this out for you.

Best Wishes

Julia





Ladybirds

This week has been all about birthday celebrations. As it was St Edmund's birthday on Monday we decided that we would have a party for Edmund Bear at the end of the week. We cut out triangles to make some bunting, designed and made cards for Edmund, printed some wrapping paper, made a party hat, made a bear cake and wrapped up a little present for him chosen by the children, which was a smaller bear friend for him to play with. This all came together in a party on Thursday where we ate the party food, wore our hats, played party games including hunt the bear and musical statues and went home with a balloon and party bag present from Edmund Bear. As you can imagine the children had a wonderful time. They also talked about their own or family birthday parties, some bringing in photos to show us.

Apart from birthdays they have been learning about 'today, tomorrow and yesterday.' This can be very hard to explain to a 3 year old but after discussing this each day they started to understand these descriptions of time.

We have continued to work on; pencil skills, in writing our names; phonics, saying each letter sound of their name; and maths, counting 1:1 carefully pointing to each object so we don't miss any out.

In music the class are becoming more confident to sing in front of each other replying to Mrs Butler's singing. I have to join in as well and am becoming more tuneful, I think. The children really like the 3 bear's song when they have to sing and move in time with the tambourine. You can ask them how baby bear, mummy bear and daddy bear move and see if they can show you.

In our Kic theatre drama workshop we acted out different aspects of a birthday celebration. This was the first time the Ladybirds had met Ian but he put them at ease and their imaginations flowed. They all had a great time showing super listening and drama skills.





Honeybees

This week the Honey Bees have had a wonderful time further exploring autumn colours. We began the week by celebrating St Edmund's Day on Monday. The children very much enjoyed watching the virtual service and joining in with the singing of the Pre-Prep prayer, 'Under and Over,' before giving St Edmunds a hearty 'three cheers' (helped by 3 of the Honey Bees who were videoed cheering in the playground!). Because the children had so loved learning the prayer, we made some 3D 'over and Under' pictures on Tuesday using Autumn colours. The children worked so hard to weave paper under and over on a base sheet and secure the 3D structures using sellotape. The results were simply amazing creations.

We then explored the book, Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert, which has the most amazing pictures of autumn leaves within the story. This book then inspired much artwork, including some fabulous 'leaf people' created from leaves and other natural materials collected at Forest School. The children are delighted with their leaf people and they will be displayed for everyone to admire. The children had great fun finger-painting autumn leaves and rolling conkers in paint to create some abstract art pieces too.

On Wednesday the children enjoyed their first Kic Theatre drama session this academic year, and what a fabulous time they had further exploring autumn with Ian. The children explored what autumn means in terms of weather, got 'dressed up' in wet weather gear and went for a 'puddle splashing' together - of course pretending to splash each other! The children then pretended to be various hibernating animals before acting out being fireworks at a bonfire party. It was a joy to see the children working so imaginatively.

Forest School was a sapling planting session. The sun shone for us as we decided where to plant the rowan, silver birch and wild cherry saplings. The children learnt how to make a 'v' shaped hole, to plant the sapling and then cane and cover with tree guards to protect from the greedy rabbits! Thank you Honey Bee helpers, and The Woodland Trust for being so generous with the free saplings.

In Literacy this week the children have been continuing to work on the graphemes learnt last week, learning how to write them cursively and to then use them independently when writing cvc words. The children have also learnt the phoneme and grapheme 'o' plus the new high frequency word 'no'. It is so lovely to see the children using their phonic skills to write independently.

In Maths this week the children have been working hard to identify a wider range of 2D shapes and to use appropriate language to describe whether they have straight sides, curved edges, corners and how many of each. We have had fun playing games matching shapes to descriptions, making straight sided shapes with lolly sticks and cutting out shapes to make dinosaur pictures.

Well done Honey Bees, another busy week and lots of hard work!





Crickets

On Monday, we started our week by celebrating St Edmunds day. This year we couldn't attend the Colyer-Ferguson theatre as we usually do, but Chaplain compiled a service for the school community, to watch on our class Smartboards. He told us about St Edmund's life and the history of the school. We watched ourselves performing 'Under and over' with the other members of the Pre Prep and sang 'hip, hip hooray'! Finally we had our doughnuts and hot chocolate. Throughout this week the Crickets followed their noses up the stairs to the classroom. Each day, they were greeted by herbs, spices and foods. The children drew smells they liked (jelly) and disliked (garlic and onions) and used pestle and mortars to grind cardamom pods and mustard seeds. They compared many herbs by their colours, textures and smells. Rosemary was a favourite that felt prickly like a hedgehog, sage felt like felt and cinnamon sticks looked like branches on a tree. Ian, from Kic theatre visited us on Wednesday and we had a fantastic time using Drama to explore all our senses. We created an enormous nostril and ear canal and used our hands and feet to represent different events like breathing, sound and sneezing! In RE, the children found out about Jewish special places and features of a synagogue. In maths, we have been solving addition problems using Numicon and our bead strings. We have also been telling the time by using clocks to recognise o'clock and half past. We are continuing to check our writing for capital letters and full stops. The children are still excitedly suggesting which Quentin Blake books to read aloud as a class and are enjoying his humour and illustrations. We have been very impressed by the class's sewing skills as they have been creating patterns on binka material to make lavender bags. Fantastic perseverance!





Dragonflies

The Dragonflies have been measuring! We are getting very skilled at estimating length and using rulers to measure to check. We have also revised positional language (under, over, behind etc.) as well as quarter and half turns and even LEFT and RIGHT! We had a super time being "robots" in the playground and following Mrs Sherwin's instructions (see photo). Please keep working on left and right at home too - it's very tricky!

We have all written AMAZING "Through the Wardrobe" stories - inspired by the class book "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe". The children focused on adjectives to make their stories atmospheric and exciting - we enjoyed reading them to our friends and have made "wardrobes" to put the stories inside. We are really enjoying listening to The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe at the end of each school day; please don't watch the film until we have finished the book!

Our topic this week has focused on Medieval Transport - which is a wonderful excuse to experiment with boats. We devised our own science investigations, making clever predictions and then testing different materials to see which would float. We recorded the results carefully and used them to decide the best materials to make our own toy boats.

The children were able to sort transport into "olden days" and "modern". We had a fun Drama Workshop and everyone enjoyed acting out different forms of transport - from horses to aeroplanes. Later, we used the photos of the class pretending to be different vehicles to create a clever history timeline to show how transport had changed. It was a wonderful opportunity to share our knowledge with our friends and think about how much human lives have changed since the invention of trains, planes and rocket ships.

