



# Oaklands Junior School

*Learning to think - Thinking to learn*

## Autumn NEWSLETTER

We need to celebrate that we have made it safely through to the end of the autumn term! I am very thankful that we have not had any closures so far. Our whole school community have been brilliant in ensuring that we keep ourselves safe with social distancing, regular hand-washing and hygiene so please do still continue these measures over the holidays so that we can all continue to remain healthy and safe in the New Year.

Now Berkshire has been moved to **Tier 3 – Very High Alert** as of Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December, please check the link to the government guidance: [here](#).

There have been many festive events this week with our Santa dash round the Daily Mile on Tuesday (thank you for your generosity). On Wednesday, Gillian Gyenes led our service that would normally have been held in St Johns church but this year St Johns came to us! It was very moving to have the whole school together in the playground, with all 8 classes socially distant from each other in separate areas of the playground. We were very lucky with the weather and avoided the rain! Our choir sang beautifully, as did the whole school and it was lovely to hear our talented musicians; Emilia K played her violin beautifully and our woodwind group (Edward T, Adam B, Neil B, Lily P, Maisie H & Lucas D) played their recorders in separate year group songs. Always lovely to be able to share such talents and we missed having you all there with us.

My thanks to ALL my staff for their teamwork and extra support this term in ensuring we all keep healthy and safe, whilst giving our children the very best education we possibly can in a creative and fun way.

Your children may have shared with you that this week we added extra safety measures in readiness for the holidays by reducing our year group bubbles to class bubbles for this final week - staff rotas have changed to ensure that your children only have contact with their Teacher and TA throughout the day, including break/lunch.

We know families have been worried about visiting grandparents over Christmas, particularly if they have not been in the best of health and this has meant struggling with a decision as to whether children should be taken out of school a few days earlier, to give time in isolation before any close contact. This year has been very difficult for us all with not being able to see our extended families as much as we would have liked. In my role as headteacher, these absences still need to be documented with an absence request which will be processed as unauthorised BUT I totally understand your decision as a parent. Parenting is never easy and in these current times it has been even more stressful but please remember that your family's health and wellbeing is most important.

Wishing you and your families the very best of health and all good wishes for a very Happy Christmas. Be kind to yourself and each other. Enjoy every moment you have with your loved ones. Stay safe.

Mrs West  
& All Staff at Oaklands Juniors

## 2020

### Thinking Schools Latest News

At the start of every school year, each year group focuses on one aspect of thinking in order for children to develop an understanding of themselves as a learner.

Year 3 cover the Learning Line, Year 4 look at the Triune Brain, Year 5 investigate Multiple Intelligences and Year 6 use Hermann's Brain Model.

In addition, children have had assemblies that look at the Oaklands Mindset and Independent Learning.

### Important Dates

**January 2021**  
INSET DAY 4<sup>th</sup>  
Back to School 5<sup>th</sup>

**February**  
Half Term 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>  
Back to School 22<sup>nd</sup>

**March**  
End of Term 31<sup>st</sup> at 1.30pm

**April**  
INSET DAY 1<sup>st</sup>  
Easter break 2<sup>nd</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>

# What has been happening in Years 3 & 4?

## Year 3

Despite being new to the school at an unusual time, the Year 3s have settled into the Juniors fantastically! The enthusiasm to get back into learning with their peers has been clear since September.

In English, we have enjoyed reading “The Magic Faraway Tree”, “The Lorax” and, most recently, a range of traditional tales. The children have produced some lovely descriptive pieces of writing and some very persuasive letters! Fairy tales have also been the inspiration for two short plays we performed and recorded to be enjoyed at home.

We have also been very busy in Art this term. We began with pointillism, inspired by Georges Seurat, resulting in some fantastic pieces of work to display at our virtual Harvest Festival. We’ve also explored the work of William Morris to create some festive wrapping paper.

In Science, we were investigating rocks and soils. We carried out a variety of experiments to find how different rocks responded in different circumstances. We ended the topic by making some effective fossils! The children were all very excited to see their creations.

We’d like to thank you all for your continued support at home. From regular reading and times tables practice to using our new Teams assignments, we appreciate all your help.

We hope you all have a lovely, relaxing and safe Christmas break. We look forward to seeing you all in the new year!

The Year 3 Team

**Message from Mrs West:** *Well done to the Y3 Team and the children for producing such brilliant end of term plays. The use of a ‘green screen’ was innovative to share the children’s art work for the scenery. Also having the narrators reading in the woodland was extra special too. Above all, to see the children enjoying the roles they played, with such enthusiasm made me smile and feel very proud. THANK YOU!*

## Year 4

It is hard to believe that it is already the end of the autumn term and what a term it has been!

We were very pleased to welcome back all of the children in September and were delighted with how they have settled back into the routines of full-time schooling in school!

Back in September, the children all looked amazing in their Roman costumes – there were some fantastic examples of gladiators, noble Roman women, centurions and senators! During the day, after decorating their shields, the children experienced life as a Roman soldier, during which they were drilled to march as a group in straight lines! In the afternoon, they took part in a Roman Vs Celts battle, in which they successfully vanquished the Celtic attack of the McHolland tribe! However, the children’s efforts at maintaining a robust ‘testudo’ formation was a ‘work in progress’!

Although we were unable to take part in the ‘Autumn celebration’ at Wellington College this year, we did however do some of the activities that they usually do there, such as creating an autumnal palette with beautifully coloured leaves. Mr Hopley also did an amazing job of growing three giant-sized pumpkins for the ‘Grow a pumpkin’ competition – sadly we were not able to enter them but they played a prominent part in our harvest celebration. In fact, they inspired our recitation and drama, which was based on a French version of ‘The enormous turnip’: *La grande citrouille*

We have also made the most of our outdoor areas during our science unit about animals and their habitats and we were particularly impressed with the English work that was inspired by the children’s work outside.

On a related note, the children have produced some beautiful autumnal water colour paintings, which you will hopefully be able to see soon.

Thank you for all your support this term in terms of home learning – every time you read to or with your child and help them with their home learning you are having a massive positive effect on their progress. We hope that our use of ‘Assignments’ this term will help the children to be prepared in the unwelcome event of a bubble closure.

Finally, we wish you all a very merry (albeit different) Christmas. The Year 4 team.

# What has been happening in Years 5 & 6?

## Year 5

We were so pleased to welcome the children back in September and are really pleased with how well they have settled in to Year 5, with the new routines and expectations.

Our English unit started off with reading 'There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom', which proved to be a very enjoyable read amongst the children. They wrote excellent formal letters in role as different characters from the book and even wrote to the author, Louis Sachar. We were impressed with the way that the children used features of letters and formal language.

In History, we learnt about the Mayan civilisation in Central America. The children investigated historical sources to gather information about the Mayan's occupations, ancient artefacts and ruins and debated the reasons for why the Mayans left their jungle homes. A memorable part of this topic was making Mayan masks using Modroc. The masks were extremely eye-catching and imaginative and really brightened up our corridor displays.

After half term, we concluded our Hinduism topic by celebrating Diwali day. In the morning, the children painted Diya lamps, created stick dances and made Diwali cards. We were then fortunate enough to have a dance workshop from West End in Schools, which told the story of Rama and Sita. This was brilliant as it was so engaging and really brought the story to life! We were particularly impressed with the children's creativity and performances. The final dances and photos from this exciting day have been uploaded to the Year 5 page on OWL.

Our Science topic this half term has been Earth and Space. The children have shown a passion for learning about the Solar System, including the features of different planets. In English, they have demonstrated their knowledge by writing information texts about the planets, Earth and Moon. We completed the topic with an action-packed Space day, where the children successfully trained as astronauts and enjoyed a visit from the Astronomy Roadshow.

On behalf of the Year 5 team, we would like to wish all of our families a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year. We look forward to seeing you in 2021.

## Year 6

Year 6 have had an excellent first term and have settled in well to being top of the school.

We started off the term in English, with descriptive writing influenced by the book Tom's Midnight Garden. The children really enjoyed the novel and used imaginative and creative language in their work.

We have had a thought-provoking time in Geography where we have learnt about the effects of Climate Change and Global Warming. This culminated in writing a letter to the government to persuade them to act on to save the planet for future generations.

In History we have been studying the famous story of the Trojan Horse. The children looked at several sources to decide whether the tale was fact or fiction. They finished off the unit by writing a balanced argument where they could express their final views about the authenticity of the narrative.

To continue our Greek themed work, we have studied theatre masks. The children greatly enjoyed designing and making their masks out of clay. The children have also written their own Greek Myths inspired by the many myths we read as a class.

Our Science topics this term have been based around the Biology units of Animals and their Habitats and Evolution and Inheritance. They particularly liked finding out about the best conditions for mould growth! They also enjoyed learning about genetics and cross breeding to create their own new species of animal or plant.

In P.E. this term we have learned how to play Lacrosse! It took a lot of skill to catch and throw the ball from the net part of the stick but our children rose to the occasion and we were able to finish off the half term with mini matches between 6A and 6B. It was great fun!

We wish all Year 6 and their families a Merry Christmas and a joyful New Year. We look forward to seeing you in the Spring Term.

# Further News

## **Oaklands PTA Challenge**

Junior staff raised £132 collectively as part of our PTA challenge. Together, when all our distances were combined, we had travelled 4325km over 4 weeks. We contemplated that this distance could have taken in Paris, Berlin, Geneva and back to Crowthorne with about 600km to spare! Thank you also to all the children who took part – all will be receiving a certificate and badge that will be announced and presented in our assembly after Christmas.

## **Oaklands PTA Raffle**

Thank you so much for supporting the PTA Christmas raffle, we are thrilled to share that this raised £791.68 from the event. 25 prizes were won by parents across both schools so we hope this spreads a little joy before Xmas.

Many thanks to our very supportive PTA who have really struggled with events over this last year, due to all the restrictions placed on us all. I hope you will join with me in congratulating them for being so creative in finding fun ways to still raise funds, which of course they could not do without your support, so a huge thank you to all our families too for taking part in these events.

## **British Legion**

Poppy money raised £126.43 – thank you to all who bought a poppy in school or outside of school to support this cause.

## **Funky Fashion Friday**

Thank you so much for the support to raise money for the council's Funky Fashion Friday. We are delighted to announce that we have raised £326.47. This will be split across the year groups to buy some of the equipment they have requested.

## **Reverse Advent**

Thank you to all of our families who generously donated to the Crowthorne Foodbank as part of our 'Reverse advent' initiative. We were amazed and so grateful for the amount of donations that we received and know that they will make such a difference to families in our community this Christmas time.



## **School Awards**

This week, congratulations are in order for the recipients of the new English and Maths awards which will now be a termly feature. Our first recipients were Harry in 4L (English) and Bella B in 5N (Maths) – very well done for all your achievements this term! These new awards will be presented at the end of each term for the greatest progress/effort in these subjects. I would like to thank the Rudz family for the creation of these impressive awards for us during last year's lockdown.

The Daisy trophy was also awarded – many congratulations to Jay T in 5N.

*Best wishes to ALL our families  
Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*