



# Oaklands Junior School

*Learning to think - Thinking to learn*

## CHRISTMAS

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have safely reached the end of term and although some of our children and families have suffered from Covid, we have successfully managed to keep the school open with 8 days of self-isolating work for every year group, regularly updated for those who have needed this. Thank you to staff, parents and children for keeping our daily hygiene measures in place and we are expecting that this will be continued for some time in the new year.

Omicron looks to be the new variant from Delta but we should not worry about this. It appears to be milder and the only concern is the rapid way that this is spreading.

We are ready to return to remote learning if that arises but our plan is to keep our school open, as long as we can, providing we have a sufficient number of healthy staff to keep this going and so long as UKHSA does not require us to keep any class or year group at home due to a rise in Covid cases.

Let us keep positive and continue all the measures we have put in place, including the **soft start** so that children can go straight into class in the mornings. The only change we will make for the new year is to reduce this window from **8.40-8.50am**, so that staff can have some time to prepare for the start of the day.

This term has been amazing when I think of how my staff consistently bring the curriculum to life with such memorable days every term, including a Y6 residential trip to Osmington Bay, a Y5 Astronomy Road Show, a Y4 Roman Day and Y3 Village Walk, not to mention a fantastic play "Five Gold Rings".

## NEWSLETTER

The whole school enjoyed seeing this brilliant play streamed to classrooms – Y3 clearly enjoyed taking part; it was just a shame that we could not invite parents into school, but we hope you understand that our priority was to keep everyone safe. We hope to send out a video of the play to all Y3 families very shortly.

### Staffing

Chris Skelton, our IT Technician, is retiring this term following 17 years with us in this role. We will miss her greatly and wish her every happiness for the future. Ashley Griffiths who has worked alongside Chris for many years will continue to provide IT support.

Claire Luther, our Lunchtime Supervisor is going on maternity leave and we look forward to hearing about her newborn in 2022. Laura Fitzgerald, following a successful interview, will be covering Claire's maternity leave.

Liz Turkington, our Y4 Teaching Assistant, is moving on to a new role at the end of our first week back in January. We will be very sorry to see her leave but wish her every success for the future.

### Staff Vacancies

We currently have vacancies for:

- Full-time TA in Y4
- 1:1 Support Assistant for 5 mornings per week
- 1:1 Support Assistant for 8 hours

Full details can be found on our website.

With our very best wishes to you all for a healthy & happy Christmas.

*J West, Headteacher*

## 2021

### Thinking Schools Latest News

We are currently putting together our application to be re-accredited as a Thinking School. This requires detailed explanation as to what we are doing, such as developing the entire curriculum using Bloom's Taxonomy as a basis, and our plans for the future. We expect to hear if we are successful early in the New Year.

A suggested way for parents to understand our thinking approach is for the children to tell them. Have you asked your child? What did they say? Was it useful? Let us know.

### Important Dates

#### January 2022

*INSET Tues 4<sup>th</sup>*

Wed 5<sup>th</sup> Back to School

Fri 14<sup>th</sup> **Y5** Living Rainforest

#### February

Tues 8<sup>th</sup> Safer Internet Day

Fri 11<sup>th</sup> end of term 3.20pm

**HALT TERM 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>**

Mon 21<sup>st</sup> Back to School

#### March

Wed 9<sup>th</sup> – Fri 11<sup>th</sup> **Y4** Ufton Court

Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Red Nose Day

#### April

Fri 1<sup>st</sup> end of term 1.30pm

**EASTER Mon 4<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>**

Back to School Tues 19<sup>th</sup>

# What has been happening in Years 3 & 4?

## Year 3

The new Year 3s have settled into the Juniors brilliantly and it has been lovely to get to know them all during the Autumn term.

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 fantastic pieces of writing, including letters and stories.

We have had a very creative term in Year 3. During our Art lessons, we have explored Pointillism, emulating the style of Georges Seurat. In the run up to Christmas, we have looked at repeated patterns inspired by George Morris and then using this idea to create some prints.

Year 3 have been lucky enough to have viola lessons, taught by the talented Mr De Nijs. We were very fortunate to have this opportunity. By the end of the sessions, the children were able to play four songs. We hope that this has inspired some budding musicians to continue learning instruments.

In Science, we have investigated forces and magnets and thought carefully about how to make predictions.

Finally, we have been able to perform our end of term play. Although we were unable to have a live audience, we hope you will enjoy the recorded performance. The children have put a lot of hard work into the play and we are proud of what they have achieved.

We would like to thank you all for your continued support at home. From regular reading and times tables practice to 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

## Year 4

The children have settled into Year 4 very well and have risen to the challenges that we have presented to them.

Our history topic began with an immersive experience in September with our Roman Day. The children and staff thoroughly enjoyed dressing up and taking part in some arduous army training, before a full battle against some marauding Celtic warriors. The children’s Tortoise and Wedge formations proved invaluable against a vicious enemy! As well as learning about the army, the children designed and created authentic-looking shields and played traditional Roman games. Finally, they also had the opportunity to practise using Roman numerals to crack codes.

In English, the children have been focussing on developing their sentence structures, spellings and use of descriptive language. Recently, this has tied in with the reading of “The Iron Man” by Ted Hughes. The children have been enjoying this exciting tale and have written diary extracts as the main protagonist, Hogarth. The ICT has, of late, been focussed on animation and we are looking forward to some dramatic stop motion animation at the start of next term based on the early chapters.

In Science, the children have been learning about Habitats and, more recently have begun to learn about electricity and building their own circuits.

Although, we were unable to attend the Autumn Extravaganza at Wellington College, thanks to the Newbury Agricultural Society, we were able to recreate all of the activities that they would have experienced. Even better, our pumpkins won first and second prize at Wellington for being the biggest and the best! Afterwards, the children spent a day making delicious pumpkin soup with our prize-winning vegetables and were able to taste the fruit of their labours.

Wishing you all a merry and safe Christmas and we look forward to seeing you next term.

The Year 4 Team

# What has been happening in Years 5 & 6?

## Year 5

Year 5 have had a fantastic first term and have impressed us with their enthusiasm for taking on new responsibilities as part of the Upper School.

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 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.

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 2022.

## Year 6

Year 6 have had an excellent first term and have settled in well to being top of the school. They have taken on all the responsibilities we have asked of them with great maturity and diligence.

The highlight of our first term was undoubtedly the trip to Osmington Bay, where the children undertook several different challenges and activities.

We started off the term in English with descriptive writing influenced by the book "The Water Tower". We then moved on to study the book, "Tom's Midnight Garden", where we looked at a range of different genres, such as letters and narrative. The children really enjoyed predicting why the garden changed when the clock struck thirteen!

In History we have been studying the Shang Dynasty of Ancient China. Throughout the unit, the children have used sources to discover information about the Shang Dynasty. The children have enjoyed talking about the different class systems and particularly enjoyed the fact that some of the kings had over sixty wives! They finished off the unit by writing a non-chronological report which drew upon all their knowledge from this term.

Our Science topics this term have been based around the Biology unit of Living Things and their Habitats. Among other lessons, the children have carried out a number of investigations, including one to test the best conditions for the growth of mould. We have now started our new topic on Light.

The highlight of PE this term has been learning to play the game of Lacrosse. This has taught them several new skills and has introduced them to a new sport. The children have surprised themselves by finding they are able to catch the ball in the tiny nets on the end of the lacrosse stick!

In Computing, we have introduced the children to excel spreadsheets in preparation for creating their own budgets. Our RE topic has focused around the Five Pillars of Islam, and in French we have been making a shape book. During Music sessions we have used Charanga to learn the song, "Happy" and have looked at different Chinese folk songs. We have continued the theme of the Shang Dynasty in Art by using pen and ink to draw Chinese dragons.

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

## **Useful Advice for parents and carers from CEOPS and the Thinkuknow Team**

Lots of us will continue to rely on technology over the winter break, for entertainment and keeping in touch with friends and family.

These articles can help parents and carers keep their children safer online:

1. [A parent's guide to privacy settings](#)
2. [Gaming: what parents and carers need to know](#)
3. [What is the Internet of Things \(IoT\)?](#)

### **PARENTS - Mental Health and Wellbeing**

We are pleased to announce a new web page entitled [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) located under the Parents section on the school website to help parents with mental health and wellbeing concerns. From ADHD to Trauma, it's an 'A to Z' of organisations we hope you might find useful.

If you would like to suggest a link, leave some feedback or let us know about an error, please email the school office [admin@oaklands-jun.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:admin@oaklands-jun.wokingham.sch.uk).

As always, our [Parent Support Adviser](#), Nikki Lenon, remains available to provide support in person.

### **Ventilation**

In January it is likely to be colder so any extra layers that the children can wear to keep them warm would be welcome as doors/windows will still need to be open.

### **Boots**

Some children are wearing a range of boots that are not part of our school uniform. Please would you ensure that if any boots are worn, that they are only of ankle height with no heels and of the appropriate school colour. Ugg boots are not allowed unless they can be mistaken for school shoes!

### **Parent Helpers**

Thank you to all our parents who were able to help this term. Your help, as always is very much appreciated and we look forward to inviting you back into school in the New Year.

Please stay safe this Christmas and if possible, take a lateral flow test on the day of going to a social event or to family, just to ensure that you and your family are safe to mix with those nearest and dearest to you.

### **Temporary Helper in Yr 6 needed from 10<sup>th</sup> January**

We urgently need a temporary TA/parent helper in Y6, for a period of 8 weeks whilst a member of staff recovers from an operation. Good English and Maths skills are essential. Although this is a full-time role, we would consider taking on two or more parent helpers to cover this role. If you are interested and may be able to help, please contact the School Office.

### **PTA News**

The PTA would like to thank everyone who supported their recent Elfridges event. They were able to give every child a present and some children were even able to buy more than one. Thanks to the PTA's long-term sponsor Michael Hardy, who covered the cost of additional presents, gift wrap and cellotape, every donation from the children was profit for the PTA, meaning they raised an incredible £1,229.95.

A further thank you goes out to those families who supported November's Bag2School collection where a total of £164.40 was raised.

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### **Activities over the festive period**

You can find information on activities that are taking place in our local community on our website – simply use the following link <https://oaklandsjunior-school.org.uk/local-community-information-activities-events/>

### **Reverse Advent Calendar**

We would like to thank all those parents / carers who have generously donated items of food for this year's Reverse Advent Calendar event. Your contributions will help families who may be having difficulties at this time of year - Crowthorne Foodbank - such a good way that we can help our local community.

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