

Our News: what's been happening in school?

The past few weeks, before and after half term have been jam packed full of excitement. Everyone is trying to make the most of every opportunity to enjoy the weather, the fresh air, and to be able to socialise with people again. We've also enjoyed far more opportunities to spend time together across the age groups, which we had missed during the tougher winter months. Here are just a few highlights of recent whole school activities.

Dogs in school



What a show and tell opportunity! Thank you so much to Claire (Emmet's mum) for bringing their puppies – twice! Everyone fell in love with them (and of course Fay was in tears – again.)

It was such a lovely opportunity for the children to interact with them and our newly fenced off pre-school and class 1 outdoors area was perfect for everyone to see them and so the children could have a little time with the puppies in small groups.



A new species of bat has been found in the garden – oh wait no – it is just one of our oldest children and our youngest staff members trying a new trick!

Fair Trade

Class 2 are including a large focus on how to be socially responsible this term, especially given that they are learning about South America and the rainforests. This started with learning all about Fair Trade a few weeks ago. The whole school joined them for a day to create tasty cakes and biscuits made from Fair Trade ingredients. They loved being able to share these with parents in the garden.

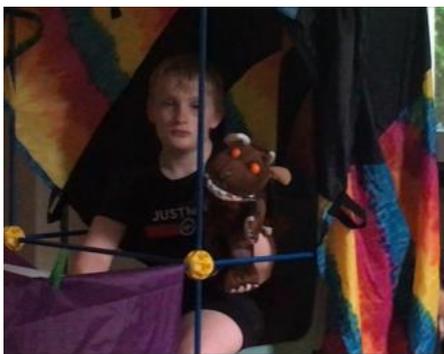


Gruffalo Theme Week

We thought we would have a common theme for our first week back this half term. As we had access to several sets of Gruffalo character puppets, this gave us plenty of ideas. It was lovely to have a little show and tell every day so that each group could share what they had been learning. Our pre-school and class 1 children incorporated the animal characters into their PE session. Class 1 wrote acrostic poems. Class 2 learned to describe the Gruffalo characters in French and developed a production of their own where the Gruffalo's child, as a grown up,



decided to travel to various rainforests to find his Gruffalo cousin. The play was performed to the school on the Friday. Of course, the highlight of the week was the Gruffalo whole school picnic on the Thursday. Class 1 children couldn't wait till the end of the day to try their homemade owl ice cream (it was a science lesson honestly!) Between all of the classes we managed to make Gruffalo crumble, owl cornflake cakes, gateau au serpent.



Our learning

Fay's pre-school group



The children have loved watching their beans grow. We aren't sure whether the dogs helped them along (after one of them had a wee) or hindered them (one of them tried to climb in the middle.) But they are doing well!



The children have been learning about each other and themselves over recent weeks, developing a pictogram of everyone's eye colour in the whole school. They are creating things to stick in their scrap book about themselves, including taking their own finger prints.

This amazing sensory activity squeezing out lemons to make 'lemon tea' which Bria organised, was so popular that it was done twice and it smelt amazing.

Class 1 have found that dinosaurs can be very inquisitive – and that they leave lots of clues!

A few weeks ago we had a few break ins overnight and found various footprints in the classroom. The class decided we needed to have some cameras filming overnight so we did just that – and managed to catch a dinosaur in the act! The children have done some amazing bits of writing (including persuading Lorna to get some CCTV!) They love having their best pieces of work in their new gallery on the wall. They've also made some discoveries of dinosaur bones in our garden. This week they discovered a mysterious note in their sandpit, which was the cause for much excitement!



Inspired by class 2's Dragon Island, the class have been creating their own island for dinosaurs.

Children in class 1 braved the rain last Friday to collect some food for their stick insects, after finding out which plants they liked best. They are in there somewhere!



Children are enjoying show and tell sessions in class 1 and everyone is enjoying listening to them too!

Class 2

Food and cooking have featured heavily in the class 2 curriculum. The bitter melon Stella's dad sent in for them to discuss and try caused a stir. Learning about the Mayan story telling how chocolate came to the Earth gave class 2 the opportunity to try some of the foods the Mayans would have enjoyed. Children who are in on Fridays have created a beautiful piece of art for our library – an Aztec Sun Stone.





With a big question ‘What makes a journey so fascinating?’ the class have been learning how to structure a ‘hero’s journey’ story and some of them are writing several chapters after planning their own stories. Their theme is focusing on learning about rainforests, mainly the Amazon.

What a stroke of luck that the class discovered that Elly had visited the Amazon when she was 16 years old – and an opportunity to interview her and write a news report. Read all about it yourselves in the special report attached to this newsletter. This was jointly written by children in class 2.

Thank you to Ben and his mum for providing class 2 with a fantastic takeaway pizza lunch a few weeks ago. The children couldn’t have been more excited waiting for the delivery. All because of a survey he did



Last week class 2 finally got out on a school visit – and we were the very first school group to be welcomed back by Erasmus Darwin House in Lichfield since last March so the ladies who did the tour were just as excited as the children. The class learned about life in Georgian times in the Darwin household and took part in a heritage trail around town. It was good to also see some sites where events in the civil war took place as the class had learnt about this period earlier in the year. Of course the visit to the little sweet shop was a highlight for many!

Fundraising news.

Art show 2021: Provisional plans are underway to hold our annual Art Show August bank Holiday weekend 27th – 30th August. This event is over 20 years old and was held virtually last year, and not only an important fundraising event for the school, but also a fantastic opportunity to bring the community together, both the local community and an extensive art show community from all over the country. Please save some time over bank holiday weekend to take part. If you have any art or craft skills and can offer a workshop for children over the weekend, please get in touch. We will also be looking for some willing volunteers to support the set up of the show throughout the week before the event. It is a fantastic way to get to know each other as staff and parents whilst helping out the school.

The Big Toddle: a letter and leaflet containing details about this event has been e-mailed out to parents. The event is for 3-7 year olds but our older children will be involved in their own way by helping to set up the event which will take place around the village.

Reminders

Helping to clear away toys: We feel that, for the most part, using the last part of the day for play works really well. It allows us to use the afternoon flexibly as individual groups and go with what works for the children that day. It also enables us to be more flexible in terms of chatting to parents at the end of the day. Finally, we know that for some families, not rushing off enables them to spend some time together, which is especially important after the year we've had. Seeing the children enjoying



themselves on the various skateboards, bikes and scooters we have is quite a sight, and one of the things which make our setting quite unique. Rather than ask them to put things away before parents arrive, we have tended to let them have things out in case some want to play a little longer as we chat to parents. We would be grateful if parents could help us out though in making sure that they ask their child to drive whatever they are on back up to its parking spot before they leave. Thank you to Sophia and Nefeli who did an amazing



job one evening after school this week, helping to put so many things away, when the playground after school was a sea of vehicles. Here are the before and after pictures.

Looking ahead to the summer holiday

Activity days: The following days / dates have been identified as activity days for the summer. Parents will receive a letter with further details shortly.

Thur 29th July, Friday 13th August, Tues 24th August, Wed 25th August Thurs 26th August

Dates for your diary

Thurs 24th June: INSET DAY. School closed to children. The school office will also be closed.

Thurs 1st July: Class 2 have a virtual presentation and question and answer session with the author of the book 'Lost Lives' which they are currently reading at 9.30am

Big Toddle (search for animals around the village.) Forms available from school from 1pm. Finish with tea and biscuits at school 3.15pm – 4pm.

School garden party for pre-school and class 1. 3.30pm – 6pm (younger siblings welcome too.)

Thursday 15th July 5.15pm onwards: Summer Leavers garden party (class 2)

Friday 16th July: last day of term. School ends at 1pm

Wednesday 1st, Thursday 2nd, Friday 3rd September: INSET days (school closed to children)

Monday 6th September: school opens for children for the Autumn term.

The calendar dates for 2021-22 will be e-mailed out to parents by the end of this week.

NB We are postponing our international food week until September in the hope that we will be able to invite a wider group of people to join us by that stage.

