

Newsletter ~ Term 3, Week 4

Dear Parents/Careers,

It has been an exceptionally busy couple of weeks at St Francis, with all sorts going on. As the newsletter is coming out bi-weekly, below is a real mix of what happened this week and the previous one. Unfortunately, for your good selves, this means that this tome is longer than ever... so if you need a cure for insomnia, you may just have found it.

With the weather taking a turn for the chilly, Reception pounced on the opportunity to practise their phonics in a slightly different manner to normal. Donning coats, woolly hats and mittens, they followed Miss Bougourd into the crisp winter air and started to work on the 'Z' sound. The whole class trod the letter into the frost on the field, uttering 'zig' for the first horizontal line, 'zag' for the diagonal and 'zig' again for the final line. To this old teacher's eyes, it looked suspiciously like they were learning and having fun at the same time. Well, I'm not sure I approve of that! Pupils enjoying themselves, whatever next?

Edit: I have just strolled into Reception and seen tiny lambs! The children absolutely loved it and were able to show just how much they have learnt about the animals. Vocabulary such as 'wool', 'bleat' and 'hooves' were all being used in the appropriate context.

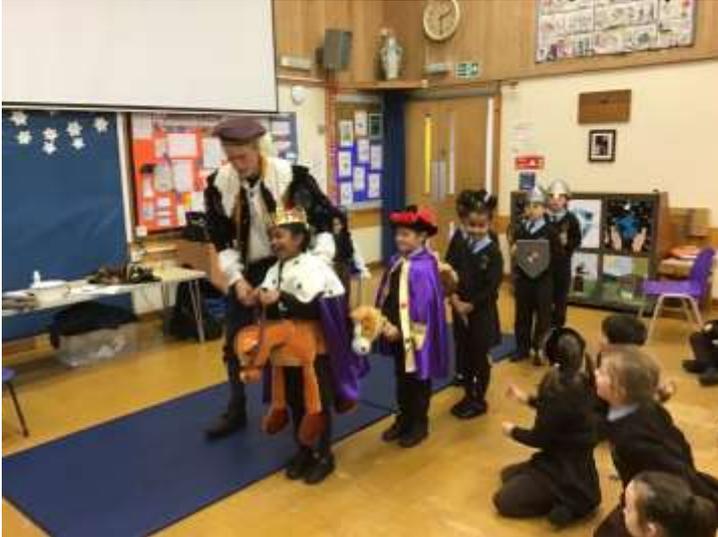


One of the highlights of my week was spending time in Year 1. As well as being an absolute delight, they were very forthcoming in their... feedback to me, letting me know exactly what needed to happen, when it should occur and what I was getting wrong. 'We don't do it like that, Mr Tucker,' was the refrain coming from the classroom. I have just started teaching them a new playground rhyme, with actions, that is rather complex. They are doing a smashing job of learning it and while we are a little way from performance-ready, with a bit of luck we should get there in the next couple of weeks. I would also just like to say how proud I am of them all. There have been lots of unavoidable disruptions over the last couple of weeks and they have taken it all in their stride. Well done everyone, well done.

It is Friday afternoon and the end of a long, industrious week. Pupils are tired: staff are exhausted. Perhaps one might expect a slightly low-key final day: some art or possibly PE. Science experiment involving water... not so much. However, this is exactly what the brave (some might say foolhardy) Mrs Field attempted this time last Friday. Comparing the absorbency of different materials by using pipettes to drip water onto tables and soak it up, was the order of the day. Two elements struck me while watching them beaver away. Firstly,

how sensible and grown up they were because, and let us be honest here, this had the propensity to go horribly wrong. Secondly, they really understood how to carry out the experiment appropriately. Asking them why they had to use the same amount of water each time and regulate the time each piece of paper had to soak up the water, they could all talk about the need for a fair test and having to trust their results.

Edit 2: Year 2 had a fabulous time on Tuesday afternoon, when Jethro, manservant to Samuel Peyps, came in to talk to the children about the Great Fire of London in 1666. Hopefully the photo will give you a flavour of what went on.



In a similar vein, last Monday, Year 3 spent the day in the company of Ograd, a Stone Age man, learning all about the Neolithic age. It was a huge success with artefacts such as flint arrow heads and sabretooth tiger skulls being of particular interest, as well as the live action story telling of a boy and his wolf. Incidentally, did you know that hedgehog was eaten at this time? Without doubt, however, the highlight of the day came when they hunted down their prey with their plastic spears. Some of those children would give Tessa Sanderson a run for her money the way they propelled them towards the deer skins on the wall. Incidentally, and I have no wish to cast aspersions on anyone, only one person in the whole class missed their prey (cough, Miss Mansfield, cough).



Due to Covid, the Weston Dance Festival has not taken place for the last two years. However, with a bit of luck, Year 4 shall be taking part in it once more in late March. This is a wonderful opportunity for our children to feel the excitement of performing on a stage in front of hundreds of people; work together and rely on each other as part of a team; push themselves to learn new skills and experience the power of practice. From the sneaky peek I managed to steal, they are already looking the business, so goodness knows how polished it will be in a few months' time. The one slightly disappointing aspect? Mr Groves deferring to Sharron, our Dance Teacher, to both choreograph the piece and teach Year 4 the routine. This was a particular shame when we found out that, according to him, he is a champion break-dancer who can do the splits. A small demonstration in assembly next week sound okay to you, Mr Groves? Excellent.

Year 5 have been hard at work developing their computing skills, with a particular emphasis on coding. Using the programme 'Scratch', which allows both the code and an English translation to be seen simultaneously, they have been developing their own maths games. In this instance, they have had to create a programme which would allow them to successfully guess a mystery number with a sprite giving them clues if they got it wrong. (As Mrs Willatts said, 'They had to start from scratch on Scratch.') Personally, I can barely turn my laptop on, let alone develop a game like this. Although the lessons started off relatively simply to allow the children to bolster their confidence, Mr Howarth, their ICT teacher, is rapidly moving up through the gears, aiming to increase the level of challenge even further over the next few weeks. Any more 'challenging' and Steve Jobs is going to have some serious competition on his hands.

Happy New Year! Or as they say in Cantonese, 'Gong hei fat choy'. This week, Year 6 have been learning all about the Chinese New Year. Posing the question to them, 'So, what have you learnt?' I was faced with a tidal wave of information: it is about to be the year of the Tiger; certain foods are considered lucky, such as fish, dried fruit and sweets; scissors are kept in drawers and hair is not washed or cut during the festivities to ward off bad luck; long noodles are eaten to promote long life; money is given to children and red is worn as it is considered lucky – hence everyone looking resplendent in their red clothes today. This has culminated today in domino games, tangram puzzles and prawn cracker munching. The offer of free, tasty food was in no way the reason I spent a disproportionate amount of time in Year 6 today. No way.

Have a lovely weekend. Play safely and take care. Bath lost the rugby and Tottenham the football last weekend. If there is a repeat performance, I'll be in such a bad mood that I'm going to be forced to cancel all breaktimes next week. Let's all hope for some favourable results!

Mr Tucker

Please can we remind parents and carers to send their child in to school with a water bottle every day. Thank you

Pope Francis has launched a universal Church Synod, inviting all to be part of a discussion regarding the teachings of the Church. Every Diocese, Parish and School has been invited to be part of this. If you would like to contribute to the discussions, please answer the following questions and forward your responses to Miss Parry c/o the office. The information that is gathered will be collated and sent to Bishop Declan to be included in the Diocesan report. The deadline for responses is Friday 11th February.

Synod Responses

Name (s) _____

- Where in your everyday life do you experience love, truth, goodness, hope and joy?
- When you reflect on your life now, and as you look to the future, what causes you concern or worry?
- What is the purpose of the Catholic Church in the world today?
- What is the mission of our school?
- What is God's dream for the school community?



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FEBRUARY HALF TERM HOLIDAY CAMPS

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Nailsea School | Reception - Year 7

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FRIDAY 29 OCT

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