

5 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Junior School Weekly Highlights – Friday 5 February 2021

I am delighted to share with you that I was lucky enough to tour our new Junior School building this week and have been absolutely astonished by the progress that has been made, despite the lockdown period. We are very much on track to move in at the end of this term and I cannot wait to see the reactions of the pupils when they see it for themselves and settle into our new 'home'. It will be such a pleasure to have first-class and state of the art facilities to match our forward-thinking and ambitious approach to education.

Thank you to all parents who completed our recent remote learning online survey. We look forward to reviewing the information in more detail next week in order that we can assess if there are particular tweaks or amendments we can make to improve our offering even further. That said, with 91% parents stating they felt our new timetable is good or excellent, we are certainly pleased to learn that the vast majority of our parents have been happy with the revised Junior School structure. The written feedback and words of praise have been very much appreciated by the Junior School team.

Nursery and Reception

Nursery has continued with their worm obsession this week, progressing to picking up worms and transporting them to safer homes – rather than me! They have taken this as an opportunity to practise their literacy skills by writing a book using different describing words. The children have had some great questions about worms including *'How can they see where they are going if they don't have eyes?'* and *'What do their homes look like and how do they make them?'* They certainly have a lot of research to do next week! We know you will be eager to know the answers, so please do make sure to read the Bulletin next Friday to uncover some of these mysteries. In Reception, pupils returned their penguin, Flipper, to Antarctica. The children spent a whole day choosing from a selection of activities relating to Antarctica, including creating a map of where they will be returning Flipper to and making ice cream. In literacy this week the children have been writing messages to their friends, who they miss very much, and in maths they have been practising making number bonds to ten using lots of different objects.

Years 1 and 2

In maths this week, Year 1 pupils have been working hard on their place value skills, demonstrating their understanding by representing two-digit numbers using a range of manipulatives. By the end of the week, pupils were such experts, that they were ready to get creative. They had to represent a number but with a challenge - they could not use paper! They had part-whole models drawn in sand, ten frames made from leaves and sticks and lots of household items bundled into tens and ones. The challenges did not end there; as they began to reach the end of their IPC topic 'Buildings', they were tasked with becoming town

planners! Pupils had to create and design a new town, before showcasing their bird's eye view maps to the class. After catching Goldilocks last week, Year 1 have left fairy tales behind and moved on to non-fiction report writing. They have learned all about the language and layout features and they are now writing fantastic reports to inform others about famous buildings and landmarks around the world. What a great way to explain their IPC learning to their friends and families. Having learned the whole of Jack and the Beanstalk (with accompanying actions!), Year 2 have set to work using the story structure to create their own version. So far, they have swapped the family cow/horse/favourite fork for birds' eggs/olive stones/magic cows and even a Venus flytrap; we can't wait to see what they will innovate next! In IPC, they have travelled the world learning about some more amazing People of the Past, creating bold and beautiful self-portraits in the style of Frida Kahlo, learning about the life of the richest person in history, Mansa Musa, and exploring the fantastic filmography of famous south Londoner Charlie Chaplin. In maths, they have become 'number know-it-alls' by snapping up numbers with greater than and less than crocodiles, and they enjoyed watching a partitioning magician saw three-digit numbers into hundreds, tens and ones.

Years 3 and 4

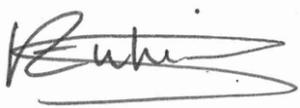
It has been another busy and exciting week for Year 3. Their week started with 'Musical Moments' – singing and creating a playlist. The teachers were introduced to a whole new set of songs including 'Raining Tacos' and 'Taco Cat!' They also went on an adventure – looking for a wolf and having lots of fun with onomatopoeia along the way. They created a menu using alliteration (slurpy soup, bouncing beans and bendy bananas) and packed a picnic lunch for Little Red Riding Hood and Grandma. After the popularity of 'Wind-Down Wednesday', they had a day being calm when pupils used their mathematical knowledge to be creative with Lego. They even found time to go bird watching! This week the children in Year 4 have begun a new IPC topic; 'Turn It Up!'. They shared their existing knowledge with their peers and were excited to answer questions such as '*What is sound?*', '*Where does light go?*' and '*What is light?*'. Their work on 'The Iron Man' continues with a focus on understanding complex characters and they spent time examining and comparing the main characters of the book.

Years 5 and 6

This week's highlight was definitely the Year 5 'Amazing Animals Day' and oh how far they travelled! Our first stop was Edinburgh Zoo where they did live animal sketching at feeding time. Then it was a hop over to the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California where they peered through the glass into the shark lagoon and the tropical underwater caverns. Pupils came dressed and ready for their day 'out' in their finest animal costumes and joined in with all the activities, including the snack time challenge and furry form time, with so much enthusiasm. The wonderful day was rounded off with a hilarious quiz. Let's just say if you ever get trapped in the wild and need to identify animals by the droppings they leave behind, call upon Year 5! In Year 6, pupils have been collaborating in maths and grappling with geometric puzzles while explaining their reasoning clearly. In English, they have been putting all they have learned so far about writing descriptively to good use by writing from different perspectives, thus producing some excellent, vivid accounts of an encounter between two wolves and a group of hunters. They are getting ready to don their debating hats in IPC as they prepare their arguments for a debate about the positive and negative impacts of dams.

As we prepare for our final week of remote learning before a well-deserved Exeat break, I encourage you to read Mrs Carmichael-Line's letter in the bulletin outlining some valuable additions to next week's schedule for 'Wellbeing Week'. This, alongside Mr Coley's E-Safety plans, will ensure that we see the final week off in true St Dunstan's style. We are hopeful that the wellbeing-inspired strategies provide some helpful ideas of fun, as well as restful, lockdown activities to continue to ensure we encourage our pupils to find ways they can look after themselves and 'switch off' during a challenging time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Whitwood', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Miss L Whitwood
Head of Junior School