11th January 2018

Dear Parents, Pupils and Guest Readers

Whilst January may be a bit damp and dismal so far, here at St P’s there is a vibrancy and energy to the start of Lent Term. Read on for our latest school news.

Reception Class News

Mrs Haynes is back from maternity leave and she reports that in Reception Class pupils have started working on their new topic, ‘Holidays’. They have written about Victorian seaside holidays, designed a map with a key, and learnt about travel by ferry. After watching exciting clips of Blue Planet II they drew and decorated giant tropical fish, using marbling inks and a variety of collage materials. They have also enjoyed role-play activities in the Reception Class ‘Travel Agency’. They have had a lot of fun together whilst learning!
Year One News

Year One pupils will be taking part in the RSPB’s Big Schools’ Birdwatch during this term. To be able to participate successfully the children will need to recognise the birds that they see so Mrs Shakeshaft has started introducing them to pictures of the most common garden birds. Pupils then chose a picture to copy, looking carefully at the details, talking about the different beaks and tails as well as taking notice of the patterns of colour on each bird. This work carried on from some of this class’s science work last term when they looked at how the robin adapts to the changing seasons.

Year Two News

Year Two pupils have started to explore the physical features of China in their Geography lessons. They have looked in atlases and on the globe to locate this large country and find out its major cities, rivers and mountains. They have also been learning about the Willow Pattern in their Art lesson and are now busy designing a plate of their own. They have discussed how this popular eighteenth century pattern was inspired by hand painted ceramics imported to Britain from China. The children learnt that although the plates have oriental landscapes painted on them, the pattern was actually invented by an English potter called Thomas Minton who wanted to promote the sale of his pottery.
Year Three News

No longer the ‘newbies’ of Key Stage Two, pupils in Year Three have made a welcome return to St P’s and to the business of learning. They have delved into 3 digit numbers in Maths, furthering their understanding of how to add and subtract larger numbers, with new methods of + and - being introduced throughout the term. The new topic in Geography is Extreme Earth and it has already promoted much class discussion, as the children are eager to find out about Volcanoes, Earthquakes, Tsunamis and other geographic extremes. In Art, they have also started to practise some clay techniques in order to sculpt a model of a volcano and the children will be looking forward to erupting them in due course. We were hoping to bring you a photograph of the art session but Mr Burgham’s hands were instead immersed in clay- so you will have to use your imagination instead!

Year Four News

Year Four are currently really stretching their memory capacity! They are working hard to learn production play scripts, Group Speaking poems and also preparing for their class assembly - which they are trying to keep as a surprise for the parents.

Year Five News

This week Year Five pupils got close and personal with their classroom, getting to know every centimetre of it! They worked together in groups of three to make maps of the classroom using scale and keys. This challenged the pupils’ mapping and maths skills and required great precision and patience.
Year Six News

The dull winter months have been banished and vibrant, engaging colours of the Brazilian artist Beatriz Milhazes have filled the Year Six classroom. Pupils watched an interview, where Milhazes explained how she takes influences from the botanical garden beside her studio in Rio de Janeiro to create her abstract collages, based on circles and fluid lines. After their initial interpretations, pupils will create a more detailed collage based on her thinking. We look forward to showing you their finished designs later in the term.

School Assemblies (Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development, British Values & Citizenship)

Our first day of Lent Term last week saw everyone in Reception Class to Year Six gathered together in Sunnylands Hall for our first School Assembly of 2018. Its theme was Resolutions. We looked back at what a New Year can mean, how it is celebrated in different countries and within various cultures and we explored the opportunities a New Year provides for a new view and a refreshed commitment to what we hold important.

Earlier today our School Assembly was about Resilience. It is all very well to have aims and targets but what strategies can we employ when things start feeling a bit tough to the point when we feel like giving up? In our assembly we looked to the animal kingdom for inspiration, finding out about the hard and long journey a swallow makes every year. Then we looked at some practical guidance for us all which pupils expanded with more ideas. They were keen to share the ideas with the School Community:
Celebrating Computing and Coding
Just before the end of last term Mr Burgham led a Key Stage Two Assembly to mark Computer Science Week, the history behind this special day and the future of Computer Science. Pupils found out about a pioneer of computer coding, Rear Admiral Grace Hopper and her amazing achievement in creating a machine to turn English into computer code or Algorithms and why it was her that we have to thank for the term ‘debugging’. Pupils watched a clip of Admiral Hopper demonstrating the use of wires to illustrate how in one billionth of second (a nanosecond) an electronic signal can travel almost twelve inches. The idea was to show something physically so that they could understand something which was difficult to visualise. We discussed other famous computer scientist such as Bill Gates, Alan Turing and Mark Zuckerberg and how their achievements have changed the way we think and do many of our everyday activities. Computer Science is an important part of our curriculum; it helps children to improve their problem-solving skills, logic and creativity. Together, we continue to experiment and improve our coding and computer skills here at St Peter’s School.

Year Four Class Assembly
Parents of Year Four pupils are invited to watch the class lead School Assembly on Thursday 18th January, as outlined in the Calendar Card distributed at the start of the year. The assembly starts at 10.30 so please arrive no earlier than 10.20.

St P’s Top Tips for Resilience

😊 Be thankful-write down something you are thankful for every day. This will help you remember the good things when you are facing a challenge and feeling low in confidence.

😊 Work hard and work together when the chance arises – a hard working team player can achieve so much!

😊 Ask for help – sometimes others can help us so much. Remember to give help too!

😊 Keep trying – not many people can grasp new skills the first time around – sometimes it takes many ‘goes’ at something before you can master it.

😊 Believe in yourself: think about the things you are good at and everything you have achieved over the years, think about the ways in which you brighten others’ days, the ways in which you are needed by others and give to them.

😊 Stay calm – remember to breathe deeply and slowly

😊 Stay happy – laugh and find the humour in life!
Up, up and away….with Reading Cloud!

Pupils in Year Five & Year Six have very recently received the exciting news that they are now members of a St Peter’s School reading community called Reading Cloud, enabling them to write reviews about books they have read and blog about what they are reading, as well as make recommendations for books they would like to see on our KS2 Library’s shelves. This will be launched in Year Three & Four at the start of next term.

SAVE THE DATE! Online safety talk for parents of pupils in Reception to Y6

We will be welcoming Kathryn Brown from the NSPCC on Wed 7th March at 4.15pm to Sunnylands Hall give a presentation about ways in which parents can ensure children are safe when on-line. Whilst we do not allow gadgets in school that provide on-line communication opportunities for pupils, it is clear that at home many children are engaged in on-line gaming and social networks. Not all parents are aware of the opportunities available to manage your child’s on-line presence and the risks that are ‘out there’. A letter will be going out soon inviting parents to sign up to this talk. In the meantime I hope that you will ‘save the date’.

Mystery at Magpie Manor

The cast are just a few rehearsal hours away from their two performances. We met for a three hour rehearsal on Saturday to blow the Christmas cobwebs away and to remind ourselves that there was a show to get ready! Now that has been done, it is full steam ahead to getting the acting and singing more polished. The next Saturday rehearsal is on 20th Jan at 2pm and then the last crucial rehearsal on Sat 3rd Feb, starting at 10 am and ending at 4pm. Parents of performers have received an Early Bird letter giving them the opportunity to buy tickets, initially four per pupil (over the two performances). It may be that performers’ families will buy up all the tickets, which is understandable! Please note that all the children in the School get a chance to see the show because they will watch a dress rehearsal of the performance on Monday 5th February.

The next bulletin will be out during the week of 22nd January.

Yours sincerely

Maria Chapman MA(Ed)
Headmistress