

LINK ACADEMY TRUST

CHRISTMAS 2018 NEWSLETTER



A Merry Christmas to All

FROM NICKY DUNFORD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As always I would like to update you all following a very busy Autumn term in our nine brilliant schools!

We had an amazing start to the year, coming back into two of our schools which had been completely refurbished in terms of heating, lighting and flooring- Harbertonford (asbestos removal too) and Bearnas. Stoke Gabriel had a second improvement phase completed and now has smart new windows and what a difference it makes, adding to last year's improved heating and lighting upgrade.

Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) bids have just been submitted for next year, if we are as successful this coming year we will continue to see our school buildings improve significantly. Alongside the CIF bids we have also submitted a School Nurseries Capital Funding bid through the Local Authority to try and develop the space within Bearnas, in order to extend the nursery provision, wrap-around care and holiday provision. The results of these bids will be known in the spring, around March time so as always we are keeping our fingers crossed for some positive outcomes.

Some very exciting projects are underway- we are working to set up a Community Farm project in Stoke Gabriel, Bearnas were awarded Community School of the Year at Teignbridge Sports Awards and we have been working with three new small schools that would like to work with The Link.

The last weeks of the autumn term have been very busy, with visits by Ofsted HMI Inspectors in two of our schools. As yet we do not have the official outcomes but reports will be published late in January, we will let you know when they are available. The Inspectors delivered a highly focused observation of our schools and were more rigorous than ever, looking closely at teaching and books to ascertain how well pupils learn and are taught, together with an in depth scrutiny of safeguarding and what is available to parents on the websites. Parents and pupils views were really listened to and although we were fairly shattered by the end, we felt we had had a fair experience.



News from the Heads of individual schools in alphabetical order:

Bearnes Primary School

Bearnes has had an incredible term! Since creating our 5 star core offer we have already supported local and international charities where the children came up with their own successful fundraisers. We won the Teignbridge Sports Award for Community School of the Year as a result of all of the sports events we have hosted and taken part in, a huge well done to Sarah Luxton for being the driving force behind this success.



Bearnes were selected to lead the Newton Abbot Lantern Parade in the samba band which was a fantastic night, the children played brilliantly. The school choir, led by Ms Clarke, were asked to sing at the Rowcroft memorial service; 'Light a Life' and represented the school brilliantly.

A member of our school won the year 5 category of Anne-Marie Morris' Christmas card competition and was presented with a prize. We were also lucky enough to use The Avenue Church to host our Christmas production of 'Lights, Camel, Action- A Strictly Nativity' which was hailed as the best production in years.



A huge well done and thank you to everyone for their hardwork and dedication to the school.



Cheriton Bishop Primary School

We have had an exciting and busy term with lots going on. In September we had two new additions to our teaching team, Mrs Baker in Class 3 and Mrs Harry in Class 2. Initially these two teachers were part time, becoming full time teachers when Mrs Berry and Mrs Gillon went on maternity leave. Despite change, the transition has been really smooth and we continue to have a enthusiastic and motivated strong team!

Class 4 enjoyed a trip to Heywood Forest to follow a geocache trail. This was quite a challenge as many were well hidden. The children then made their own geocache boxes back at school, which will form part of a trail around Cheriton Bishop. Class 4 also had a marvellous time at a Tag Rugby competition organised by QE. Every child in the class competed and played really well. Well done Class 4.



The children also attended Forest School and enjoyed building shelters, making fires and cooking food. All Class 2 children had a speaking role in the Christmas Nativity, The Landlord's Cat. What a confident and well-spoken bunch they are! Well done Class 2.



Class 3 have been learning about World War 2. They found this topic fascinating and learnt loads, sharing their knowledge in our whole school Harvest Assembly. Class 2 also made 'war time' self-sufficient gardens, cooked 'rationed style' potato cakes, built Anderson Shelters and created fighter planes out of plastic bottles. Class 3 led our Remembrance assembly with some moving readings from their 'War Time' diaries. Class 3 also enjoyed a gymnastic workshop with lots of other schools at QE. Fantastic work Class 3.

Class 2's topic was Up, Up and Away! They have been learning about Space. They created moon pictures and even made rockets. Class 2 enjoyed looking at aerial views and maps of Cheriton Bishop and creating ones of their own.



We had 13 new reception children join Class 1 in September. These children settled within minutes and making a great class team with the Year 1 children. Their topic was 'Splish, Splash, Splosh' and they have been learning about different weather, here and around the world. They have had lots of outdoor time enjoying mud, wind and rain! Year 1 children attended Forest School, the Reception children still having that to look forwards to. All the children in Class 1 performed in The Landlord's Cat and made brilliant angels, camels, kings, shepherds and sheep! Great work Class 1.

We've also had Farmwise, MacMillan Coffee Morning, Open Afternoons, weekly swimming, Children In Need, Anti-Bullying Week, the Swimming Gala, Christmas Craft Fair, Carols, Christingle, Parties and Pantomimes! What an exciting place to be!



Diptford CofE Primary School

We have had such a busy term at Diptford! Highlights include Bring a Broom Day; Hawks class Junior Life Skills and WW2 day.



Kingfishers class trip to Merrivale; Dippers class Bygones trip; and Little Dippers trip to the residential care home and Santa train. We have supported several charities, including Children In Need with a multi day and bake sale, Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day and selling Poppies to support Remembrance.



The term culminated with a wonderful Christmas service that really showcased our pupil's talents, including acting the Nativity story, singing beautifully and some children even performed by playing the instrument they are learning - a lovely range of recorders, piano, guitar and saxophone.



What a talented bunch they are!



Harbertonford CofE Primary School

We have had an action packed term at Harbertonford including many PE and sporting events such as swimming, Tri-Golf, Tag Rugby and KEVICC interschool events.



Pupils enjoyed 'Spirit of Adventure' team building activities in September and everyone has been out on a trip, including to Ashprington Church, Diptford for the WW2 event and Hay Tor on Dartmoor.



The children have loved the build up to Christmas – they have particularly delighted in Christmas crafts organised by our fantastic PTFA and making decorations for the Harberton tree festival. The Multi-Story Theatre Company's '12 Wild Ducks' performance was great fun and enjoyed by all. We are still looking forward to our Christmas service and fair, and to starting our big mosaic project in January 2019.

A really busy and productive term again!

Merry
Xmas

Hennock Primary School

Hennock has experienced a hugely busy and rewarding term. The residential that years 4,5 and 6 went on just before half term kicked our year off brilliantly. Outdoor learning opportunities offer fantastic ways to encourage and support children to learn more about themselves and to challenge self esteem and build resilience. I have experienced many residential during my time as a teacher but I have to say Great Potheridge House stood out to me for a few simple, yet crucial reasons. Firstly the same instructor stayed with the group they were assigned to from the beginning. This struck me half way through as being so important for the children as they were supported mentally through quite often tricky experiences by somebody who'd already built a rapport and knew them as an individual. They therefore played a perfect role in guiding, cajoling and sometimes strongly encouraging participation and because they knew the children so well they were able to play this part brilliantly and achieve the best possible experience for the child.



Secondly the activities were designed with a focus on team participation. The abseiling for example required a team of children to pull a child up a tree lift and then watch and support as they abseil down. The crate stacking in its own way was designed so that everyone in the group supported and helped one another, from passing crates up a pulley system, to holding the safety ropes with the instructor, to pushing the stack over and leaving their team mates hanging at the end!! The powerful learning for me took place at the end, when each instructor would sit with their team and discuss feelings, support mechanisms and generally shone a light on the emotional and physical support that the team had given each other.



What a great experience and one I know will have made such a difference in terms of mindset for many of those children who attended.

The term concluded with our Christmas production of 'Olivia' and once again the whole experience for our pupils brings so much more than simply 'getting on stage and saying your lines'. It is a huge community event and brings us together to present something quite remarkable. The children learn about resilience, strength of character, determination and there is always a sense of fun about it. This year in particular the teamwork element shone through strongly. It only takes a bit of stage fright for things to begin to unravel and it will undoubtedly be the courage, support, patience and true sense of care that pupils showed towards each other that this performance will be remembered for. As one of our parents stated "This has been the highlight of her year! She has grown in confidence out of all recognition".



This is our aim for all our pupils at Hennock. A term full of challenges that pupils and staff rose to positively and achieved great things.

Landscape CofE Primary School



We began the year with KS2 learning how to play P BONES! Thursday afternoons were spent with Vincent, our brass expert, who showed us how to blow lots of raspberry noises which did become tuneful notes!



The Eco committee led the way with an assembly to launch our Healthy Eating Week. All classes were busy creating healthy treats to eat and thinking about the benefits of following a healthy, balanced diet. Using original recipes to create smoothies and making fruit kebabs were some of the treats on offer. Class 2 were even lucky enough to work alongside the chef from our local pub, The Live and Let Live, who cooked the menu the children designed~ a meal out for the class was a great experience!



The Eco committee also encouraged classes to think about grounds maintenance. Class 4 have planted the flower beds with spring bulbs and as part of their WWL projects this half term, Class three have been busy doing some leaf moulding, which they will be able to be used for a 'mulch' ~ 'Gardener's Gold'. It will be used to add nutrition to the raised beds, before some spring time planting! It has been a really successful term for the Eco Committee, who are ready to apply for the Silver Eco Award ~ they might even go straight for Green!

An artist in residence, Mandy Ellis, joined us for our annual arts week where we studied portraits. We gained a real insight into how an artist begins and the strategies she uses for drawing faces. Our Exhibition & Open Evening of Art work took place in October ~ a great opportunity to share and celebrate fantastic, artistic creativity. It also generated interest from new families, all of whom came back for a second visit.



(Faith and Beliefs) FAB, HARVEST IN A DAY really did live up to its name, with children fully engaging with the four workshops all based on the story of The Feeding of the Five Thousand. They demonstrated a great ability to work together, with the older ones supporting the younger ones and a creative time was had by all. The produce collected supported Buckfastleigh foodbank.

CLASSES 2&3 met a cultural champion. Their FAB Hinduism topic was brought alive by meeting somebody who could share her beliefs and traditions first hand. The children learnt more about how the festival of Diwali is celebrated across the world, they had the opportunity to handle Hindu artefacts including diwa lamps, dolls, spices, cards and gifts and took part in Hindu prayer (puja). They also learnt a traditional Hindu stick dance.

Sport has featured in a big way this term~ all the staff and children have enjoyed Mr Tanner's PE lessons and clubs. We have made the most of every opportunity taking part in: Cross Country events, Tri Golf, ultimate frisbee, tag rugby, high five netball, gymnastics and dodgeball. Phew! Finally we have visited Bethlehem 3 times in the penultimate week ~ All three performances were brilliant and the confidence displayed by the children was remarkable. I thought that each and every one of them was tremendous, making the shows spectacular and packed with memories for parents to treasure. Every year the teachers wonder whether they "can pull it off" again and every year the children do spectacularly well. I'm so proud of them all! Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant!

We have one last event being held by class 4 for their parents~ a wartime supper during which Class 4 are planning to serve parents their World War II rationing meal ~ Trench Stew and Carrot biscuits! YUM!

After a final carol service on Thursday 20th December I think we could say it's been a full and fun term.

Stoke Gabriel Primary School

We have had a fabulous first term at Stoke Gabriel and were really proud to be able to show off our school during our Ofsted inspection in December. We have been putting a lot of effort into our curriculum and developing the enquiry journey model so that the children are given the most enriching learning experiences. The year started with a whole school enquiry journey based around the text, "Where my wellies take me." This saw the children making the most of our wonderful location with welly walks, artwork from natural paints, mapping skills, poetry and clay modelling just a few of the learning opportunities delivered by the staff.



At the same time, children in years 5 and 6 all had sailing lessons thanks to Stoke Gabriel Boating Association. Matt Tanner of Saints Southwest has been with us on Tuesdays, working alongside the staff to guarantee high quality PE provision for the whole school. This has been supplemented by visits to Paignton Community College sports festivals for the older children and a Tag Rugby Festival for the whole Trust. Year 3 children have been the first to benefit from the introduction of Woodland Learning and have thoroughly enjoyed their Wednesday afternoons in our recently cleared woodland area.



This has been the first year we have started with our Five Star Pledge and new school values of Community, Character, Courage and Creativity in place. As part of our pledge, the year 5 and 6 children went to Slapton to investigate the history around Operation Tiger and they also had an inspiring visit to We The Curious@Bristol where they learned all about the night sky above us in an amazing planetarium show. Their study of Slapton ended with an immersion day in life during World War 2 and a visit from a gentleman who grew up in Stoke Gabriel during the war. The children were spellbound as he told them about the bombing of boats moored in the River Dart.



Our Year 4 class have been working with Totnes Renewable Energy Society and have visited sites around the local area with solar panels, wind turbines, water turbines and other renewable energy sources. The whole of key stage 2 went to see the latest production of David Walliams' "Awful Auntie" at the Theatre Royal Plymouth as part of our pledge to take every child to see a professional theatre production during their time with us. On the same day, Key stage 1 had a Polar Exploration Day to bring together their enquiry journey based around Antarctica.



Tedburn St Mary Primary School

A very busy term has seen the school continue to build on its successes of previous years and ended with the school being number one in Devon again for its KS2 results and performance. A fantastic achievement and a reflection of how well all our children work in school and the dedication of staff throughout school in helping all children achieve their full potential.



We have had lots to celebrate besides this, the school has introduced a new PSHE scheme - called Jigsaw which is being well received across school. Classes are developing and beginning to embed Mike Hughes' Magenta principles and staff have really taken this on board and thinking about how they can use his principles to enhance children's learning. Our new Accelerated reader programme has been well received by children and the passion for reading across school is really becoming evident.



We have had two weeks where children have read over a million words. Our approach to helping children develop healthy lifestyles continues to improve, our introduction of the Daily Mile has been a great success, as has our Sports partnership with QE. This has seen support for teachers in their teaching of PE lessons as well as children visiting the high school to take part in Rugby and Gymnastics. The children are really looking forward to next terms events.



We held an Art week in November which was a great success, the children looked at four different artists: Andy Warhol, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Freda Karlo, recreating portraits in each artists style. The parents thoroughly enjoyed our Art gallery at the end of the week. Visits to Runnage Farm, Morwellham Quay and Farmwise this term has certainly supported children's learning across the curriculum this term.

We hope to build on the great start to the year by everyone as we head into the Spring term and look forward to the challenges it brings



Yeoford Primary School



This term has been very busy with lots of fun things happening across the school. The new Foundation Stage Unit opened in September and is a hive of activity with lots of new children joining throughout the term.



Hedgehog Class (YR, 1,2) have been working hard on their topic about Toys and visited Crediton Museum which has a huge range of old and new toys. They enjoyed Forest Schools and they made pancakes, tree cookies and learned how to build shelters.



Owl Class (y3,4,5,6) have been learning about the Tudors and they visited some Tudors houses in Exeter and watched the Terrible Tudors show at the Northcott Theatre.



The year 5 & 6 took part in a TAG Rugby tournament at the local secondary school and the year 3 & 4 children took part in a gymnastics event also.

The term finished with a fantastic performance of 'Christmas around the World' and the children sung and performed magnificently. The children visited the Pantomime and watched Aladdin along with Christmas lunch and making Christingles it has been a busy, but fun end of the term



Special Thanks

Finally there are a few people I would like to thank for their outstanding support this term:

Sue Howard has stepped into the breach in one of our schools to help them manage effectively while a member of staff is poorly. She has continued to complete all the main office work she needs to do, including ensuring payroll is accurate, alongside supporting the Academy Head- referring to sickness 'Sue takes it to a whole other level!' What praise- thank you Sue!

I would also like to mention all the staff at Cheriton Bishop who have a pupil who has very high medical needs and requires immediate emergency treatment to counteract life threatening episodes- they have dealt with 6 such incidents this term and have all been superb!

I would also like to mention Alice who has had her first term as an Academy Head- she has taken up the reins in such a professional and dedicated way, ensuring the school continues to support families that do not always find things easy alongside supporting staff with an incredible level of nurture. A great start Alice keep it up!

I would also like to thank Pete and the staff at Yeoford, particularly Lyndsey who have set up the Foundation Stage Unit which has provided Pre School provision in the village- it's looking good!

Next, Sarah Luxton, who has thrown herself into the delivery of sports to such a standard that the school received the Teignbridge award for Community School of the Year last week. What an accolade- thank you for your enthusiasm Sarah!

Finally, I would like to make it clear that all our staff do wonderful things throughout the year- often too numerous to mention. Our Trust is being recognised by Regional Schools Commissioners' Office on a regular basis for the great things that are happening for the education of the children in our care and we should all be aware of this.

Have a super Christmas and New Year everyone and thank you for all your amazing efforts in ensuring the Link Academy Trust is such a brilliant organisation.

Nicky



*Finally, A Very Merry
Christmas and a Happy
New Year*

