Weekly Learning Update

5th December 2025

Nursery

Nursery have had another exciting and fun filled week! We are continuing to practice our Nativity and this week we joined Reception to rehearse in the hall. All staff commented on how fantastic Nursery were in waiting for their turn, knowing the song lyrics and the actions. We are very excited and cannot wait to show you on Tuesday 16th December!

In English, we have continued to explore rhyme and rhythm within our key text 'Each Peach Pear Plum' and thinking about the flow of the words within the story. Children have been clapping out the rhythm within spoken sentences and thought about breaking words into syllables, clapping out each syllable as it is heard.

During Phonics, we have continued to explore environmental sounds within Nursery, focusing on making sounds in a variety of different ways and identifying the sound that was made. We have played games to support this, including 'Granny's Footsteps' which the children loved!

With the wintery weather upon us, the children have still been enjoying going out and learning in our outdoor classroom. Please ensure that children have named coats, hats and gloves each day.

We have had a range of activities to challenge the children this week, including our own present wrapping station, vegetable printing to explore colour and creating pattern, making Christmas wishes and rescuing different animals from ice!

Reception (King Class and Parks Class)

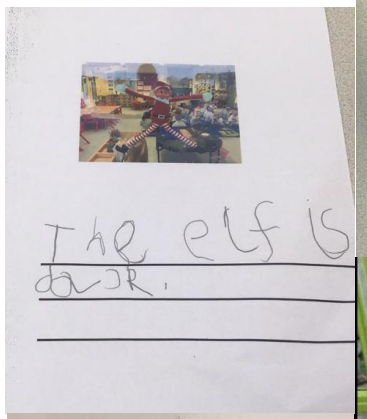
This week, Reception have been so busy learning, exploring and having fun!

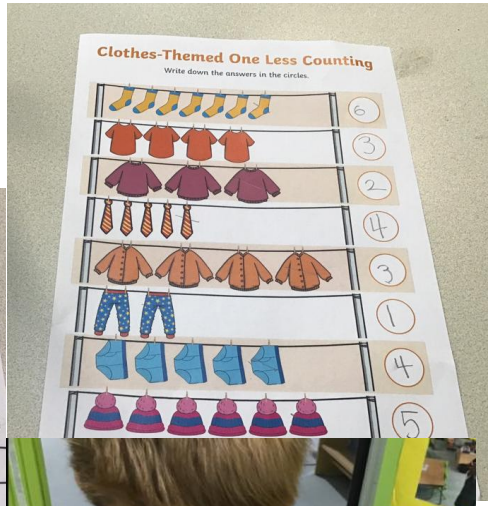
This week, we were super phonics detectives! We learned the new phonemes ai, ee, igh and oa. The children have been practising blending these sounds to read new words and segmenting to spell. We are so proud of how confident they are becoming!

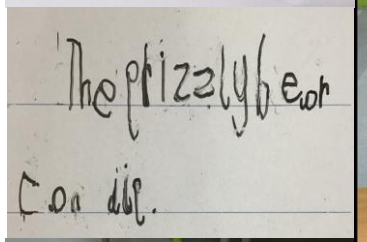
In English, we've been learning how to write sentences that inform. The children created their very own grizzly bear fact files full of amazing information. They can't wait to explore other types of bears next week and begin writing even more fantastic sentences!

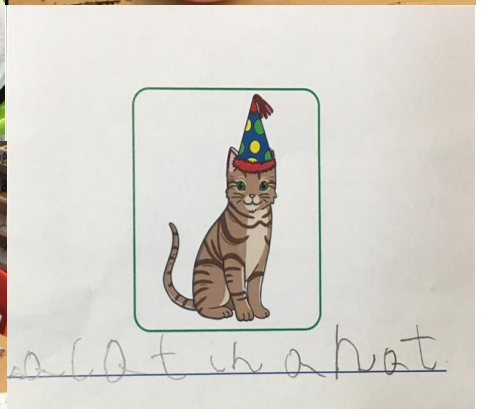
Maths this week has been all about one more and one less within 10. The children have been using practical resources and games to help them understand that one more means adding 1 and one less means taking 1 away.

This week in Expressive Arts, the children began creating their Christmas cards. They used felt-tip pens to colour the base of their designs and we were incredibly proud of how carefully and neatly they worked on their templates.









Year 1 (Bell Class and Windsor Class)

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our school Christmas Fair! It was lovely to see so many of you enjoying yourselves and getting into the festive spirit. There were lots of happy faces from the children and it truly felt like a wonderful community celebration.

This week, in Maths, we completed our unit on shape with an end-of-unit quiz. We were so impressed with the children's shape knowledge and their excellent developing skills.

In English, we made predictions about the short video *"Bubbles"*. The children showed great imagination when sharing what they thought would happen to the girl after she blew the bubbles. We were also practising writing words with the –ing and –ed suffixes in super sentences.

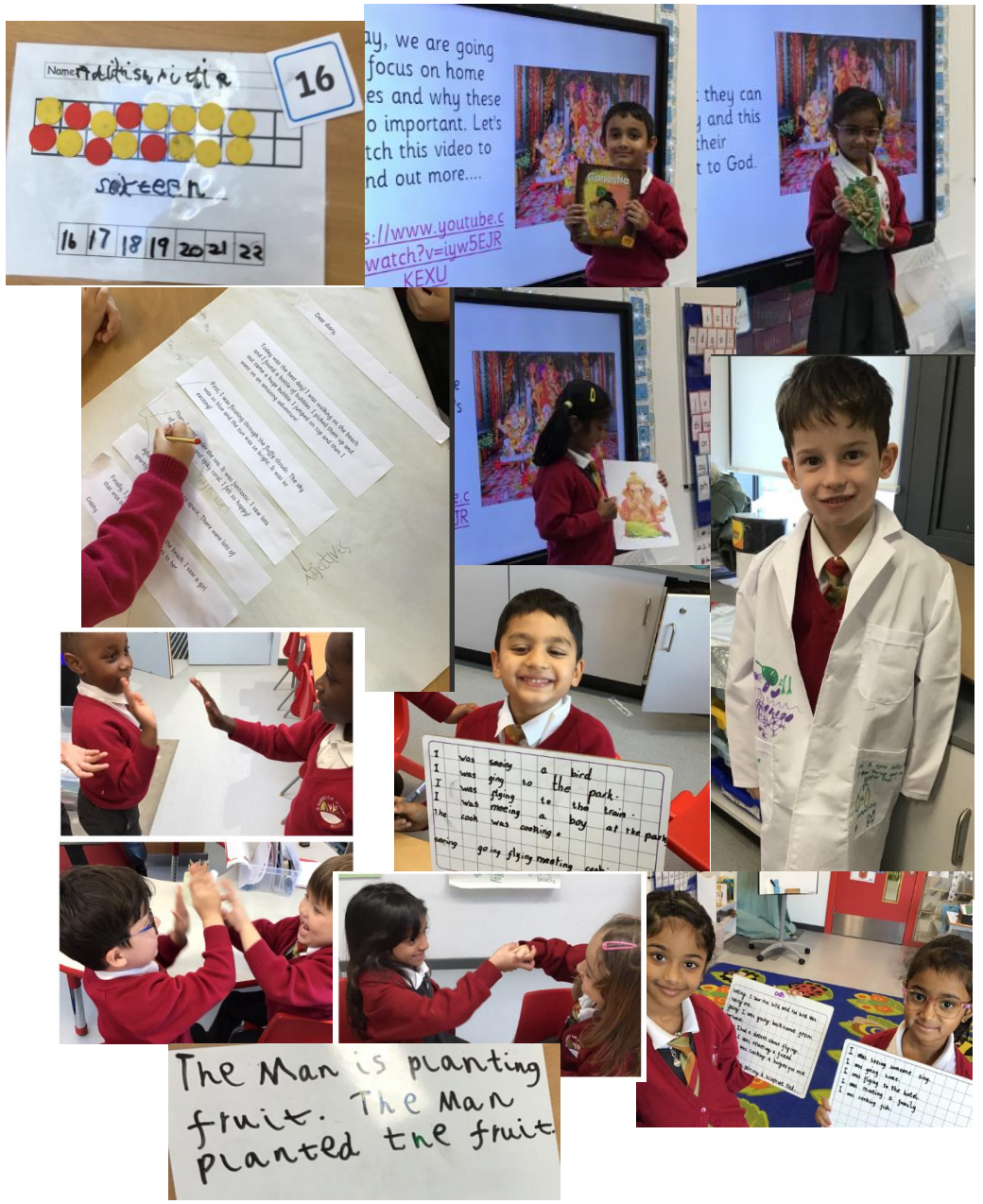
We continued deepening our understanding of groups of animals in Science. The children considered how animals within the same group can have differences – for example, not all birds can fly and not all mammals live on land. They are becoming fantastic scientists!

In History, the children enjoyed making comparisons between Victorian schools and schools today. We were impressed with how much they remembered from our visit to St John's Museum - mini historians in the making!

In PSHE, we explored why people might choose to hold or join hands and practised gestures such as shaking hands and high-fiving to show love and respect towards each other. It was lovely to see the children thinking about kindness and friendship.

We learnt about Hindu home shrines in RE and were delighted that some children were able to talk about the shrines they have at home and even brought in religious items to share. We were so proud of how all the children showed community by listening carefully and asking thoughtful questions to learn more.

Thank you for your continued support. We are so proud of the children and all their hard work this week!



Year 2 (Braille Class and Kerr Class)

Year 2 have worked hard this week in their learning!

In English, we have started a new book: 'There's a Rang-Tan in my bedroom' by James Sellick. Our classroom was invaded by a surprise visitor asking for help. It turned out it was an orangutan from the rainforest, who was worried about how the trees were being cut down and destroying her home. She recommended not using products that use palm oil, like shampoo and chocolate. We are looking forward to writing a quick news report next week about the 'Rang-Tan in our classroom.'

In Maths, we have explored mixed addition and subtraction questions. We have explored language used to show whether we are adding or subtracting. We practised using number lines to add and subtract two-digit numbers.

In Science, we have been exploring microhabitats where minibeasts live. We walked around the field at school to see if we could find any microhabitats in our school grounds.

In History, we researched the life of Samuel Pepys, a man that lived in London in 1666. Samuel Pepys wrote a diary recounting the events of important moments in Stuart times like the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London.

In DT, we have continued exploring our sewing techniques and some of us moved onto sewing using fabric rather than plastic binca.

Year 3 (Malala Class and Anning Class)

Year 3 have had another exciting week of learning!

In English, we explored the features of persuasive writing in more detail. The children practised using time, cause and place conjunctions, as well as prepositions, preparing to write their own persuasive texts next week.

In Maths, we have been adding and subtracting 2 and 3-digit numbers, exploring number bonds to 100, and practising how to estimate answers.

In RE, we focused on the importance of nature and the seasons for those with Pagan worldviews. We explored the Wheel of the Year, with a special focus on Yuletide, discussing how greenery plays a key role in traditions and celebrations and reflecting on why this time is meaningful for some people.

In Science, we investigated patterns in the human body, asking, "Do some parts of our body have similar lengths or follow a pattern? "The children measured and compared their height and wingspan to identify similarities and differences.

In PSHE, we discussed different types of bullying and explored strategies for what to do if we, or someone we know, experiences it.

In Geography, we carried out some fieldwork in Houlton, exploring how people's use of the local area changes over time. The children observed the Co-op and the park, recording how many people visited at different times and discussing patterns.

The children have shown great curiosity and enthusiasm across all areas of their learning and we are very proud of them!

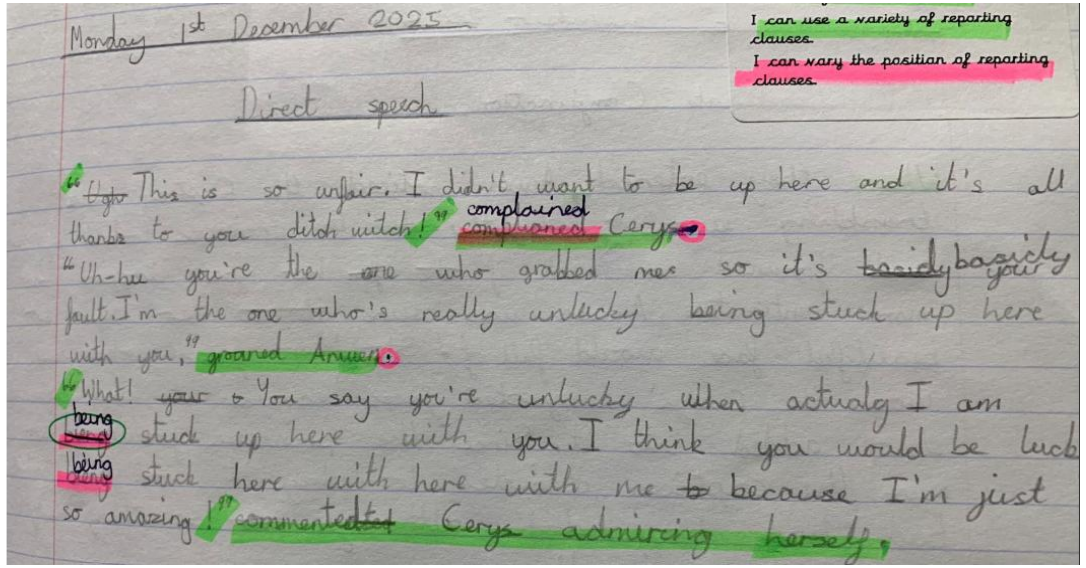
Year 4 (Tagore Class and Turing Class)

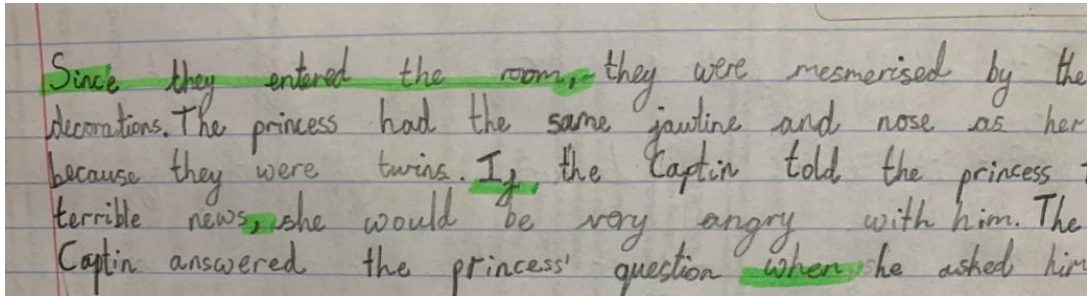
Our English learning this week was supported by new developments in our story: we found out who killed King Thibault! We have been developing our understanding of direct speech and the purpose of subordinate conjunctions within sentences so that we can manipulate causes. After all of this work, we have begun to plan our prequel to the events of this story. There were lots of unique and interesting ideas shared which will inform our steps of learning next week.

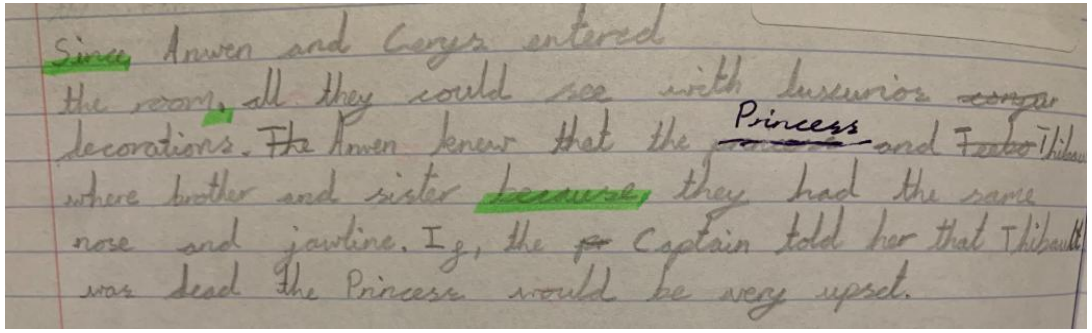
Maths has seen us continue to develop our understanding of how multiplications are so closely related. We have use this knowledge to help strengthen our understanding of the 7, 11 and 12 times tables.

Our Design and Technology lesson this week was centred around developing our own recipe for baking bread. The children spent a long time deciding which bread they would bake and the necessary steps that would need to be followed for their delicious creations!

This week in RE, we asked questions about Hinduism. We wanted to know more about how they worship, their belief of God and how this affects their daily lived lives. We took a virtual tour of a Mandir and we were able to observe how a communal worldview may influence an individuals.



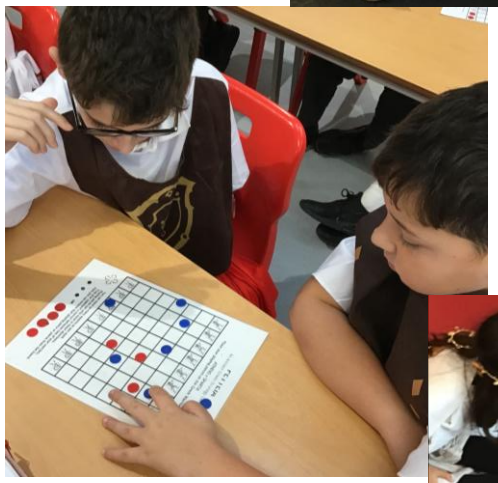




Year 5 (Attenborough Class and Rauf Class)

On Monday, we had a fantastic Greek Day! The children loved dressing up and taking part in a variety of activities, including puzzles, games and role-playing Olympic events. They also learned more about life in Ancient Greece, including democracy and its lasting impact on the world.

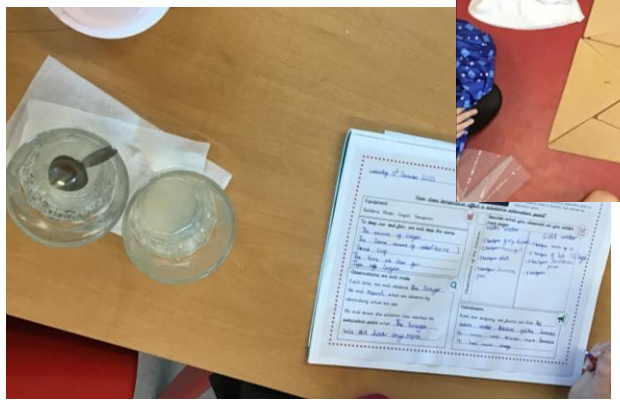
In Maths this week, we have continued working on adding and subtracting fractions. This has been a challenging area as it requires a range of skills, including finding equivalent fractions and converting between improper fractions and mixed numbers. The children have shown great perseverance and embraced the challenge with enthusiasm.



In English, we have started an exciting new unit based on the book *Robot Girl* by Malorie Blackman. The children have enjoyed reading the first few chapters and are already hooked on the story. They have been using clues in the text to make inferences, asking thoughtful questions and making predictions about what might happen next.

In DT, we began constructing our bird hides this week. The children worked carefully, using their plans and applying the joining techniques they have learned. Next week, we will continue building and think about finishing touches, such as making it camouflaged.

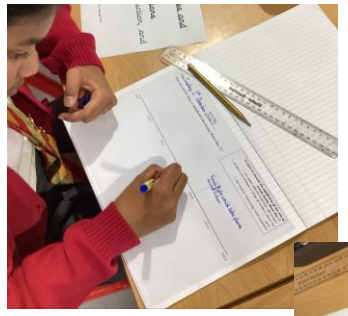
In Music, we continued to evaluate different songs, focusing on their structure and identifying the 'hook'. We have also started thinking about ideas for our own song and what our hook might be.

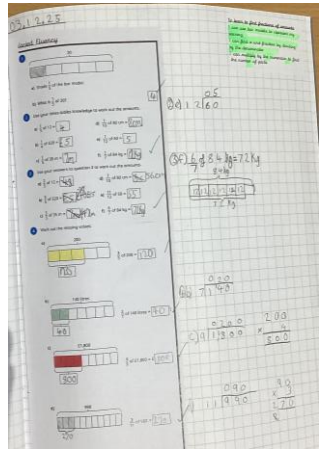


In Science, we explored the concept of saturation by investigating how much sugar can dissolve in water. We carried out experiments to see whether temperature affects the time it takes for saturation to occur.

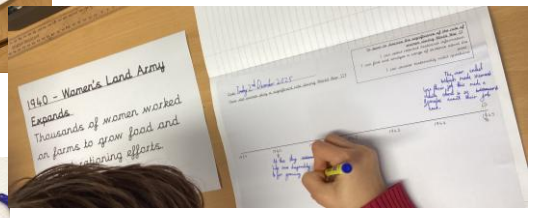
Year 6 (Pogson Class and Walker Class)

In English this week, we have been busy planning and starting to write our balanced argument about evacuation: Should children have been evacuated in WWII? We have considered a range of arguments for and against, and are making sure we have the same number of arguments to keep a neutral and impartial tone to our writing. We are writing to discuss, so want the reader to come to their own decisions and opinions without influence.

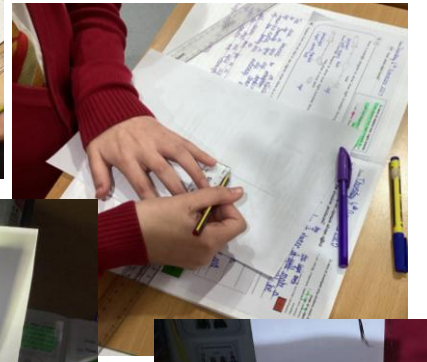




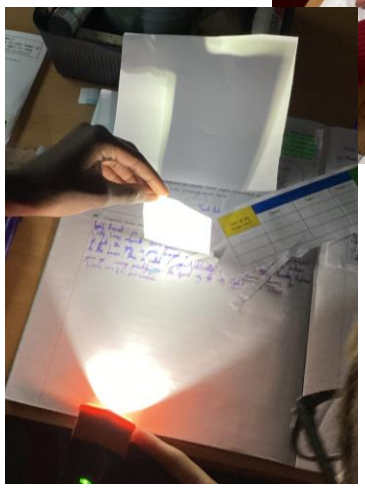
In Maths, we have continued with dividing fractions by an integer. We have represented this using bar models to show the fractions getting smaller as we divide them. We have also found a fraction of an amount and used this knowledge to find the whole too.

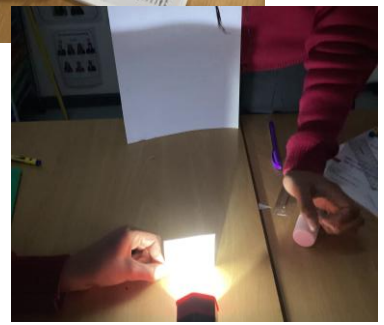


In History, we have explored the role of women during World War Two. During the war, women were expected to carry out the roles previously carried out by men. This included working in factories and making ammunition and weapons ready to take to war. After the war, women had to go back to their previous roles as the men returned.



In Science, we have investigated shadows and how these are formed. Our question was 'What happens when light hits an opaque object?'. We could either investigate whether the area (size) of an opaque shapes affected the size of the shadow produced or investigate whether the placement (closer or further from a light source) of an opaque shape affects the size of its shadow. We worked scientifically to write a prediction, carry out our investigation and write a conclusion based on our results.





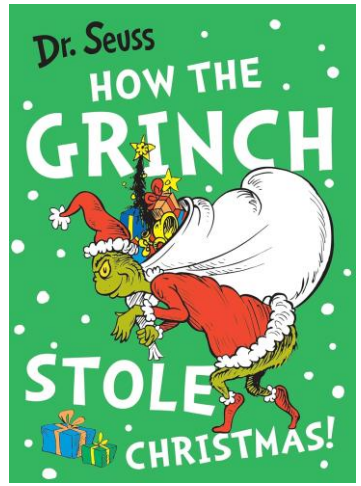
In RE, we have reflected on our learning since the beginning of Year 6. We have consolidated our knowledge about beliefs on land and how these beliefs shape the way humans live. We discussed sacred places, which are important to different worldviews, and which factors can have an impact on someone's worldview.

Collective Worship

Severn Trent came to visit St Gabriel's this week and delivered an assembly to the school about the water cycle. During the assembly, it was discussed how we can save water each day by making small changes.

SEVERN TRENT

During Worship Through Story this week, we read How the Grinch Stole Christmas. The children loved hearing how the Grinch tried to stop Christmas by taking away presents, decorations and food, only to discover that the true meaning of Christmas cannot be stolen.



The story reminded us all that Christmas is not about material things, but about love, joy and community. It teaches that kindness and togetherness are what make the season special and that hearts can be changed when we share those gifts with others.

Braille Class led this week's Celebration Collective Worship. They shared some fascinating information with the school about Saint Nicholas. Well done to Braille Class!

Collective worship at St Gabriel's always aims to be **inspirational** for all, **invitational** to all and **inclusive** of all.

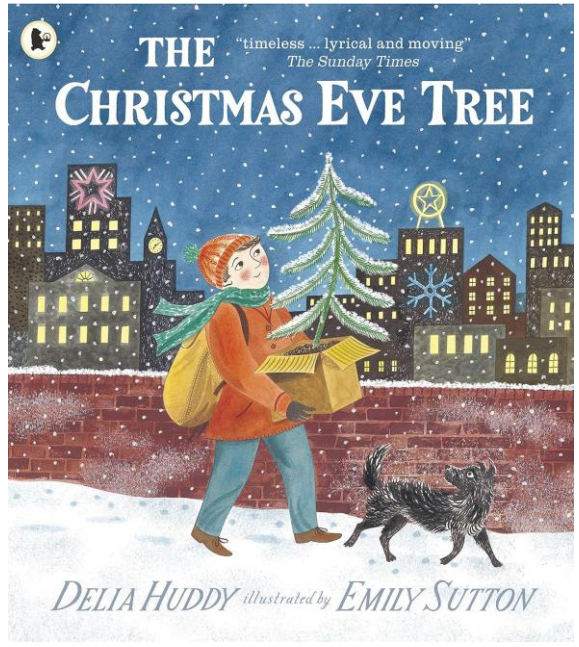
Recommended Read

The Christmas Eve Tree by Delia Huddy and Emily Sutton

A little fir tree, cramped and lopsided, is overlooked while the other trees grow tall and strong. One December, it is cut down and taken to the city to be sold, but no one wants it, until a small boy asks for it just as the shops are closing on Christmas Eve.

The little tree enjoys a joyful Christmas with an unlikely group of people and later finds a permanent home in a park, where it grows strong and is loved by all.

This heartwarming story celebrates the true spirit of Christmas - kindness, caring and fun over expensive gifts - and shows how even the smallest plants can thrive when nurtured.



Online Safety

The UK Safer Internet Centre has a wealth of advice on how to support children and families to be safe online during the Christmas holidays.

Christmas is such a wonderful time of year, with excitable children and time to relax with family and friends.. and of course, there are new toys to play with!

With a huge increase in sales of devices (around 13 million people receive smartphones for Christmas each year) it is important to ensure that you and your children are safe when playing with new kit. To help, we've set out a few top tips to help keep your household safe online over the holidays.

https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/top-tips-for-staying-safe-online-at-christmas

UK Safer Internet Centre

Maths Problem of the Week

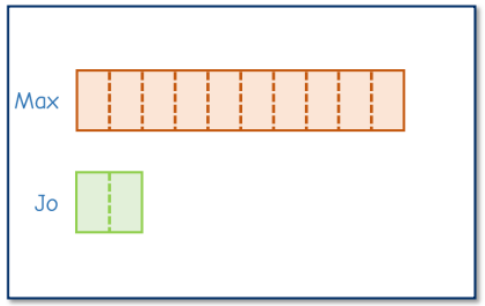
KS1

1 Max has 10 cards.

Jo has 2 cards.

Max gives Jo 6 cards.

How many more cards does Jo have than Max now?

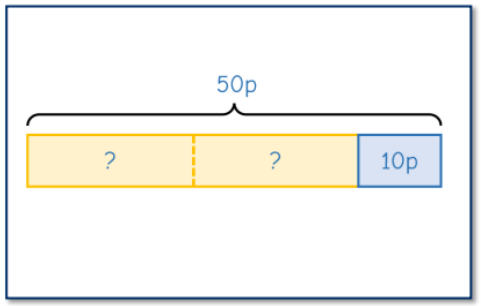


2 Kim buys 2 mince pies.

She pays with a 50p coin.

She gets 10p change.

How much does one mince pie cost?

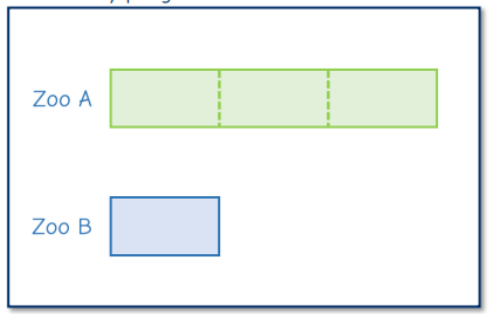


KS2

3 Zoo A has 3 times as many penguins as Zoo B.

- Zoo A releases $\frac{2}{3}$ of their penguins into the wild.
- Zoo A gives $\frac{1}{2}$ of their remaining penguins to Zoo B.
- Zoo A has 10 penguins left.

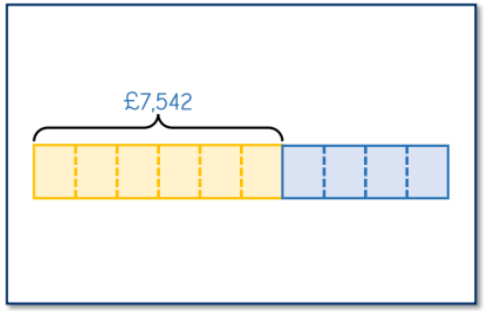
How many penguins does Zoo B have now?



4 The cost of a sleigh is reduced by 40%

The cost of the sleigh is now £7,542

What was the full price of the sleigh?



Challenge

5 A baker bakes the same number of cookies, gingerbread and biscuits.

- By lunchtime, there are twice as many gingerbread as biscuits left.
- The baker sells 45 cookies.
- The number of cookies is now 17 fewer than the number of gingerbread.
- There are 323 items left.

How many of each item did the baker bake?

Answers

1 Jo has 4 more cards than Max.

2 One mince pie costs 20p pence.

3 Zoo B now has 30 penguins.

4 The full price of the sleigh was £12,570

5 164

Autumn Term 2: Key Dates

Monday 8th December: Houlton School Pantomime
Students of Houlton School are Performing a touring production of Sleeping Beauty at St Gabriel's.

Wednesday 10th December: Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Dinner Day
Christmas Jumper Day is an annual fundraising event organised by Save the Children, encouraging people to wear festive jumpers and make a donation to support the charity. Please make your donation on Arbor.

Friday 12th December: Attenborough Celebration Worship and Nursery Christmas Craft Sessions
We are welcoming Nursery parents and carers either between 10.30-11.15am or 2.45-3.30pm for some Christmas crafts. Please complete the sign up sheets on the Nursery doors. Due to limited space within the Nursery, we ask that 1 parent/carer attends and no siblings, unless they are a baby in arms.

Tuesday 16th December: Nursery and Reception Nativity

Wednesday 17th December: KS1 Nativity

Family Support

There is a special edition of the Family Information Service newsletter.

Read on to discover money saving ideas for the festive period, details about the HAF programme, emergency support over the festive period, tips to stay safe this Christmas and more.

Worried about a Child?

If you have concerns that a child is suffering any form of abuse, neglect or cruelty, contact the Warwickshire Children and Families Family Connect immediately by calling 01926 414144.
Lines are open Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5.30pm, Friday 8.30am-5.00pm.

If you need to get in touch out of usual office hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team immediately by calling 01926 886922.

If you think that a child is at immediate risk, contact the police immediately by calling 999.

Community Events

Thank you very much for supporting our Christmas Fair this week! It was lovely to share the festive fun with our wider school community!

We are still selling raffle tickets, which are available to purchase from the school office. Thank you to local businesses who have supported us with donations of prizes – we are very grateful for your generosity!

ST. GABRIEL'S CofE ACADEMY HOULTON

Christmas

RAFFLE

PRIZES INCLUDE:

£30 VOUCHER FOR THE TUNING FORK

2 X VOUCHER FOR FOUR PILATES CLASSES AT MINDFUL MOVEMENT WITH EVELYN FRAIN

TIGERS PLAYZONE VOUCHERS

£15 VOUCHER FOR LA CASA LOCO

COVENTRY BLAZE FAMILY TICKET

2 X £20 VOUCHERS FOR HILLMORTON FISH SALOON

4 TICKETS TO THE CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME AT THE BENN HALL

ALCOHOL PRIZES

£50 VOUCHER FOR THE SPICE LOUNGE

£50 VOUCHER FOR THE PADDLE

TWO FULL DAYS AT LEGACY SPORTS HOLIDAY CLUBS

£20 JOSEPH MORRIS VOUCHER

MACREADY THEATRE FAMILY TICKET TO THE GINGERBREAD MAN IN JANUARY 2026

1 HOUR LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE MASSAGE WITH GAIA HOLISTICS

£ 10 VOUCHER FOR AESTHETICS WITH LILY

WHILTON LOCKS ICE SKATING VOUCHER

CHILDREN'S BOOK BUNDLES GIFTED BY TROUBADOR PUBLISHING

SWEET RETREAT BUNDLE

4 X CHILDREN'S HAIR CUTS AT HOULTON HAIR HUB

£10 VOUCHER FOR POLISHED BY IZZY-MAE

2 X £15 TREATMENT VOUCHERS FOR K LOUISE THERAPY

2 X £50 ONSIDE VOUCHERS

£5 A STRIP, £1 A TICKET

Advent Attendance Award

Weekly Draws: Each week during December, one child from each class who has attended school every day that week will be entered into a draw to win a book of their choice.

Grand Draw: Children who achieve full attendance for the whole of December will be entered into a special draw for another chance to win a free book.

Whole school target is 96%

National research shows, on average, children who meet expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics have higher attendance than those who did not.

Please contact the school for support and advice if you are concerned about your child's attendance.

NHS England has provided helpful guidance for parents and carers when making the difficult decision regarding not sending a child to school.

NHS guidance- Is my child too ill for school?

St Gabriel's CofE Academy, Houlton Way, Houlton, Rugby, CV23 1AN

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