

Lent Term

Weekly Newsletter - Week ending 14th February 2020

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

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Dear Parents,

The first half of the Lent Term has flown by, but nevertheless, it has been packed with opportunities for our children to enjoy, achieve and learn. We have had exotic animal visitors, a mock trial from local magistrates, a wide variety of sporting events and much more! Next half term is full of more exciting plans. We will be launching our Lenten activities and will be marking World Book Day and British Science Week in school to name a few!

I would like to thank staff for all their hard work in support of your children and bringing exciting variety to your children's days. A big 'thank you' to all our children and families for embracing these opportunities each day, making St Gregory's such a special school to be a part of.

Have a wonderful half term break and enjoy your family time together.

Mrs K Yuen

Executive Headteacher

Nursery

Since January, we have welcomed some new Nursery children and their families to the St Gregory's community. We are proud of how well they are settling in and how quickly they have formed relationships with the other children.

The children have engaged in a wide range of activities which reflect the seven areas of learning including baking, counting, acting out stories, painting and water play. One focus has been all things 'Winter'. We have explored the properties of ice, considered the clothes we need to wear in cold weather and created some beautiful art work. We have also focused on the theme, 'Celebrations', our families and all the special people in our lives.



Upcoming Events

24th February

Back to School.

25th February

Mass for the Eucharist Topic for Year 6 and their parents.

26th February

Ash Wednesday.

2nd March

Book and Biscuit Week – please see letter for details.

4th March

Elm and Ash assembly to parents 9.10am.

5th March

World Book Day.

17th and 18th March

Parents' Evening: 3.30pm-6pm.

26th March

Northampton Catholic Schools' Lent Reflection, Northampton Cathedral.

27th March

Poppies' assembly to parents at 9.05am.

Foundation Stage

In Foundation Stage this half term, we have been very busy learning all about 'People Who Help Us'. We have enjoyed visits from the Fire Service, a bus driver, a Priest and The Hope Centre! This has led to exciting writing opportunities including learning how to write down questions we would like to ask.

We have also enjoyed plenty of opportunities to go out and about in our local community. We have visited our friends at Eleanore House each fortnight, attending their coffee morning. We are forming some lovely friendships with the residents there. We also visited Weston Favell Library this week and met Michael and Ety, who gave us a tour of the library and read a story to us. We were very excited to be issued library cards and were able to take home a library book. We are really looking forward to visiting with our parents at weekends now to get our next library book!

Year 1

In Year 1 this term, we have been learning lots of interesting facts about animals from around the world. In Ash Class, the children have been using phonics skills to write about animals independently and Miss Brown's class have been generating non-fiction writing, creating fact files about tigers and penguins. They have been able to label the key parts of these animals and recall whether they are carnivores, omnivores or herbivores. Lots of scientific language has been learned in Daises and the children have worked hard to apply this in their writing.

All of the children in Ash Class have enjoyed using technology to practise and improve their mathematical skills this term. It has been really pleasing to see them making excellent use of the resources available to them in the classroom to support their understanding of key mathematical concepts.



Daises Class have focused on adding interest to their writing by using adjectives and thinking carefully about word choices. It has been wonderful to see them choosing more adventurous vocabulary, like colossal, massive or even gigantic, rather than just using the word 'big'! The children have used the familiar story, 'The Tiger Who Came To Tea' to devise their own version titled: 'The Gorilla Who Came To A Midnight Feast'.

In both classes, the children have produced some fantastic artwork, working on their sketching skills to draw animals. Popular choices have been penguins, tigers, gorillas and birds.



Year 2

Our topic this term has been 'Adventure Is Out There'. We have been learning about Ibn Battuta and Christopher Columbus, who both went on exciting adventures to different parts of the world. We have looked closely at the author, Aaron Becker, who wrote Journey and Quest. We really enjoyed learning how to write interesting setting descriptions with similes, noun phrases and adverbs. We have also created some fantastic artwork based on the film poster for 'Up!'

In RE, our topic has been 'Books'. We had great fun creating role-plays of the proclamation of the Gospel at Mass, which helped us to understand that the Gospel is very special. We used this RE knowledge to participate fully in our Mass with Year 3 and Fr Pius. We remembered to make the Sign of the Cross on our forehead, lips and heart to remind us that we should try to keep the Word of God in our mind, to speak with holy words and to invite God to strengthen our love for Him and others.

Finally, in PSHE, we have been learning about how to keep our bodies healthy. We created short exercises in groups to help us to be active and stay fit. We have also thought about the importance of a good bedtime routine to help us to get enough sleep, which will help us learn better at school.



Year 3

Our Year 3 class have been working hard to master the recorder this term; they are really enjoying working with Mrs Sefton and can already play the note 'B'. They are beginning to read music – especially if it has 'B' and a rest in it!

The class are really getting to grips with their topic, Rock of Ages, enjoying learning about life in Stone Age Britain. We certainly have a few aspiring experts in the field. This week they have had a very successful and informative trip to Flag Fen, a Bronze Age settlement, near Peterborough.

After making a timeline to show how little time humans have been on the Earth, we became field archaeologists, examining artefacts to determine what an object was, what it may have been used for and the time period it was from. We then became model archaeologists, making pots from clay using tools of the time to decorate them. Following lunch, we took a very muddy, slippery walk around the site with sheep wandering along behind us. Sonya, our guide, told us that sheep have been on the site since the Bronze Age and the sheep there were probably descendents of the original sheep!

Entering a shed, we saw log boats being preserved in water and wax and learned that they were used to cross the sea, not just local rivers. That would not have been fun! We then visited a preserved causeway which is estimated to have needed 60,000 trees to build it and have taken 400 years to complete. There was a lot of treasure found under the causeway and it was thought to have been left there as gifts to thank the gods.

Eventually, we found the round house and could see how it was built. It was dark inside and quite cold. Sonya used a flint to light a fire and told us an amazing story about dragons, fairies and elves set around the mere we visited at the end of the trip. We had a fantastic day!

Tommy: "I liked seeing the log boats wrapped to protect them from rotting."

Elliott: "I liked learning about the mere in the story."

Aliou: "It was fun to make a wish on the iron sword!"



Abel: "I liked learning about the round house and because it had a grass roof, it was camouflaged."

Year 4

In Maths, we have been exploring the four operations, learning new methods to help us work out calculations efficiently and to help our understanding. We have learned the column method for adding, subtracting and multiplying, and we have consolidated our learning on the bus stop method for division.

In Literacy, we have completed lots of writing based on the book 'Leon and the Place Between'. We have focussed on persuasive writing this term, exploring the features of persuasive writing which has led to us writing our own text. Our first piece of writing was persuading our reader to buy tickets to Abdul Kazam's magic show. The children really enjoyed this piece of writing! We then moved on to learning about the Australian Bushfires. The children used a Chromebook to research information about the fires and then wrote a persuasive letter to Michael Ellis, convincing him to do something to support those affected. The children really engaged with this piece of writing.

In Science, our topic has been 'sound'. We have completed several experiments to help us further our understanding of this tricky concept. Our first experiment involved the string telephone, which helped us understand



how sound is made and how it travels. From this experiment, we concluded that sound is made from vibrations which pass through air particles. Our second experiment involved using a variety of musical instruments to explore pitch and volume. We explored different methods to make high and low pitch and loud and quiet sounds.

Our work in Art and Design has been based around our topic, 'Music to our Ears'. We used watercolour paints to paint a piano, using bleeding techniques. We then moved onto creating a background practising the techniques we had learned. We are very proud of the work we have produced.



Year 5

The pupils in Year 5 are thoroughly enjoying their topic, 'An Adventure in Time and Space'. They have produced some excellent writing in Literacy in the form of newspaper reports, diary entries and biographies, working hard to include plenty of the 'Writers' Secrets' they have learned in order to aid cohesion and add sophistication to their writing. In Science, the children have been learning about The Solar System and have enjoyed researching particular planets working hard to present their information using technology in class.

We have had an interesting time in RE this term. Our focus has been on our 'Local Church', investigating the mission of the diocese in which we live. As you may know, Bishop Peter Doyle – Bishop of the Diocese of Northampton for over a decade - will be retiring in the next few weeks and Bishop Elect David Oakley will be his successor. The fact that this change has occurred during the topic that focuses on the diocese has been particularly interesting and we look forward to supporting Bishop Elect David in his new role.

A recent highlight for our Year 5 pupils has undoubtedly been our visitors from Magistrates in the Community. Both classes have benefited from a visit from members of the team of magistrates, allowing the opportunity to gain an insight into British law and the judicial system. Thankfully, our visitors were happy to answer the wide range of questions posed to them by some very inquisitive Year 5s, before setting up a courtroom scene in our school. The children had various roles to play and a case, which involved cyberbullying, to judge. It was very interesting to hear the children's view on whether the defendant should be found guilty and we were most impressed with the clarity of some children's reasoning and the empathy they showed. The morning spent with the magistrates has certainly inspired our pupils to remain as law-abiding citizens!



Year 6

Year 6 have been working incredibly hard this half term. Their focus has been on World War One, investigating why and how the war started and learning about what it means to be 'an alliance'. They have worked well to use secondary sources to research what trench life was like, learning more from Mr Wyn Williams – a regular visitor to St Gregory's – who gave an interesting talk about William Coltman, a brave World War One medic who risked his life to help others in the battlefields. Year 6 have demonstrated impressive resilience and enthusiasm when learning about decimals and entering the world of algebra during Maths lessons. Their teachers have been impressed with their work. In recent weeks, the children have been putting on their 'writing caps'; embracing the opportunity to enter BBC Radio 2's 500 Word Competition. The children's creativity and use of Writers' Secrets has been pleasing to see. Who knows, we may have some winners in our midst!

Sport at SGCPS

Our Year 4 children have come to the end of their swimming sessions at Barry Road Swimming Pool; we are very proud of all that the children have achieved. The regularity of the weekly sessions has allowed all the children to increase in confidence. It has been wonderful to see them becoming more competent swimmers and we look forward to awarding their certificates in our celebration assembly this week. We hope that they will continue to practise this vital skill by visiting local pools at the weekends and in the school holidays.

Mini Vinnies

On Thursday, 5th March there will be a Cake Sale from 3pm on the Main Playground. Proceeds raised will be sent to the people in Australia who have suffered through the extensive fires. Please bring any cake donations are most welcome; please bring them to the School Office on the day.

Some of our Year 4 children, who have been commissioned as Mini Vinnies, have been proactive in their service to others by initiating this event.

How wonderful is that?!

Bishop Peter Doyle

There will be a Mass to celebrate Bishop Peter's ministry, and the opportunity to bid him farewell, at Northampton Cathedral on Saturday 22nd February. All are welcome to attend!