



FRIDAY 31 JANUARY 2025

## HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE



### **Making our classrooms even better!**

School improvement is a continuous journey and we are always thinking deeply about ways to further enhance children's experience in our school. We are currently undertaking research about how the physical classroom environment can affect children's well-being, focus and concentration.

Year 5 Birch are leading the way with this as a case study.

Their teacher, Mr. Simpson, is trialling making changes to our traditional classroom designs and teaching strategies. These include changes to sensory aspects such as lighting (using lamps and string lights), scent diffusers and music alongside additions to classroom furniture such as open bookshelves to create zones, positive affirmation areas, and the addition of more green plants. I enjoyed spending all day with the class on Tuesday this week and was wholeheartedly encouraged by how well the children are doing both socially and academically. Children feel very positive about their classroom and feel it is making a real difference to their well-being.

We're currently creating a case study around this and will be looking to roll out any positive outcomes to other classes in the future.

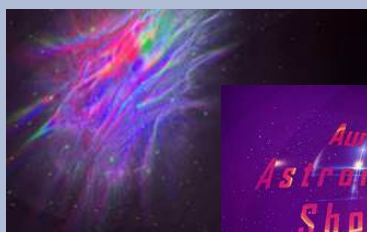
*Jane Scardifield*





## Exploring Our wonderful World

All week in school, we have been thinking about 'Our Wonderful World' from a Scientific point of view and also with a contemplative focus in our assemblies. If your children are in Reception classes, do ask them to share their impressive knowledge about the solar system - the Scientific knowledge shared by this talented group of 4 and 5 year olds about gravity, orbits and planets is superb and will stand them in good stead as they move through the year groups and add to their understanding. To bring the topic to life for all our pupils, we filled our school hall with a planetarium and all year groups enjoyed spending time in this magical inflatable dome which creates an artificial night sky to explore learning about the solar system, sun, planets and stars - what a memorable and magical experience!



The children in Year 2 said wow as soon as they walked into the hall! They said it was fantastic and they felt like they were really in space. We learnt about the phases of the moon, night and day, earth rotating on its axis and what life is like on the moon! This perfectly fits in with our topic on the solar system later in the year!

Ms Lewis (Year 2 teacher)



## Short-story competition

We are very grateful to our heads of house in Year 6 - Lottie and Elliana - for organising our latest inter-house competition.

Pupils in year 3-6 have been invited to submit a 500 word short story which will be judged by Miss Davis (our English leader) before half term.

The girls have done a super job producing a range of different inspiring prompt sheets to inspire children's stories which are available to buy for 50p at the school office with all proceeds going to our Charity of the Year - The National Autism Society.

Lottie and Elliana have prepared a 'mystery hamper' for the first prize winner and all entrants will earn house-points so get writing!

We hope to publish the winning entry in our next newsletter!



# WORK



## Dream Big: Exploring the World of Work Fortnight (24th February-7th March 2025)

Calling all farmers, engineers, entrepreneurs, doctors, nurses, bankers, carpenters, gardeners, dog groomers, builders, architects, dental assistants, lawyers, electricians, plumbers, tree surgeons, interior designers, vets, deep-sea divers, soldiers....(the list goes on and on!) Do you have an interesting job? Do you love your job? Could you spare time to inspire our pupils by talking to them about the pathway you took in your career?

In the two weeks after half term we will be having a focus on different careers in our school assemblies. We are looking for individuals (parents, carers, family members or people within our community) who feel they have an interesting job who would be willing to come in to school to talk to our pupils about what they currently do (or have previously done) in their job role. We know that children find it very inspiring to hear from people who have enjoyed success in a wide range of careers and sharing the training, qualifications and experience you have needed helps our young pupils start to consider the opportunities for their future careers.

We are looking for people to come into one of our assemblies and talk for a short amount of time and answer questions from the children. If you think that you may be able to commit to being part of an assembly (9.15-9.30am) in the fortnight after half term (24th February - 7th March), please contact the school office to let them know what your job is and what availability you have. We are hoping to get a wide range of different careers that appeal to our whole range of pupils.



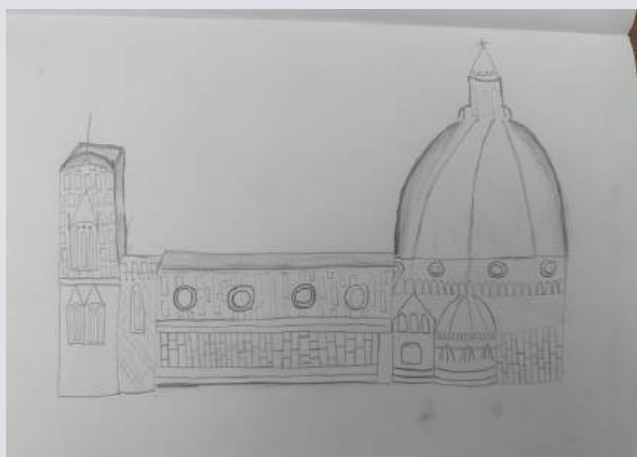
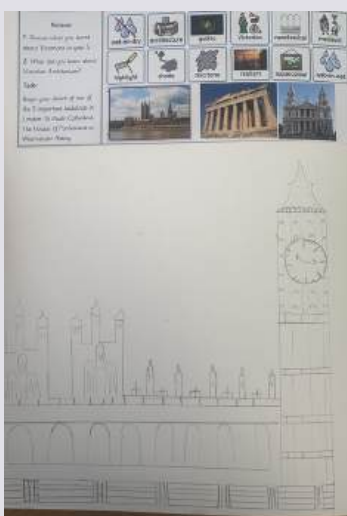




## ART GALLERY

Year 6 pupils have been studying Victorian architecture this half term and influences from classical and gothic architecture.

The children looked at different buildings including the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey and sketched a part of their chosen building.



During the recent snowfall, year 1 were challenged to work in teams to make the tallest building they could using five given pieces of wood and snow to link with their Art topic of architecture – super structures year 1! They also had great fun trying their hand at snow and ice painting to make the most of the Wintry conditions.

In Reception, children have been learning about the different species of birds that live in forest school.

They worked hard to make bird feeder rings by threading food onto wire and hanging them in forest school to help the birds when food is difficult for them to find in the winter months. Thank you for caring for our wildlife Reception children!



## ATTENDANCE

In a strive to continue to improve on our already good attendance, we would like to request that if your child is poorly, you ring and speak to someone at school in person on the third day. This is to help safeguard our children and to check if there is anything further we can do to support you.

We aim for children to attend school for at least 95% of the school year. Of course, we understand that children do get poorly but should their attendance go below 90%, they are considered a 'Persistent Absentee' and we are obliged this to report these cases to our Educational Welfare Officer. Each child's attendance is looked at carefully and we will always aim to support you as much as possible if your child's attendance is of concern – please do work with us and talk to us as this makes it so much easier.



### Staying Safe against AI scams.

Staying safe online can be incredibly worrying for everyone and with the increased use of AI, this can make the digital world an even scarier place. Whilst it is always important to keep our children safe online, as highlighted in the previous newsletter, it is also important that we keep ourselves safe. Scammers are increasingly using voice-enabled AI models to automate their fraudulent schemes. The tricking of individuals has become highly popular. Tech Radar magazine has recently published an article on how to tackle this. Have a look at the link below which offers advice on staying safe against AI threats.

<https://www.techradar.com/computing/artificial-intelligence/ai-voice-clone-scams>



### Training Day

School is closed to pupils on Friday 14th February (Friday before half term) for a teacher training day. School will re-open after the half term break on Monday 24 February.

### Mobile phones

There is a blanket prohibition of mobile phone use in school grounds by pupils. This includes before school and after school. Where parents have provided consent for our oldest pupils in year 6 to bring a phone to school, these must be turned off at all times in the school grounds and handed in to teachers to be safely stored until the end of the school day.

### Dogs

Dogs are not allowed on school premises or to be tied to school railings during pick up and drop-off periods. Thank you for your support with this.

### Snack and water

We encourage the children to drink regularly through the day. Children should bring their own water bottle and only water is allowed – no juice/squash or other drink – thank you. We are seeing a trend of children bringing in very expensive water bottles and would strongly advise against this as, in a class of 30 children, these could become lost/damaged/muddled with others. Children are allowed to bring fruit or veg for snack only at playtime.

### School shoes

It is important that children look smart for school and our school uniform is that black school shoes are worn by both boys and girls – no trainers please.



