



Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is Courage

www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

22nd September 2023

Every child is a treasure - small in size, growing in God's love.

As we come to the end of the third week of the new academic year, the summer break now seems to be a distant memory! However, we hope that everyone had a lovely summer and was able to enjoy plenty of family time.

We would like to welcome the children and families of **Shackadell Class** to our Aston School community. The children have made a fantastic start to their time with us, and it really is lovely to see them so happy and settled. **Year Six** are delighted to be Buddies with them; it makes us very proud to observe the care and support that they offer to their young friends whilst they share lunch together each day, when they read together on Friday mornings and play together on the field at breaktimes.

We would also like to welcome **Miss Myers** to her new role as Haffydown Class teacher. As many of you will know, Miss Myers has been a valued member of our staff team for a few years now and we are delighted that she is now a qualified teacher. Haffydown Class are certainly very lucky!

Our value this half term is **Courage**; we have begun to explore the theme through our daily worship in school. Last week, we learnt about the courage shown by Rosa Parks when her courageous actions helped spark the civil rights movement. Please see the ideas after the class pages about how you can enjoy exploring this value together at home with your child/children.

We certainly have a busy term ahead – in fact so busy that the **dates list** has filled a whole page (please see page two of this newsletter). Included on the list are dates from **our hard-working PTFA**; please do try to support the events that they arrange as they raise valuable funds for our school. You will see on the list that next Friday – 29th September – we are holding a **Macmillan 'coffeeless' morning** for the children. They can bring a **donation of any amount** and all money raised will go directly to Macmillan. All children will receive a cookie from Joyce in the kitchen and will be able to enjoy it with a little coffee morning style chat.

On page 4 of this newsletter, you can read about the **E-Safety Day** we have planned for **Monday 30th October**. Children will have sessions during the school day which will be followed by an evening for parents (children can come along and watch a film to enable parents/carers to attend). Due to the importance of this safeguarding issue in our local area, there is an expectation that **all children will have an adult to represent them at the evening session**.

It has been a pleasure to visit classrooms since the beginning of term – there is a real buzz of learning around the school with all classes already working hard and producing some fantastic learning outcomes. Thank you for attending the **Meet the Teacher** sessions last week – we hope these sessions very useful and informative.

We hope you have a lovely weekend.

Diary Dates

Monday 25th September – Peartree Class Florence Nightingale day

Thursday 28th September – School Nurse visit Year 6 (Health and Wellbeing)

Friday 29th September – Macmillan Children's 'Coffeeless Morning'. Children to bring any donation which will go directly to Macmillan.

Monday 2nd October – **3:20pm** Spelling and TTRS meeting for Year 2 parents/carers (Year 3 and above also welcome)

Wednesday 4th October – Danes and Puddlebridge visit St. Albans.

Wednesday 4th October – Cauliflower Christmas Card Forms deadline for return to school

Thursday 5th October – National Poetry Day

Friday 6th October - PTFA Cake Sale after school (cake donations welcome on the morning – thank you)

Tuesday 10th October – Haffydown visit Hitchin Schools Museum

Thursday 12th October – School Nurse visit Year 6 (Height and weight)

Friday 13th October – Harvest Festival

Monday 16th October – Parent Teacher Consultations until 6:00pm

Thursday 19th October – Parent Teacher Consultations until 7:30pm

Friday 20th October – PTFA Jolly Jars

Monday 23rd – Friday 27th October – Half Term Break

Monday 30th October – E-Safety Day and Parent Workshop (evening)

Thursday 2nd November - Photographer (Individual Photos)

Friday 3rd November – Non-uniform (donations of chocolate for the Christmas Fayre please)

Friday 10th November – Remembrance Service

Friday 10th November – PTFA Uniform Sale

Friday 10th November – Quiz Night (adults only)

Friday 17th November – Children in Need

Sunday 19th November – PTFA Family Bingo at 2pm

Thursday 23rd November – Clothing Collection

Monday 27th November – Occasional Day (school closed)

Friday 1st December – Christmas Decoration Day

Friday 8th December - Non-uniform (donations of bottles for the Christmas Fayre please)

Saturday 9th December – PTFA Christmas Fayre

Monday 11th December – Flu immunisations

Wednesday 13th December – Christmas Dinner

Thursday 14th December – Christmas Parties

Friday 15th December – Reward Day

Monday 18th December – Christmas Service

Tuesday 19th December – Last day of term (1pm finish)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

AUTUMN TERM

Monday 4th September 2023 to Tuesday 19th December 2023

HALF TERM Break – Monday 23rd October 2023-Friday 27th October 2023

Occasional Day: Monday 27th November 2023 – SCHOOL CLOSED

SPRING TERM

Thursday 4th January 2024 to Thursday 28th March 2024

HALF TERM BREAK - Monday 19th February 2024– Friday 23rd February 2024

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 16th April 2024 to Friday 19th July 2024

Bank Holiday – Monday 6th May 2024 – SCHOOL CLOSED

HALF TERM Break – Monday 27th May 2024 – Friday 31st May 2024

School Meals

To order school meals, please log onto your School Gateway account via the website or the app.

DINNER MONEY FEES

£3.25 per meal



Naughty – By Aria (Year One)

Following our whole school cinema trip to see Matilda in July, Aria in Year One was inspired to record her own performance of 'Naughty'. Supported by her Dad, she showed great commitment and so much talent to record this amazing performance. We think you will agree, this really is quite incredible for a five-year-old child.

Well done Aria, we are SO proud of you!

Scan the QR code to listen to 'Naughty' by Aria.



House Points

Canterbury



154

St. Paul's



143

St. Albans



187

Coventry



174

A Thought from Reverend Jenny:

It's easy for family, friends, work colleagues and neighbours, people of different faiths and nations to fall out and cause pain to themselves and others. Hurt, anger and hatred are often carried across the generations, fuelling hostility, war, genocide etc.

we see in the world's conflicts today.

Jesus talks a lot about forgiveness because forgiveness is so needed AND so difficult to put into practice. Jesus' story of the unforgiving servant set for today shows us God freely forgives us our sins/trespasses/wrong-doing/wrong-thinking every time we ask him, providing we also forgive those who sin/tresspass against us...No exceptions, no matter how great the wrong done. Every time we say the Lord's Prayer, we commit ourselves to this: '*Forgive us our sins just as we forgive those who sin against us*'... words we don't always think through and apply to our own lives.

Forgiving others isn't optional for Christians. Jesus' teaching is clear that only those who forgive belong in God's kingdom.

'Forgive our sins as we forgive',
you taught us, Lord, to pray;
but you alone can grant us grace
to live the words we say.

Lord, cleanse the depths within
our souls
and bid resentment cease;
then, bound to all in bonds of
love,
our lives will spread your peace'.

(Rosamond Herklots)

Notices

  **Important date for your Diary – Monday 30th October 2023**
 

SAFEGUARDING YOUR CHILD

There are many dangers facing children in today's world. The internet is a wonderful resource, but can be a very dangerous place, especially for children. For this reason, we are arranging an E-Safety day for the children and adults in school, as well as an evening for parents to attend.

It is important that every child has an adult to represent them in the evening session.

'Far too many parents are preparing their children for life as it was in 1990 and not life as it is today...' John Woodley and John Staines (known as 'The 2 Johns') 2023

On **Monday 30th October**, we will be joined by 'The 2 Johns'. Both Johns are retired police officers who now run eSafety events for schools across the country. An extract from their website can be seen below.

John Woodley & John Staines

Also known as 'The 2 Johns'

Over the past five years you may have seen either one of the '2 Johns' present at numerous key events in relation to the Online Child Sexual Exploitation of Children (OCSE). They have completed interviews for BBC Breakfast TV, BBC Radio 4, Channel 4 TV and numerous other local radio stations and have presented in schools across the UK.

You can find out more about 'The 2 Johns' by scanning the QR code below.



We are sending the date out early to ensure all parents and carers will be able to attend. Due to the importance of making parents aware of the dangers your children face online, we will be arranging a childcare session for pupils from our school. This will be open for any parent or carer who cannot find alternative childcare arrangements for the parents 90 minutes session.

A letter will be coming home soon. Please return the slip asap to confirm your attendance and to let us know if you require support with childcare.

Please contact Mrs Winwood or the Mrs Carter if you have any questions.



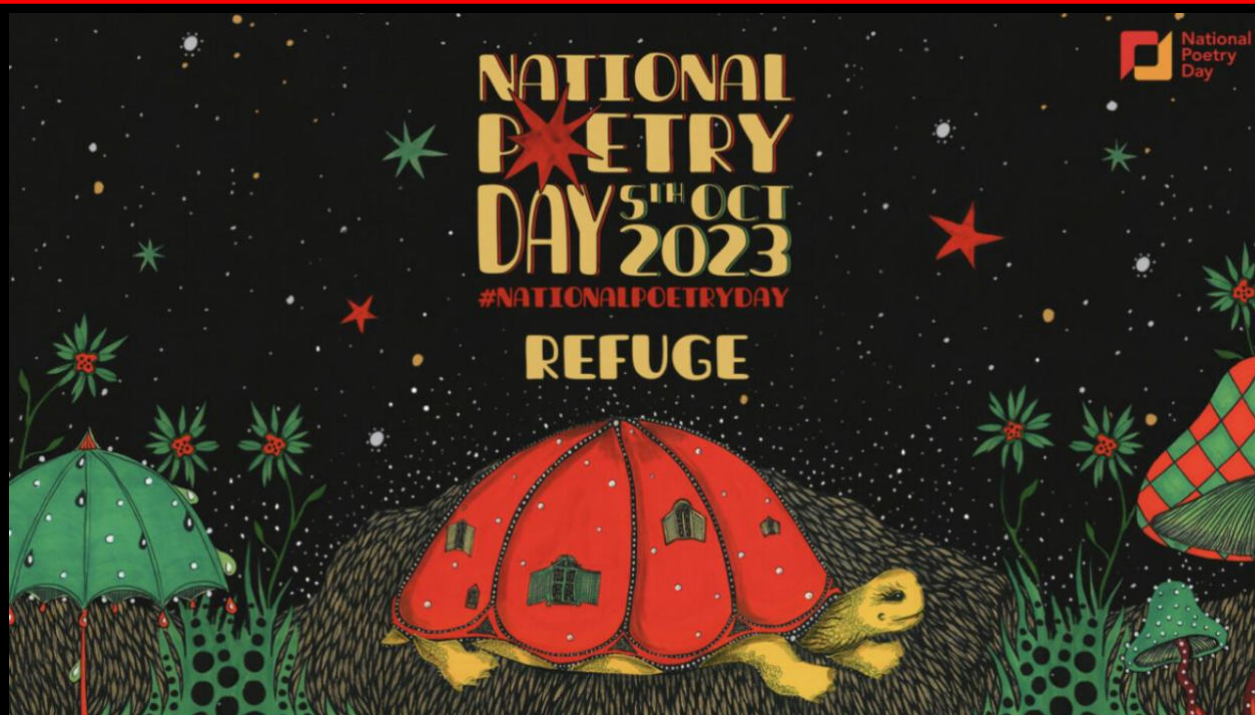
Notices

Spelling Journals and Times Tables Rock Stars
Meeting for Year Two Parents/Carers (Years 3-6 also welcome)
Monday 2nd October – 3:20pm (Danes Classroom)



Having completed the phonics programme, children move onto spelling lessons from Year Two – Year Six. We follow the ‘**No Nonsense Spelling**’ programme, a key feature of which is the use of **Spelling Journals**. In Maths, we introduce **Times Tables Rock Stars** – a fun and engaging way to build rapid recall of multiplication facts which underpin all areas of the Maths curriculum.

Parents/Carers are invited to a meeting during which Mrs Branagan will explain how you can support your child at home with both Spelling and Times Tables Rock Stars.



After School and Lunchtime Clubs

As a small school, we are very proud to be able to offer such a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Activities on offer may vary over the year. Currently, the children are able to participate in the following clubs:



Activity	Day	Year Groups
Football (Stevenage FC)	Monday after school Tuesday after school Thursday after school	Year 5 and Year 6 Year 1 and Year 2 Year 3 and Year 4
Rugby	Friday after school	Year 3 – Year 6
Cookery	Wednesday after school	All – a class each week
Choir	Wednesday lunchtime	Year 1 – Year 6
Netball	Monday lunchtime	Year 3 – Year 6
Multisports (Rising Stars)	Monday after school	All
Sports Leaders (Rising Stars)	Monday and Friday lunchtime	Led by Year 6 for the younger children



Notices

**"The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn, you more places you will go."**

– Dr. Seuss

At Aston St. Mary's, we work hard to instil a passion for reading in all our pupils. To put it simply, reading increases life chances. This is why reading is always prioritised in our school. It is a skill that most of us take for granted and is essential for being able to get on in life. As a child grows up, being able to read well not only enables them to discover new facts and to learn at school, but also opens them up to a world of new ideas, stories and opportunities.

Research shows children who read for pleasure will achieve more than those who don't in later life. Studies have proved that an early love of reading can have life-long benefits resulting in academic success at GCSE level, 'A' level and beyond as well as higher income earning potential in adult life.

On starting school, higher achieving pupils already understand an average of 7,100 root words whilst others may know 3,000 or fewer. The importance of spoken language cannot be underestimated; if a child aged five has poor oral language, the reading gap widens by an average of five years by the time the child is fourteen. Pupils who come to school with a reduced vocabulary find it more challenging to access meaning from reading and therefore read less because they find it challenging. As a result, they learn fewer words. On the other hand, pupils with wider vocabularies read more because it is less challenging and as a result further increase their vocabularies.

To truly learn new words in the course of reading, children need to:

- Read widely enough to encounter a lot of unfamiliar words,
- Read texts complex enough to contain a number of unfamiliar words,
- Have the skills to infer meaningful information from the context,
- Encounter the word(s) a number of times.

"You can't build a vocabulary without reading. You can't meet friends if you...stay at home by yourself all the time. In the same way, you can't build up a vocabulary if you never meet any new words. And to meet them you must read. The more you read the better..." Rudolf Flesch

We are proud of our well-stocked library and class book corners at Aston St. Mary's; these are being continually updated with new titles and authors for our pupils to enjoy. Please do encourage your child to read daily at home and to talk about their reading.

You really cannot give your child a greater gift in life then finding time to enjoy books together – no matter how busy our family lives can be, a few minutes with a book is absolutely key!



Notices

Deadline for Secondary School Applications

Is your child currently in Year Six?
Please be reminded that the deadline for applications for secondary school places for September 2024 is **Tuesday 31st October.**



School Uniform Reminder

Please be reminded that:

- Children should wear smart black shoes
- Hair accessories should be small and discrete in school colours (black, white or navy blue)
- No jewellery should be worn except plain stud earrings. Watches are also allowed.
- Nail varnish should not be worn.

Please make sure that all items of uniform and coats are clearly named.

Thank you for your support.

Cauliflower Christmas Cards

Please be reminded that the deadline is approaching for Christmas Card orders. You place the order online but the whole art form and picture must be returned to school. Forms need to be back in school by **3.30pm on Wednesday 4th October at the latest.** Please return the form to your child's teacher.



Handwriting – Transition to Pen

Please be aware that we are now adopting a more fluid approach to the transition from writing in pencil to gel pen. Children's handwriting develops at different rates and, whilst pen has historically been introduced once a child has a neat, cursive style, research shows that some children who struggle with their writing actually find use of a pen easier than pencil and their handwriting can improve as a result. For this reason, we will **no longer be issuing pen licences.** Instead, we will be encouraging children to **experiment with the use of a pen during handwriting lessons** – probably from around Year Two/Three. As their skills develop and their confidence builds, they will begin to use pen rather than pencil for writing during other lessons.

Reception and Year One Reading Books

As part of the Little Wandle Phonics programme that we use in school, children in Reception and Year One take home the fully decodable reading book which they read as part of their reading practice sessions three times a week in school. We invested heavily in the purchase of group sets of these books which are a key component of our phonics teaching. Unfortunately, we have recently had to order replacement copies of a number of books due to them not being returned to school – we are a small school with a limited budget so please support us by ensuring all books are returned to school in your child's book bag.

Thank you for your continued support.

Quiz Night – Friday 10th

November



We are very excited to be able to run a quiz night again this year. This is a fun evening where teams compete in tables of up to eight – ten people (adults only). Bring your own food and drink.

£6 per person and raffle on the night.

Tables are limited due to space in the school hall. If you would like to join us, please email:

closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

Class News

Shackadell Class

Welcome to all of our new Shackadell children. We have had a fantastic start to the term, exploring all that Reception has to offer. We have been getting used to all of our new routines and learning lots of things during child-initiated learning. We have also loved getting to know our buddies who have been amazing at helping us to settle in by looking after us at lunch time and by reading with us each Friday. We are already working very hard having already learned eight phonemes in phonics and doing lots of fun maths activities. We love our new school!

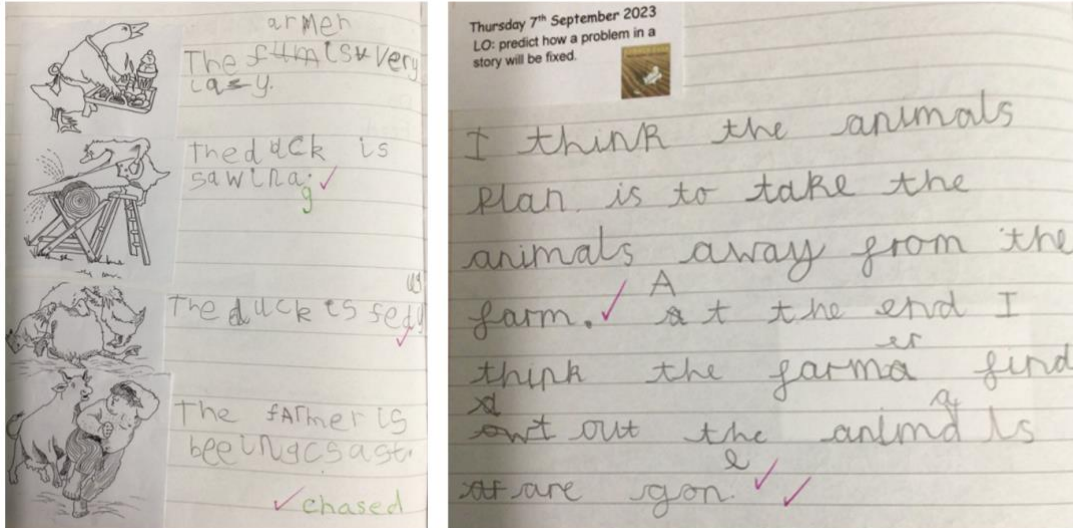


Class News

Peartree Class

Welcome back to school after a well-deserved summer break. The children are settling into a busy classroom with lots to do. There has already been a lot of lovely learning taking place in Peartree class and here are some examples.

In our English lessons, we have been reading Farmer Duck. We have made predictions, learnt to write instructions using imperative verbs and sequence the story.



In science, we are learning about animals including humans. We had to think of as many different body parts that we could and then Joe volunteered to be our human poster to label.



Our art lessons link well with our science topic as we are looking at different animals from around the world. So far, we have made some observational drawings of some British wildlife and we have re-created patterns from some African animals.



Class News

Haffydown Class



Our first term in Haffydown has got off to fantastic start. All the children have settled in beautifully and shown wonderfully positive attitudes to their learning. Our class reading incentive has proved to be very popular and we are thrilled to see so many children reading every single night, in order to earn a chance to 'spin the wheel'. There have been many 'reading buddies' making trips home for bedtime stories and our ambitious goal of reaching 100 books by Summer is starting to look too easy! In English, we have explored the story of The Paper Bag Princess, and in History, the children have learnt what life was like for a Victorian child working as a straw plaiter. Haffydown have come together as a new class and put their own stamp on the classroom. We have our beautiful new crosses on the windows and speech bubbles that capture their learning across the working walls. Well done for such an inspiring start to the year Haffydown!



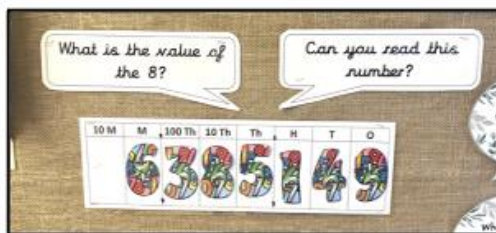
Class News

Puddlebridge Class

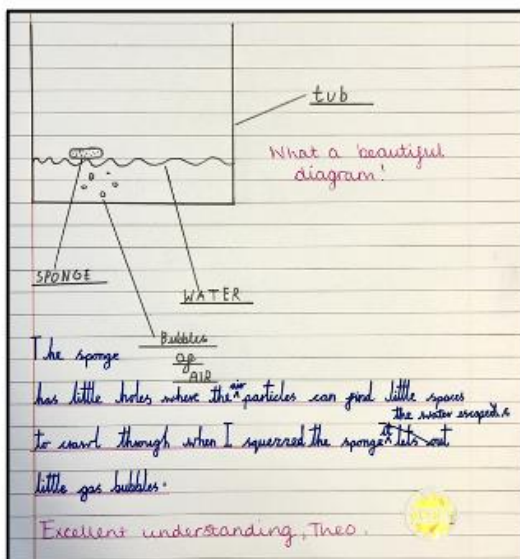
Puddlebridge have made an excellent start to the new school year. We have really enjoyed starting our new History topic, The Romans in Britain. Our English learning also links with our new topic as we are studying Roman myths to inspire our writing.



In Maths, we have been extending our learning about place value to include large numbers up to seven-digits.



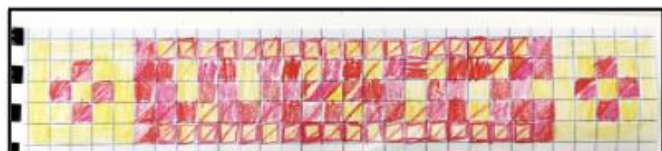
In Science, Year 5 have begun learning about Electricity, while Year 4 are focusing on States of Matter. This week, we thought about how gases behave and learned how to draw scientific diagrams.



We are learning about Buddhism in RE. We are already thinking very deeply about our key question: Is it possible for everyone to be happy?



In Art, we have been looking at Roman mosaics.



Class News

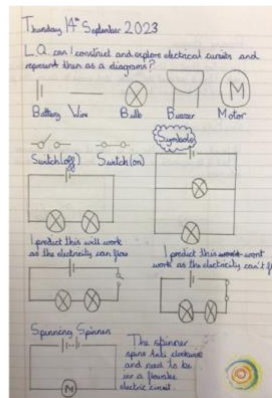
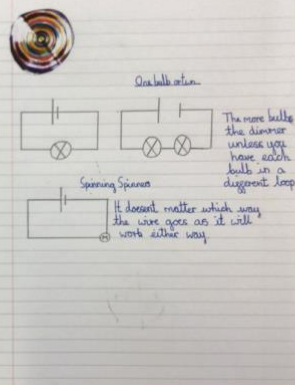
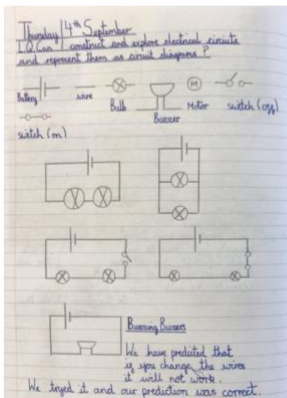
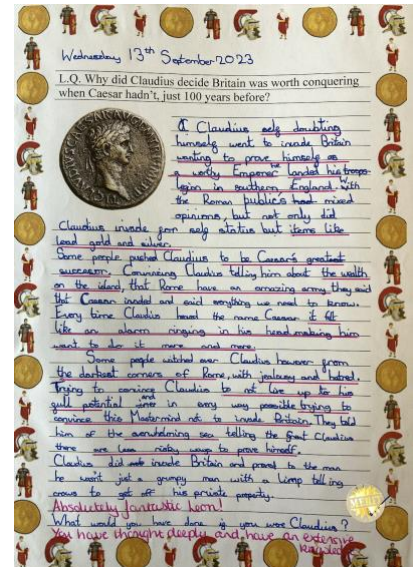
Danes Class

What a fantastic start Danes Class have made to the new school year! Our first week was a bit of a challenge as, after just two days in the classroom, our room was flooded by a leak from one of the sinks. We had three days of lessons in the hall whilst the carpet dried; the children were just so sensible throughout.



In History, we are learning about Roman Britain and the Roman Empire. We have begun by exploring historical evidence to try to understand why the Romans wanted to invade Britain – a cold island on the edge of the empire.

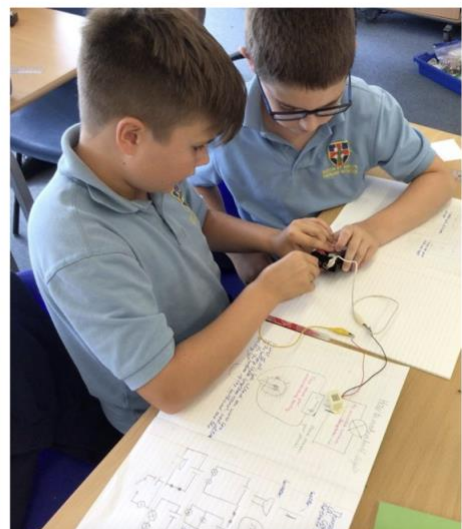
Our learning in English is based upon Roman Myths, we have enjoyed reading 'The Taming of Venus', 'City of Dreams' and 'Romulus and Remus'. Next week, we will be writing our own myths using all the skills that we have practised throughout the learning sequence. In Maths, we have been focussing on Place Value working with large numbers and decimals.



Electricity is our focus in Science this half term. We have had great fun already exploring electrical circuits and we have learnt to represent these using circuit diagrams.



We explored different circuits using bulbs, motors and buzzers.



Exploring Electrical Circuits

COURAGE

HOME SCHOOL VALUES

This term we will be focussing in school on the value **COURAGE**. We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together.

TALK TOGETHER about Courage

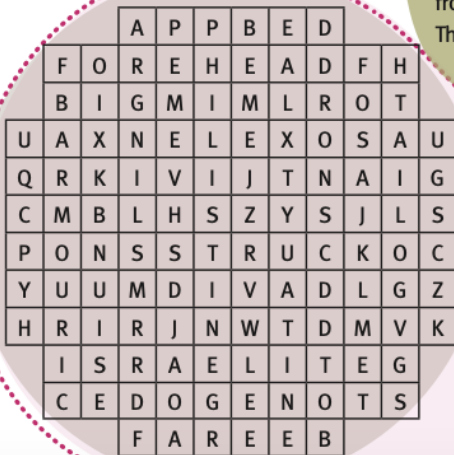
Being **courageous** can mean different things to different people. For example, one person may think it easy to speak in front of a large audience, whilst another would need to find lots of **courage** to do this. Everyone faces challenges from time to time, and we have to find **courage** to overcome them.

Talk together about:

- The different challenges that each family member faces
- Who or what helps us find **courage**?
- Is there someone that we admire because of the **courage** that they have shown?

THINK TOGETHER Words of Wisdom

"**Courage** is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to overcome that fear."
Nelson Mandela



READ TOGETHER...

The Courage of David the Shepherd Boy

One day as David the shepherd boy was carrying lunch to his older brothers in the Israelite army he heard an angry booming voice thunder across the fields. "I am Goliath, and I dare you to pick someone to fight me."

The voice was coming from the Philistine ranks and went on taunting the Israelites and their God. As David grew closer he could see the giant Goliath strutting up and down. He could also see the terrified faces of King Saul and his soldiers. This made David very angry and more than a little ashamed. He decided he must go and see the king.

"I will fight that bully Goliath!" David announced.

It was all that King Saul could do not to laugh out loud. "You are just a boy David, a small boy. Goliath has been a mighty soldier all his life."

"But when the wild animals attack my father's sheep," protested David, "I fight them off with my sling and staff. I have killed many lions and bears and I will do the same to this wicked Philistine. Do not fear for God is on our side."

King Saul was taken aback. "Well, I suppose you should be given a chance. At least let me lend you some armour and a sword." But the armour was heavy and David was not used to it. He returned the armour to Saul and instead picked up five smooth stones from the stream and marched out **courageously** to face Goliath.

The giant laughed scornfully at the small boy and shouted curses at him. David did not flinch. "This very day you will be defeated and everyone here will see that the Lord does not need swords or spears to save his people."

As Goliath lowered his shield and aimed his spear at the boy, quick as a flash, David loaded a stone into his sling, spun it around above his head and sent it spinning through the air towards Goliath. The stone struck the giant on his forehead and he crumpled to the ground. Goliath was dead. There was a moment of stunned silence before the whoops and cheers from the Israelite army echoed around the hillsides.

This was a day no-one would forget, when the **courage** of a shepherd boy saved a nation.



Bible story based on 1 Samuel 17

QUIZ Wordsearch

Find the words from the story in the grid on Goliath's shield.

ARMOUR

COURAGE

GOLIATH

PHILISTINE

SOLDIER

BOY

FOREHEAD

GOD

SHIELD

STONE

DAVID

GIANT

ISRAELITE

SLING

STRUCK





FAMILY FOCUS & HOME-SCHOOL CHALLENGE



Children of Courage

Each year awards are presented to children throughout the country who have shown outstanding bravery and **courage** in overcoming huge challenges in their lives. (Google 'UK children of **courage** awards' to see some examples.)

Design a nomination for a child that you know and believe should be recognised for their **courage**. Remember, there are different kinds of **courage** and different ways of showing bravery.

The nominations will be displayed in the Challenge Gallery at school.



Example Nomination sheet



Name of child who has shown **courage**

.....

Has shown **courage** by

.....

This bravery should be recognised because

.....

.....



HALL OF FAME

Bravery v. Slavery



Harriet Tubman was born nearly 200 years ago in Maryland, USA. Her family were slaves which means that they had to work for the people who 'owned' them. Slaves had no pay and no rights and they could be bought or sold like property. As Harriet grew older she was afraid that she would be sold and sent far away from her family to work for strangers. She decided to try to escape. This needed great **courage** because Harriet knew that if she was caught she would be cruelly punished. After many adventures and with the help of kind people along the way, Harriet managed to escape to Canada, where slavery was banned.

It would have been safest for Harriet to stay in Canada and make for herself a comfortable and easier life, but she was determined not to forget her family and friends who still suffered as slaves in America. She made her way back and forth to Maryland not once, but *nineteen times*, facing great danger and showing amazing bravery as she helped slaves to escape to freedom. By the end of her life Harriet had helped to free around 300 slaves!

After her death Harriet received many honours for her bravery. A ship was named after her, and in 1995 the US government issued a postage stamp to celebrate her **courageous** life.



FASCINATING FACTS

In case of emergency – Dial 999

"Help...my house is on fire!"

"Help....there's been an accident!"

"Help.... burglars are breaking into the house over the road!"

- The emergency number, 999, was introduced in London in 1937.
- In an emergency, phoning 999 will connect you quickly to an 'emergency control centre'. An operator will ask which service you need, fire, ambulance or police. The operator will be able to track your call to discover where you are and soon help will be on its way.
- Firefighters, police and ambulance crew all risk their own lives on occasions to help other people who are in danger.
- Additional emergency services operate in some places such as mountain and cave rescue, coast guards, air sea rescue.
- Over 30 million 999 calls are made each year.
- About half of all calls are hoaxes. Not only do hoax callers break the law, they put people's lives in danger as it takes longer for real emergencies to be dealt with.

PREPARED FOR ANYTHING

Canoeing, climbing, surfing, archery,
sailing, helping, playing, volunteering,
abseiling, fundraising, making, acting...
Whatever you like doing, Scouts make
it happen!

Are you aged between 10 and 14? Come
and join us on a Friday evening at Pin
Green Scouts in Aston End. Contact us
for more details -
jack.jeffreys@stevenagescouting.org.uk



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