



## Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is Generosity

[www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk](http://www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk)

24<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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

### Diary Dates

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November** – Occasional Day (school closed)

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November** – Year 6 to Gary Younge Talk at Peartree Spring Primary School

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December** – Christmas Decoration Day (Christmas jumpers may be worn)

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Jumper Day (donations for Save the Children)

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December** - Non-uniform (donations of bottles for the Christmas Fayre please)

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December** – PTFA Christmas Fayre 12 – 3pm

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December** – Flu immunisations

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December** – Shackadell Class Nativity at 9:30am (school hall)

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Dinner (Christmas jumpers may be worn)

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Parties (please bring party clothes)

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December** – Reward Day

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas Service at 1:45pm

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December** – Last day of term (1pm finish)

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January** – Children return to school after the Christmas break

What a busy term this is in school! Since our last newsletter, we have marked **Remembrance Day** with a beautiful service in church and had a fun day in school to raise money and awareness for **Children in Need**. Both of these events serve to remind us of the importance of our current school value, **Generosity**, as we reflect upon how we can give in order to help and support others. As you are already aware, we are also collecting donations of new toys and gifts for the **'Toyshed'**.

Please check the diary dates carefully as the festive period is now rapidly approaching and there is lots going on in school. This year, in a change to tradition, **Shackadell Class** will be performing their **Christmas Nativity** on stage in the school hall. Also, for the first time, we will be holding a **Carol Service** in church; during this service Year Six will tell the story of the First Christmas and the whole school community will be able to enjoy singing some traditional Christmas Carols. The **PTFA Christmas Fayre** is always a very popular event as well as one of our key fundraisers. If at all possible, please do offer your help (even if only for an hour or so) as many hands really would help lighten the load for our dedicated PTFA team. Thank you.

We hope that everyone enjoys our long weekend as **school is closed on Monday** for our **occasional day**. We look forward to seeing the children back in school on Tuesday.

## 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



## Don't Forget!

School is closed on Monday. We hope everyone enjoys a well-deserved long weekend!



## House Points

### Canterbury



369

### St. Paul's



351

### St. Albans



391

### Coventry



386

## A Thought from Reverend Jenny:

Did you see the heart-warming story of Teasel, the Jack Russell terrier, who 'adopted' the six abandoned kittens brought into her home? Instead of seeing them as natural enemies, the little dog immediately started caring for the kittens. She cleaned them and, within a few hours, lactated milk to feed them. She kept watch over them and, when any wandered off, she picked them up and put them back in her bed.

Teasel upended the usual cat-dog stereotype. Her instinctive, maternal response was triggered by the kittens' vulnerability and need...

which seems a modern parable for humankind, about recognising and addressing the needs of those who seem to be enemies...

a hopeful taste of Isaiah's vision of heaven's harmony that: 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.'

(Isaiah 11:6-9)

# Notices

## Toyshed

This year we will be continuing to support our link with the 'Foodshed' over this festive period. In previous years we have collected **new** toys and gifts for the 'Toyshed'.

We will be taking donations for toys and gifts for all ages 0-18 years old! Last year the 'Toyshed' were able to give away over 350 bags of toys/gifts across Stevenage and the surrounding villages and we'd love to support this so that they can do the same this year.

There is no expectation to donate and instead of focusing on collecting on a particular day, there will be a collection point inside the hall from Mon 20<sup>th</sup> November until Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December.



Thank you to Dennis Preston, our quiz master, and to everyone who attended the quiz on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November. A fun evening was had by all and an impressive **£575** was raised for school funds.



On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November we spent that day celebrating 'Children in Need'. We had a fantastic day learning about how 'Children in Need' support children across the country. We were very impressed with the wonderful Pudsey cookies that Joyce and Heather made for us!

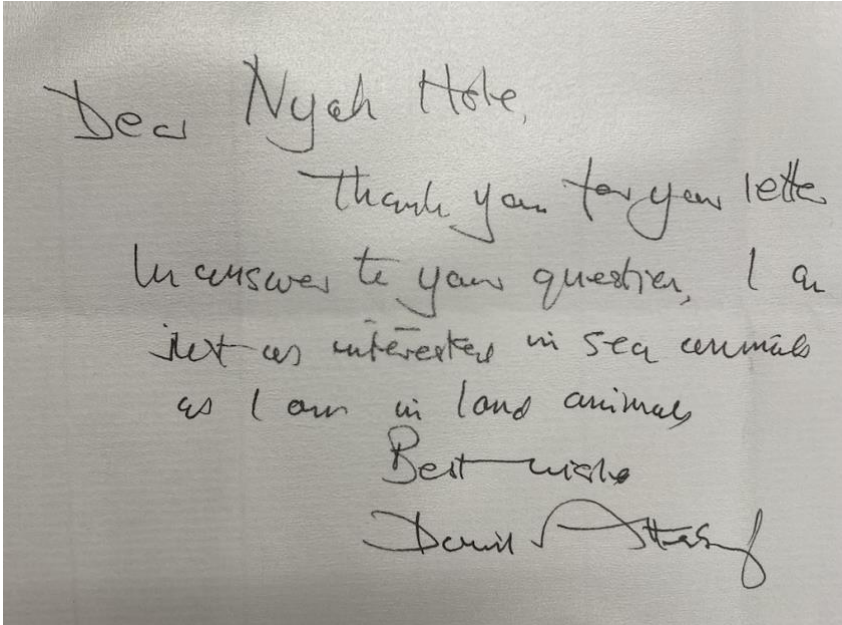
In the afternoon, we took part in the 'Big House Quiz' – an interhouse competition which involved a wide range of quiz questions. It even involved a rare singing performance by Mrs Holmes. Mrs Dean managed to win St. Pauls house an extra point with some awesome dance moves! In the end St. Albans house won with 32 points! Thank you for all of your donations to this amazing national charity.





# Notices

## A Letter from David Attenborough



Having enjoyed watching some of David Attenborough's documentaries at home with her family, Nyah in Danes Class decided to write him a letter.

She was absolutely delighted to receive a handwritten reply.



Last week, Years 4, 5 and 6 competed in a national competition on Times Tables Rock Stars – they achieved some very impressive results.

**As a school, Aston St Mary's achieved 16<sup>th</sup> place out of 4,083 primary schools.**

**As a class, Danes Class achieved 63<sup>rd</sup> place out of a staggering 30,020 classes.**

These fantastic results are a testament to the hard work that the children have put into securing their fluency with times tables since they began learning them. Fluency with times tables really does enable the best possible progress and attainment across the mathematics curriculum.

## Remembrance Service

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November the whole school walked up to the church to take part in a remembrance service. Pupils from Year 6 read prayers and some of them performed 'In Flanders Fields' by John McCrae. Please scan below to listen to their performance.



**We raised an impressive £228.16 for the 2023 Poppy Appeal. Thank you for your generosity.**

# Notices

## Holidays during the School Term

Please be reminded that we are unable to authorise term time holidays. Absence can only be authorised if a child is unwell.

If, the number of unauthorised sessions reaches 15 half days or more, the local authority may issue you with a Penalty Notice. Term time holidays have a negative impact on both friendships and learning. When a child returns to school after a period of absence, there will inevitably be gaps in their learning which will affect them both in the short term and the long term. This is because every lesson forms part of a sequence of learning and learning is built upon year on year. So, if your child is well, it is important that you avoid taking them out of school. Section 7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory age attends school. As an example, when children's absence is below 90%, this is equivalent to missing half a school year of secondary school education.

### Aston St Mary's School is a Safeguarding School

We are an Encompass School working with external agencies to support children who are victims of domestic abuse. *'All schools have a clear responsibility placed on them by the Children Act 1989 and by guidance from the Department of Education to safeguard the welfare of all their pupils. In doing so schools are expected to consult with Social Services if they believe there is a possibility that a child may be suffering from abuse or neglect.'*

If you have any concerns regarding any child, please contact:

Mrs Winwood (Designated Senior Leader), Mrs Branagan (Deputy Designated Senior Leader), Mrs Holmes (Deputy Designated Senior Leader) or Mrs Bird (Chair of Governors).

Alternatively, contact 0300 123 4043 or 999 in an emergency.

### Congratulations Max!

Congratulations to our ex-pupil, Max Woodford. You may have seen him on Sky Sports and in the news last week, when he became Stevenage Football Club's youngest ever player. This must have been a very exciting time for Max and his family. It just shows what can be achieved with hard work and dedication. We are very proud of Max and wish him every success in his future career. Well done - Max!

To read more, scan the code below:



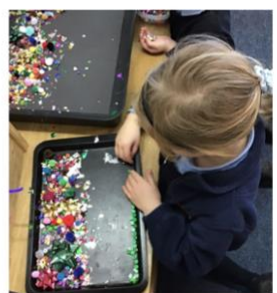
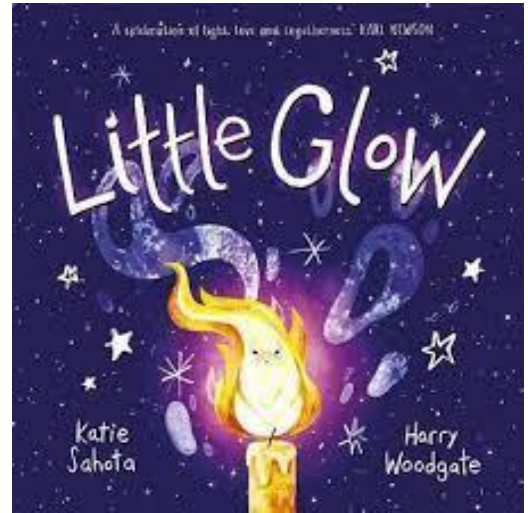
# Class News

## Shackadell Class

In Shackadell class, we have been using the book **'Little Glow'** to support our learning about lots of different celebrations. The book talks about a street where many different celebrations are taking place including Hannukah, Eid, Diwali, Bonfire Night, Christmas and Chinese New Year - to name a few!

We focussed on some of the **celebrations** that have been happening recently. We learned about Bonfire Night and how to stay safe around fireworks and sparklers. We also learned all about Diwali and how Diya lamps are used to celebrate during this time.

We loved seeing all of the wonderful colours and how fireworks are used across the world to celebrate! We made our own firework images, Rangoli patterns and Diya lamps.

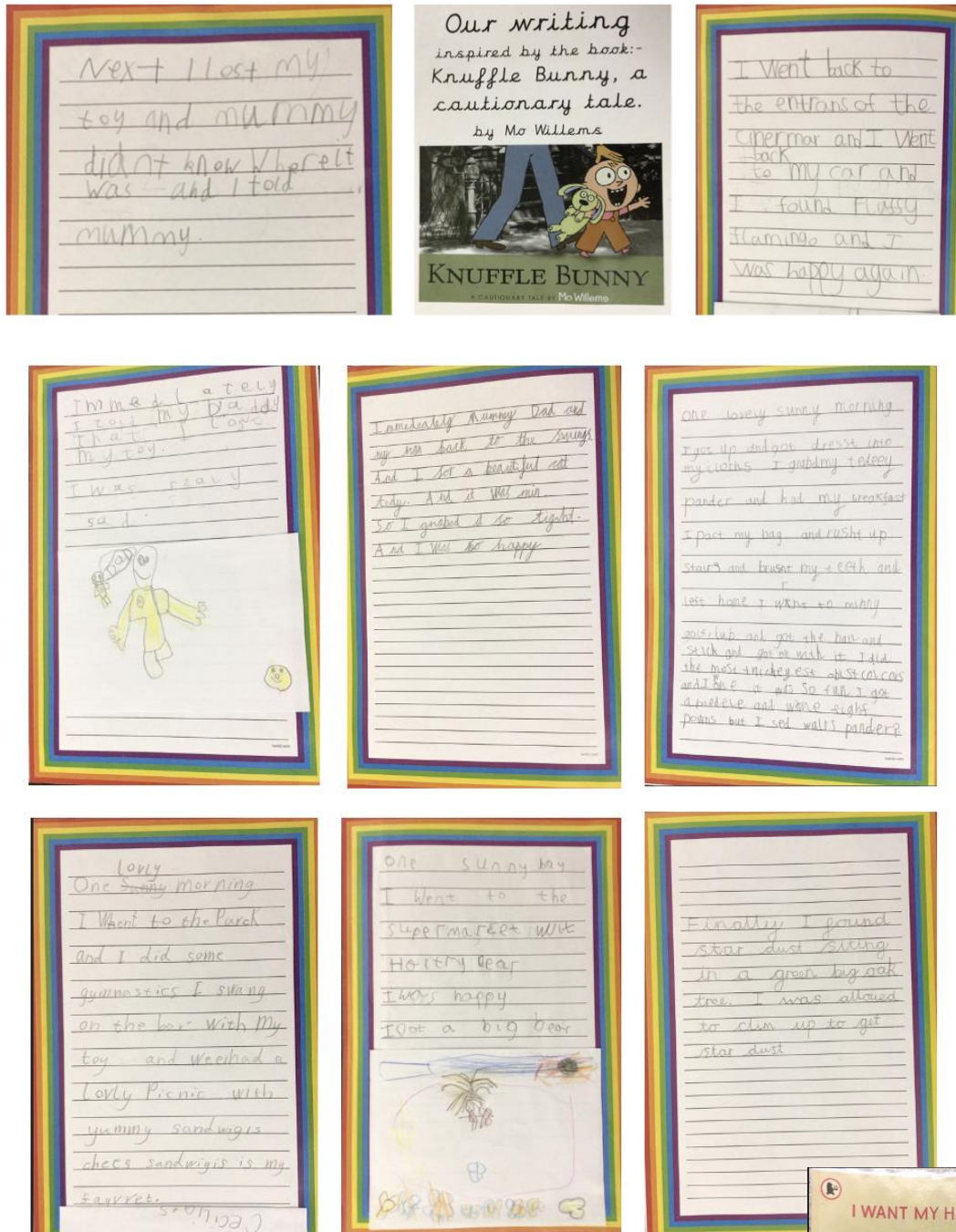




# Class News

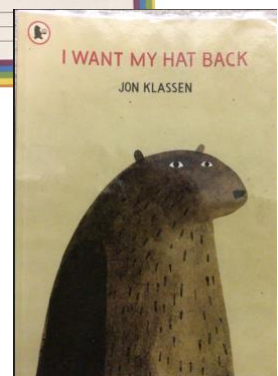
## Peartree Class

We have just finished reading the book **Knuffle Bunny** by Mo Willems. We have all written our own version of this story where we are the main character and have lost our favourite toy.



Now, we are reading the book **I Want My Hat** by Jon Klassen.

The children have explored asking questions, making predictions, empathy for different characters and role-play. They are really enjoying this book and using their imagination in all our lessons.



# Class News

## Haffydown Class

In Geography, we have been exploring our new unit - **Hot and Cold Places**. We started by singing the Continent Song – a firm favourite that is now on repeat in the classroom. We then formed the continents, with different coloured playdough, on world maps. We had an interactive quiz and learnt about the equator, hemispheres and Tropics.



We enjoyed an exciting **cookery club**, where we made our own dough to roll and cut into biscuits.

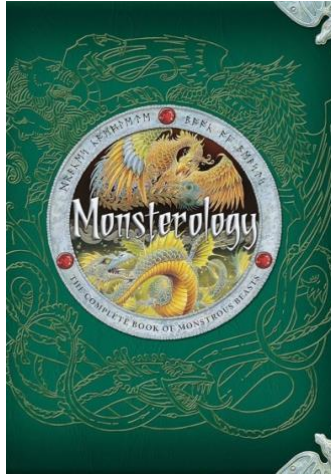
In English, we started our new book – **Mini Rabbit Not Lost**. We thought about what it is like to cook at home with our parents...and what it might be like for our parents to cook with us!



# Class News

## Puddlebridge Class

In English, we have started a new unit of work based on the book **Monsterology**. This book acts as a handbook for students of monsterology. So far, we have enjoyed reading about *Beasts of the Earth*. We produced a diary entry in role as Ernest Drake, imagining that we had just discovered the Nue in a remote area of Japan.



Dear Diary,  
Today was the best day of my life. It's a new era.  
I have found a creature and I will call it  
a Nue. It has tigeresque legs, a monkey  
head, tanuki body and a snake tail. So I have  
seen its features there's a venomous & cloud the smoke  
uses when its disturbed it is also considered bad  
luck.



We are all very excited to have started a new Geography topic about **North America**. During this topic we will learn about the geographical features of the different countries and make comparisons.



In Science, Year 4 have begun learning about **electricity** and Year 5 have been learning about **light**.



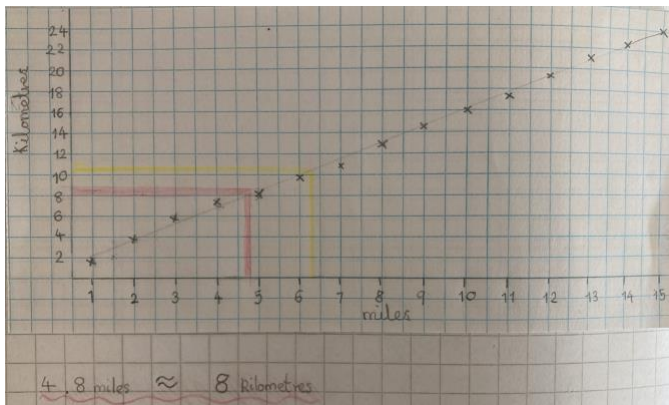
# Class News

## Danes Class

In English, our current focus is **Gothic literature**. We have read an extract from **Great Expectations** and learnt about how the life of Charles Dickens was a key influence for his writing. We studied the extract (where Pip meets Miss Havisham) in detail in order to answer the question: *How does Dickens create a sense of horror around the character of Miss Havisham?* We are now trying to use some of his techniques to write our own Gothic narratives in a Dickensian style.

In this extract, Dickens creates a sense of horror around the character Miss Havisham. He does this by making the character sound intimidating and cruel. Miss Havisham is wearing old and rusty clothes with a white, dusty, unwashed dress with dark eyes as black as the colour as the night sky and the dress the colour of the stars and the moon. She was like a skeleton, allergic to light and as creepy as a ghost as the clock in the room completely stops at the time of twenty minutes to nine. Dickens plays with the readers emotions as Miss Havisham is in a bridal dress but that soon changes. She was going to get married to Mister Pumblechook but as Pip got her. Maybe Mister Pumblechook left and Miss Havisham has been hiding away from people since she said she hasn't seen the sun since she was born. Dickens had amazing thoughts. By Jack France

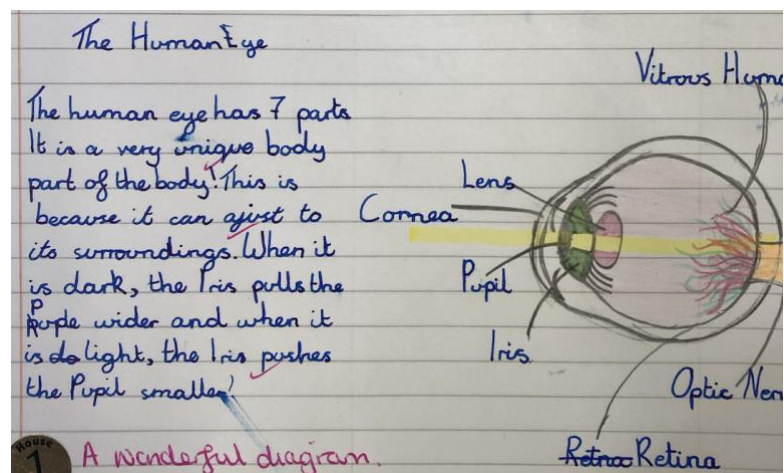
In this extract, Dickens creates a sense of horror to intimidate the reader. Dickens uses Mrs Havisham's clothing to paint a happy wedding scene but suddenly changes the scene to a horrific and dark environment. Dickens plays with the readers emotions and makes the reader frightened by the change of tone. On meeting Pip, Mrs Havisham is creepy and continuously pulls Pip nearer. The idea of the clocks stopping makes the reader think that time is special. I think it is when Pip was born because it says she hasn't seen sunlight since he was born.



Last week in maths, we applied our understanding of **multiplication strategies** to convert distances between miles and kilometres and then plotted conversion graphs.

We have now moved on to learning about **fractions**. We have learnt how to convert fractions to their simplest form, find common denominators and to convert between improper fractions and mixed numbers.

We have recently begun a new sequence of learning about **Light** in science. After revisiting our prior learning about how shadows are formed, we looked at how the eye works. We learnt about all the different parts of the eye and what they do. Many of us were surprised to learn that we actually see things upside down but then our brains flip the image the right way up again.



Having completed our history sequence about the **Roman Empire in Britain**, we are excited to have begun a geographical sequence all about **North America**.



# Golf Lessons – coming soon!



## Exciting news!

From January, we are starting golf lessons at Stevenage Golf Club. These will take place at the golf club on Fridays between 3:30pm-4:30pm and sessions are open to children of all ages. The cost per session will be £5 and parents will need to arrange to get their child there after school as well as pick up from the golf club at the end of the session. Please look out for further information and forms soon.

We will, of course, need sufficient interest for these sessions to go ahead.

