



Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is Generosity

www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

19th December 2023

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

Diary Dates

Thursday 4th January – Children return to school after the Christmas break

Monday 19th February – Friday 23rd

February - Half Term break

Monday 4th March – Danes and Puddlebridge trip to Tower bridge

Thursday 7th March – World Book Day (further details TBC)

Friday 8th March – Mothering Service in church

Monday 18th March – Parent Teacher consultations

Thursday 21st March – Parent Teacher consultations

Friday 22nd March – Reward Day

Tuesday 26th March – Easter breakfast

Thursday 28th March – Easter Service, Ceramic egg rolling and decoration. Last day of Spring Term

As we head towards the end of term, we would like to wish all of our families and very **Happy Christmas**. In the midst of all the preparations for Christmas, both in school and at home, it is important that we reflect upon the true meaning of Christmas. People all over the world will be celebrating the birth of **Jesus Christ** and sharing in the joy that this brings. Our value this half term is '**generosity**'; at this time of year, it is particularly important that we remember those who are less fortunate than ourselves and give generously in whatever way we can.

We have had a very busy time in school over the past couple of weeks. It was wonderful to welcome so many friends and family members to enjoy **Shackadell's** performance of '**The Sleepy Shepherd**' last Wednesday – the children's performance was brilliant! Thank you to all those who stayed afterwards to help dismantle the stage and set up for **Christmas Lunch** – this was a very special occasion with the whole school enjoying their meal together. On Thursday last week, classes enjoyed their **Christmas parties**. Thank you for all the **donations of food** and to **Father Christmas** for taking time out of his busy schedule to pay us a visit. Yesterday, it was wonderful to welcome so many of you to our first ever **Aston St. Mary's Carol Services**. We think you will agree that there was a very special atmosphere in the church and we look forward to this becoming an annual event in our school calendar. It was wonderful to hear the **Year Six bell ringers** perform at the end of the service – **thank you to Mr Falder** for giving the children this opportunity.

We would like to thank our whole school community for your continued support and to wish you and your loved ones a restful Christmas and a New Year of health and happiness.



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



Shining Stars were awarded to:

Tate, Lily-Anne, Charlie, Vaaris, Stanley

House Point Winners

Well done to St. Albans House for earning the most house points this half term!



House Points

Canterbury



763

St. Paul's



749

St. Albans



840

Coventry



791

A Thought from Reverend Jenny:

'What's the best thing about Christmas?' I asked some children in school last week, quoting a song which suggests:

'The tree or the cake?

The crackers or presents?

The decorations we make?

The candles and carols?

The church and the bells?

The packets of sweets?

The parties and treats?

The visit from grandma?

What's the thing we want most?...

The children's answer (no surprise) was 'presents' but the song goes on:

LOVE's the best thing about Christmas,

God's love for us in Jesus' birth.

Christmas is His birthday,

Come to bring love to the earth.'

and ends

'There's nothing so good and nothing compares

To being around somebody who CARES'.

'Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est'

'Wherever there is charity and love,

God is truly there.' (Paulinus of Aquileia in 796 AD still true today).

Christmas is about what we give, not what we get, so let's 'have ourselves a CARING little Christmas now.'

PTFA

Thank you to all who supported our **Christmas Fayre** on the 9th December. **We raised a staggering £2,000** and we could not have done it without all the support. A huge thanks to the PTFA, and the teachers running the stalls. We also had some fabulous children helping on the day as well, which was wonderful to see.



Primrose ran wheel of sweets
James setting up, tea room and cleaning up
Lottie Speller cleaning up and hoovered Shakadell
Cotis and Toby doing shed runs
Tilly ran the first aid stall
Ted and Orla set up the decorations
Keely put all the tables and chairs away
Amelie helped with set up and cleaning up
Otilie sorted all the raffle tickets
Daisy helped run the penguin stall

**We are so lucky to
have a community
spirit, and the
children all had an
amazing time.**

The current PTFA have only been going for 18 months and we started out with £5,000 in the account. Our ambition was to purchase something that all the children would make use of, and there was an old idea of providing a trim trail on the school field. After several quotes, we were not sure whether this would be in our reach as we were nearly £15,000 away from our target! Roll on, to now, and with the generous donations from all of you, and the board of governors, we finally did it!

The trim trail has been purchased and we are hoping that this will be ready in Spring.



We wanted to thank you all, but also a massive cheer for the PTFA, who work so hard (and sometimes tirelessly) in the background organising all of these events.

If you would like to join the PTFA or have any ideas, please let us know, we are always very grateful for any help!

Best wishes, The PTFA

Special Events

Dressing the Christmas Tree



On Friday 1st December, we enjoyed Decoration Day in school. This is a popular Aston tradition when the children spend the day decorating their classrooms ready for Christmas. One of the most special parts of the day is when the whole school gets together to dress the Christmas tree. The children are reminded of the symbolism of the different coloured baubles whilst Year Six hang them carefully on the tree. It is always a magical moment when the lights of the tree are finally switched on.



Special Events

Aston School Choir

The choir have been very busy performing this month. On Thursday 7th December, they sang at the new housing development. Unfortunately, it was very wet, but that did not stop them singing and a good time was had by all.

At the Christmas Fayre last Saturday, they sang their Christmas songs and carols too.

Finally, on Tuesday 12th December, Mrs Crowley and Mrs Winwood took the choir along to Woodlands View Care Home to sing Christmas songs to the residents. The children sang beautifully and it was really enjoyed by the residents. The children sang a mixture of our Christmas carols and Christmas songs, including some of our traditional favourites: Twelve Days of Christmas and the Penguin Song. The choir represented themselves, the school and their families very well, making Mrs Crowley and Mrs Winwood, extremely proud of them.



A big thank you must go to Mrs Crowley for continuing to teach our choir and provide them with these lovely singing experiences.

Attendance



Attendance continues to be a key priority across the school – so far this year attendance has been very good at 97.2%. Haffydown Class deserve a special mention once again for having the highest score - with all other classes close behind.

Haffydown: 98.1%
Peartree: 97.7%
Puddlebridge: 97.2%
Danes: 97.0%
Shackadell: 95.8%



Football News



Wow...what a start to our first year of being in the Stevenage primary schools football competitions! The team has done fantastically well, all whilst remembering to play the game using our Christian values and considering fair play.

We began the season by winning our first tournament, to get to the finals tournament, where we narrowly lost in the finals final! The team have won their cup match and two league matches played so far.

Following the league and cup match, the team then came runners up again at a tournament at Stevenage FC; this tournament included teams from Hitchin and Letchworth too.

We are extremely proud of our football team, especially when you compare the size of our school to the size of the schools that they have played against. We look forward to seeing them play more games in the new year.

A **big THANK YOU** must go to Nathaniel and Theo's dad for agreeing to lead our football team on match days - so **thank you, Rene!** The children have loved playing the matches.



Scores:

Stevenage cup match, first round:

Aston 7 v Ashtree 4

League matches:

Aston 3 v Bedwell 0

Round Diamond 2 - Aston 5

Year 3 and Year 4 football team:

We have continued to try and arrange games for this team with other schools and have penciled some dates in for the new year. Keep an eye out for news on these fixtures!

Class News

Shackadell Class

Last week Shackadell performed their Nativity for 2023 - '**The Sleepy Shepherd**'. On Tuesday, they performed to the whole school and then on Wednesday to their families. It was fantastic to see them all taking part and their hard work in learning all of their lines, the songs and actions really paid off. We are very proud of you all. Merry Christmas from Shackadell Class!



Class News

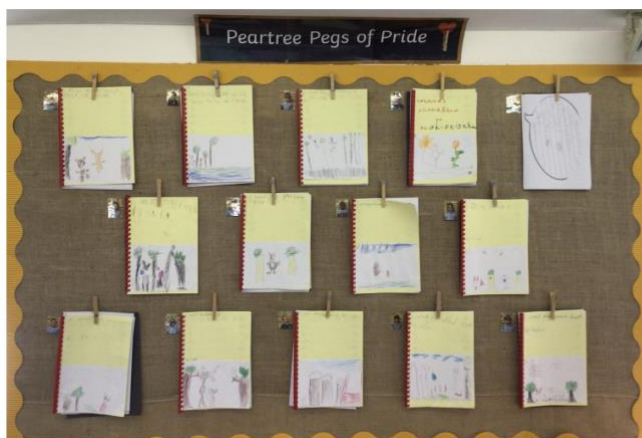
Peartree Class

Well, here we are at the end of our first term, and hasn't it gone quickly? We have all been very busy and are extremely proud of what we have achieved this term.

In our **'Landscapes and Cityscapes'** art topic, we looked at **Vincent Van Gogh's 'Starry Night'** and used acrylic paint to create our own versions of this. We looked at different brushstrokes and thickness of paint to create texture.



In our English unit, we all made our own version of the book **'I Want my Hat Back'** by Jon Klassen. They are displayed on our 'Pegs of Pride' for all to see. If you would like to have a look, feel free to ask Mrs Baker at home time.

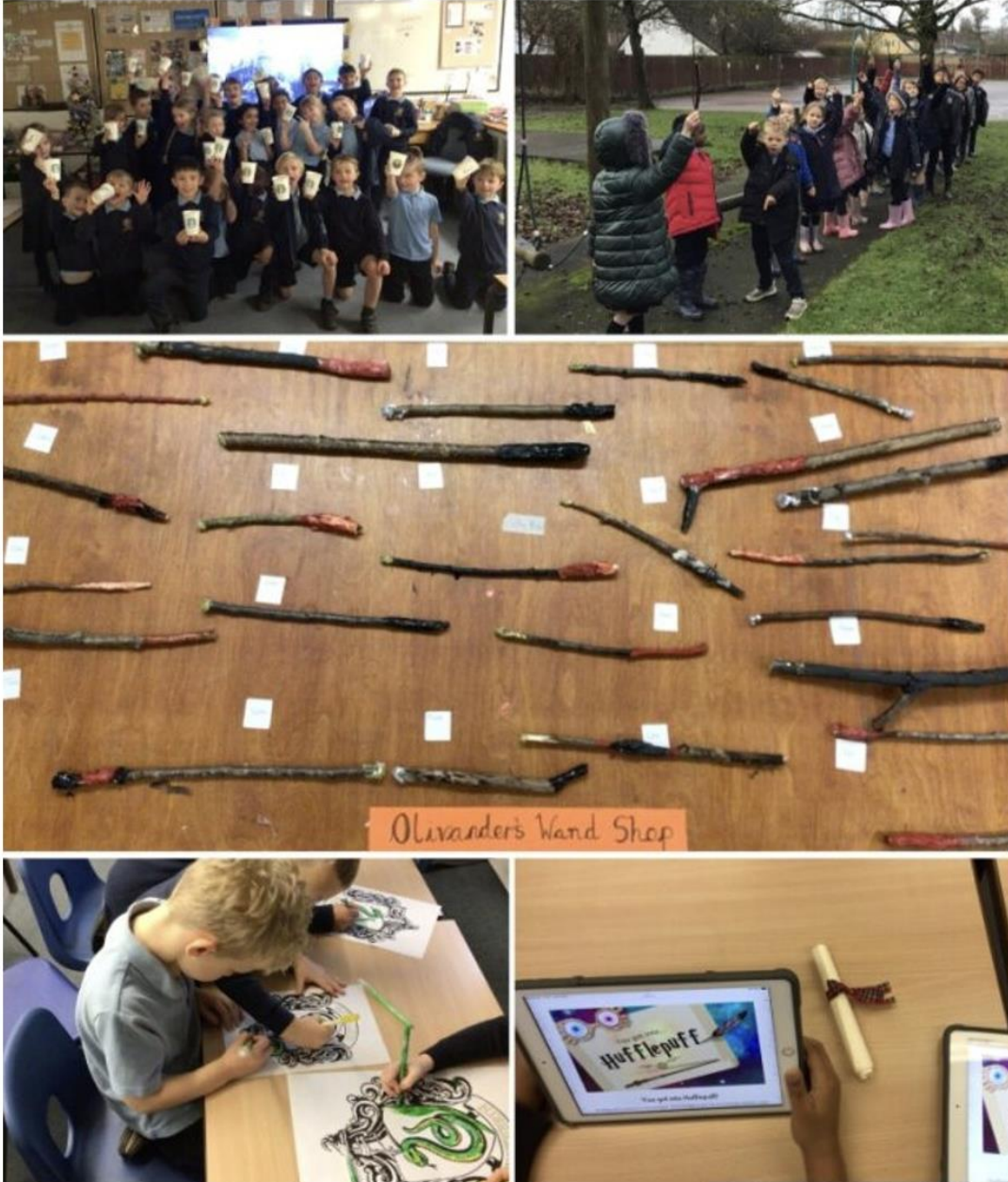


We wish you all a lovely Christmas and hope you have a well-earned rest.

Class News

Haffydown Class

This term, Haffydown have worked extremely hard to complete their reading at home cards and managed to do it just in time to earn their Theme Day. As voted for, Haffydown enjoyed a Harry Potter Scavenger Hunt Day, with a Starbucks Twist! They designed and made their own wands, got sorted into their Hogwarts Houses, wrote spells and solved the Goblet of Fire mystery – Mrs Carter was shocked to see the magical goblet appear on her desk, just as Haffydown cast their spells! **Magical rocks, Accio Nox!**



Haffydown looked deeper into their PSHE unit by focusing on their teamwork skills throughout the day and they carefully considered how they felt about their Hogwarts Houses. They discussed the following questions and how these can be important to think about in our everyday lives...

How do misconceptions impact how we treat people?

What makes a good teammate?

Do your preconceived ideas of groups of people change how well you work in a group?

Puddlebridge Class



THE SEA CHAMPION

Introduction.

The Sea champion is an extremely legendary monster. This bizarre monster can only be found at the very bottom of the ocean, but it is not easy to find. Now I will tell you more about it. He lives at the bottom of the ocean, he has got sharp teeth and claws.

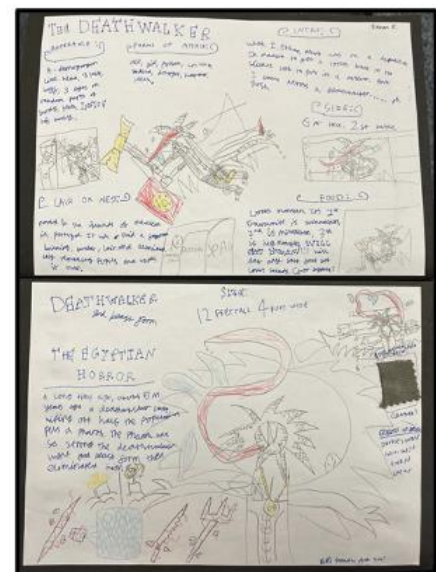
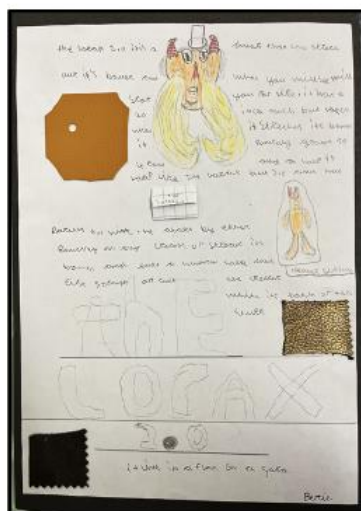
His form of attack is pretending he is nice to them and then rapidly knocks them out. Really but understandable, because then with his sharp razor teeth, he can know that it is the most dangerous monster that lives at the bottom of the ocean.

The dimensions of the sea champion are the same size as the Eiffel tower, which is approximately 300m long.



Now I will talk about its physical appearance. The colour of its skin is blue, the legs and of its tail can hurt sea creatures as well. It is quite wide and sometimes sea monsters can swim be scared of him. Often, he has got scars on him because he has to fight sea monsters.

By Ali Zuleh



We have continued to develop our **pencil sketching skills** this week by sketching robins. We learnt how to draw the shape of the head and body, before creating different textures and details.

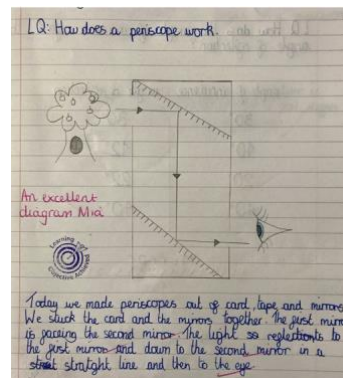
Class News

Danes Class

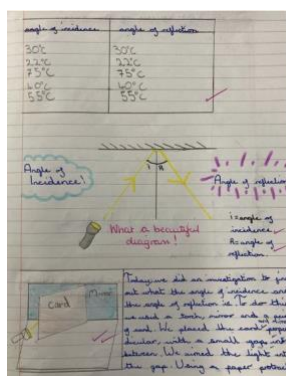
In maths, we have been learning all about **fractions**. We have explored equivalent fractions, found common denominators, converted improper fractions to mixed numbers and completed addition and subtraction calculations using fractions. One of our final challenges was to apply all of our fractional reasoning in order to sequence a set of more than twenty fractions. We worked in pairs and located the fractions on a strip of paper; we labelled the ends 0 and 1 and then used benchmarks such as $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, and $\frac{3}{4}$ to help us locate the other fractions.



We had so much fun in science! We made our own **periscopes** and then used them to spy around the school. We drew a diagram to show our understanding of how mirrors are used to reflect the light; this built upon our knowledge that light travels in straight lines.



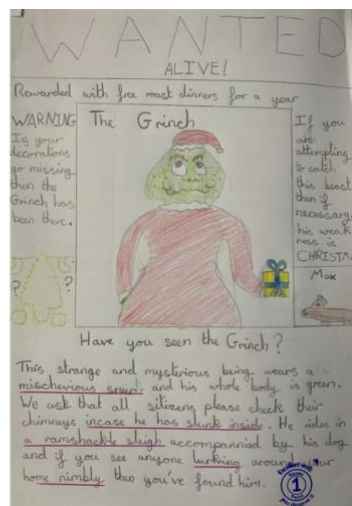
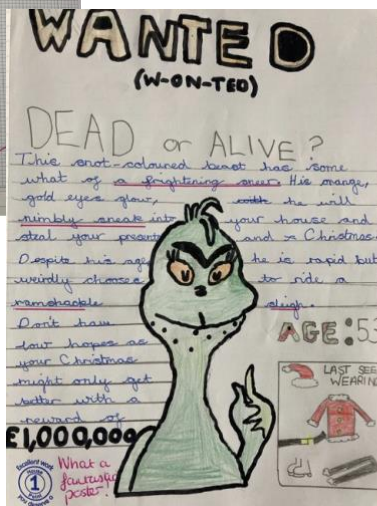
Next, we learnt what is meant by the **angle of incidence** and the **angle of reflection**. We investigated how changing the angle of incidence affected the angle of reflection; we discovered that these angles are always equal.



Last week in English, we enjoyed reading **The Grinch who Stole Christmas**. We explored some of the language used before making our own WANTED posters to describe the Grinch.

Danes Class have worked incredibly hard this term – they certainly deserve a very happy and relaxing Christmas break.

WANTED... The Grinch!



Neurodiversity Support Hub

For Parents, Carers and Professionals

We can offer support, signposting and guidance about a whole range of things including but not limited to:

No
Diagnosis
Required

- Understanding ADHD/Autism
- Distressed Behaviours
- Anxiety
- School

The phones are answered by our team of parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people

Are you a
Parent, Carer
or
Professional?



We Can't:

- Give updates/ fast track places on waiting lists
- Recommend specific private assessors

01727 833963



supporthub@add-vance.org

Open Monday-Friday
9 AM - 1PM



Here to support, reach out for a listening ear



 SEND
0-25 years
Hertfordshire's Local Offer



ADD-vance
The ADHD and Autism Trust

Herts
Parent
Carer Involvement
www.hertsparentcarers.org.uk

 Hertfordshire

**MH
LDA**

Herts Mental Health,
Learning Disability and
Autism Health and Care
Partnership

NHS

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

**1 DAY CHAMPION COURSE
FOR PARENTS & CARERS OF
8 TO 18-YEAR-OLDS
FREE TRAINING
09:30AM - 16:00PM**



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- AN UNDERSTANDING OF COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND HOW THEY CAN AFFECT YOUNG PEOPLE
- ABILITY TO SPOT SIGNS OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH IN YOUNG PEOPLE AND GUIDE THEM TO A PLACE OF SUPPORT
- KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE TO ADVOCATE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
- SKILLS TO SUPPORT POSITIVE WELLBEING

COURSE STRUCTURE

SESSION 1- ABOUT, WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL ILL HEALTH, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION, DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE.
SESSION 2 MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS: ANXIETY, SELF-HARM, EATING DISORDERS, PSYCHOSIS, RECOVERY, RESILIENCE

For further information please contact:
hweicbhv.schoolsmh@nhs.net

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING



**BOOKING LINKS
1 DAY CHAMPION COURSE FOR
PARENTS/CARERS
09:30AM - 16:00PM**

Dates	Location	Booking Link	Parking
16th November 2023	Robertson House, Stevenage	Booking Link	Parking available on site
7th December 2023	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary, Dacorum	Booking Link	Parking available on site
30th January 2024	Robertson House, Stevenage	Booking Link	Parking available on site
7th March 2024	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary, Dacorum	Booking Link	Parking available on site

For further information please contact:
hweicbhv.schoolsmh@nhs.net

Relationship Support for Parents

We recognise that the Christmas period for some can bring additional stress and pressure on your relationship whether you are together or separated, you can find a wealth of information and guidance on the Relationship support for parents | Hertfordshire County Council

[Relationship support for parents | Hertfordshire County Council](#)



This includes FREE relationship courses for Hertfordshire parents:

Parenting When Separated – A 6-week group-based course delivered online or face to face aimed at parents that are going through or are separated.

OnePlusOne's Digital Offer – Parents can access a free online platform that consists of 3 courses and bonus debt material.

Parenting SEND Children Through Separation – A 6-week online course for parents if children with SEND that are separated.

Within My Reach – An 8-week online course for parents of children with SEND that are together.

Stronger Relationships – A 6-week online course for parents, carers and extended family.

Scan the QR code above for more information and to make a referral.