



DECEMBER 2023

NEWS ON THE NINTH

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Nursery



The children are becoming very excited as we prepare for Christmas. A Christmas tree appeared in the role play area which they have enjoyed decorating! We had a lovely time in the school grounds looking for winter trees. The children have learnt that some trees are bare, and some are evergreens. We brought back some pieces of pine tree, pine cones, holly and some twigs and used them to make some Christmas decorations. We also explored the foliage more closely along with playdough, using it to create prints and to create our own winter tree scenes. We have also been very busy learning lots of songs for our Christmas Show, we hope that you enjoy it!

Reception



In Reception, we have begun to feel very festive. We have been decorating our classrooms and making decorations using natural items we collected in the orchard. We were excited to meet our class elves 'Jack' (Alder Class) and 'Jess' (Acer Class) and we are keen to find out what they will get up to in our classes leading up to Christmas! We have already been writing them letters, welcoming them and telling them all about our class rules. We hope they don't cause too much mischief during their time with us!





Year 1

On 15th November we had an animal workshop during our Science lesson. We had the chance to see and touch lots of different creatures and ask questions. The visitor taught us lots about snakes, spiders and even an owl!



Year 2

Year 2 have been busy in their Literacy lessons learning a poem 'If I had wings' by Pie Corbett. We acted out the poem and performed it to the class using expression. We have then been working on adapting the poem to 'If I had fins'. The children have had a lot of fun using their senses to imagine what they might see, hear and taste as a fish and have created some fantastic poems! Lovely writing Year 2!



Year 3

We went to the British Museum on the 16th November to look at their Egyptian exhibitions. We saw Egyptian sculptures, tombs, sarcophaguses, and jewellery. We also saw real mummies! We learnt a lot about Egyptians at the museum and will continue this learning during our history lessons this term and next term.



Year 4

As well as creating Christmas decorations and learning our carols, we have been writing a story based on 'Arthur and the Golden Rope'. We used an iPad app to retell our story and drew a comic strip to help prepare us for writing. In our DT unit, we have also started work on designing and making some winter bunting.

Year 5



On Wednesday 8th November, Year 5 went to The British Schools Museum in Hitchin as part of their History learning about the Victorians. During the visit, the children experienced a

Victorian lesson in an authentic galleryed classroom with a Victorian Teacher and visited the 1857 Headmaster's house, along with the opportunity to look at Victorian artefacts. The day ended with a Victorian exercise drill.

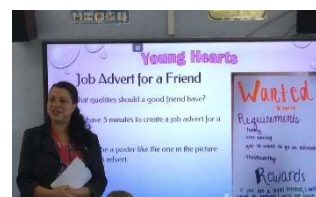


Year 6



Last week, we were lucky enough to have a visit from the student nurses at Hertfordshire University. The children learnt all about how to stay healthy through diet and exercise choices and also how to protect themselves in the hot weather. Children were reminded about online safety and the importance of choosing the safest (not quickest) route home.

Over the last month, we have had four PSHE sessions led by Jo from Future Living. In these sessions, we learnt all about what positive relationships are, the importance of respect, personal space and consent and how we could deal with conflict should it ever arise.



Year 6 have had a very busy month. In Art, we have been studying artwork by L.S Lowry and techniques he used to create his landscapes e.g. perspective and matchstick men. We created our own landscapes using watercolours inspired by Lowry.



Finally, to support our learning about WWII, we visited the RAF Museum in Hendon. Here, we looked at all the different aircraft flown during WWII and experienced what life was like for people living on the Home Front. We looked at real life artefacts, tried on pilots' uniforms and even experienced an air raid!

Christmas Lunch



Children will be served their lunch by staff on Monday 11th (Reception, Y1 and Y2) and Tuesday 12th (Years 3-6) December. The Kitchen staff give up their free time on Sunday to prepare a feast, so a big thank you in advance to them. All children will receive a Christmas lunch unless you have told us otherwise. For KS2 children, please ensure you have credit in your Arbor meals account. Please remember that your child needs to bring a packed lunch on the day they are not having their Christmas lunch.

Decorations/Christmas cards

Pupils have created a small mountain of decorations to adorn halls, corridors and classrooms. The trees are now in place and the post boxes have been open since 1st December. If children plan to send cards, they need to pop them in the boxes and make sure that the children's full name and class are shown clearly. It is also a good opportunity for the children to use their best handwriting! The last card delivery will be Friday 15th.



Christmas Performances



The delightful sounds of our youngest children rehearsing for their Christmas performances can be heard across the school. The performances are the culmination of an immense amount of effort and are very special events. We hope that you have managed to find alternative care for pre-school children and if you have not, please take them out of the hall if they become at all fractious. We also ask for all parents to switch off their mobile phones.

Photography is not permitted on the school site due to safeguarding, but the shows will be available on DVD.

Festive Fun!



The PTA's festive fun event will be held on **Saturday 9th December** between 12-3pm. Please check out PTA events to purchase tickets for the games, grotto and craft stalls. Tickets will be available to purchase on the day of the event (subject to availability). We are also still looking for volunteers to help on the day! If you could spare an hour we would really appreciate it. Please head over



to the PTA events page for more information and to sign up. The website address is: <https://www.pta-events.co.uk/friendsofcommonswoodpta> or please scan the QR code

Poppy Appeal



Poppy sales at Commonswood School to raise money for the Royal British Legion were once again extremely successful this year. Thank you for supporting this charity.



Friends of Commonswood PTA

Thank you to the Friends of Commonswood PTA and all the parents who have contributed funds over the past year. The Christmas wreath making workshop raised £546.41.



We have planted our bluebell bulbs, funded by the PTA, in the orchard and we are looking forward to watching for signs of them blooming in the Spring.



Whole school Maths home-learning!

Over the school holidays, we would like everyone to 'Get caught doing Maths'.

This year our theme is festive shapes. You might find shapes on Christmas trees, or in boxes of chocolates, or in food packaging.

In your home-learning book draw mini sketches of all the shapes you see over the holidays and label them.

Have a wonderful festive holiday and have fun getting caught doing Maths!



Parent Survey – Homework

Thank you to all the parents who took part in our homework survey. We received 88 responses to the survey of which 85% wanted to keep the homework the same as it is – sent home on a Friday and returned to school on a Tuesday.

Online Safety

December's Online Safety focus is Health, Well-being and lifestyle. At home, please could you have a discussion with your child regarding this area.

In EYFS and KS1, it could be discussing rules to stay safe when using technology and having clear time limits.

In Lower KS2, it could be discussing the negative effects of spending long periods on technology and identifying when it would be sensible to limit technology use.

In Upper KS2 it could be how technology can affect health both positively and negatively. Recognise and discuss the pressures that technology can place on someone and discuss how to manage it.

Mobile Phones

Christmas is a time when children may be given a mobile phone as a present. When introducing this technology, it is best to set clear rules from the beginning. Although your child may grumble at first, it will help reduce the likelihood of being subject to online bullying and them misusing the technology.

Our recommendation is that if your child is given access to any form of social media, it is made clear that you, as a parent, may, and will, view their messages from time to time.

By doing this, other parents have found that it has helped make their children think before sending messages and help prevent receiving continued unpleasant items.



Anti-Bullying Week

This year, Anti-Bullying Week was celebrated from 13th to 17th November. Anti-Bullying Week is a way of raising awareness about bullying. It is a week during which we learn about bullying and how to deal with it. We kicked off the week with Odd Socks Day and an Anti-Bullying assembly where we discussed what bullying was and how we can “Make a Noise About Bullying”. At Commonswood, children felt very confident in naming trusted people they could speak with if they felt they were, or a friend was, being bullied. Throughout the week, children completed activities to do with this year’s theme – Make A Noise About Bullying.

Pupil Wellbeing Committee

Here at Commonswood, we have set up a pupil-led wellbeing committee to discuss the wellbeing of pupils at our school. Please meet our Pupil Wellbeing Committee.

The children regularly meet with Miss Dean and Miss Bertorelli to find ways of boosting morale and self-esteem within the classrooms. This year’s team have already had a great start to the year, supporting in the Anti-Bullying Week Assembly as well as creating posters for the school to highlight who they are and to promote a positive mindset.



Football Match Report

Commonswood Primary School showcased their prowess on the field in a thrilling match against Our Lady's school, culminating in a 4-2 victory that left the fans in awe and the school buzzing with pride. From the outset, it was evident that the players were determined to make a mark, demonstrating exceptional sportsmanship and skill throughout the game. Coach Mr. Marshment lauded their performance, not just for the win but for the exemplary attitude and camaraderie displayed on the field.

Riley’s standout moment stole the show with an exceptional goal from the halfway line, perfectly placed in the top right corner, leaving the opposition in sheer admiration.

The backbone of the team was undoubtedly goalkeeper Josh, who made exceptional saves, showcasing incredible reflexes and keeping the team in the game. Defenders Max and Thomas stood as the unyielding foundation, not only thwarting attacks but also initiating stunning counter-attacks, serving as the bedrock for the team's success.

Ted's performance stood out as the only year 5 player in the team, admirably holding his ground against year 6 opponents and impressively linking play, a testament to his talent and resilience. Alfie, Alex, Cody, Roman, and Khaldun were the unsung heroes, displaying impeccable teamwork, supporting each other, and exhibiting great footballing skills. Their collective efforts were instrumental in securing the team's victory.

The game was not just a display of skill but also of unity and collaboration, where every player contributed their best, fought hard, and, most importantly, supported each other on the field. The match will be remembered not just for the scoreline but for the outstanding sportsmanship and dedication showcased by the Commonswood team. The victory was a testament to the hard work, determination, and talent of the entire team, leaving the school community brimming with pride and anticipation for their upcoming matches.



School Council

On Friday 10th November, as part of our Remembrance assembly, the School Council of 2022-23 handed over to this year's elected children. Welcome to our new School Council for 2023-24 who will be representing the views of the children throughout the forthcoming year.

Severe Weather Plan

We will text parents/carers via School Gateway if the school is closed due to severe weather or for any other unexpected/unforeseen circumstance. Please ensure you have downloaded the School Gateway app and enable push notifications. We will also update the school website.

Reception Applications for September 2024

Applications for Reception classes must be completed by 15th January 2024. If you need any help or guidance to do so, please speak with our office staff who will be pleased to assist you if you do not have access to online facilities. May we remind parents of Nursery children that a new application must be made for admission to Reception classes, and no priority is given to children already attending Commonswood Nursery.

Nursery Applications for September 2024

If your child was born between 01/09/2020 – 31/08/2021 they are eligible to start our Nursery in September 2024. Applications for Nursery will go live in January 2024. We do have some Stay & Play sessions available for you and your child to come along and spend some time in the Nursery prior to applying. Please contact the school office in order for you to book a place. Places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. Please email the school office to request a Nursery application form admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk

Lost property



Please label your child's belongings with a name and class in permanent ink in order for property to be swiftly returned to them. If your child has lost any items of school uniform, please check the lost property boxes which are currently overflowing. We will put lost property boxes out on both playgrounds on dry days. Any unclaimed lost property will be recycled at the end of the term.

Reminder to Parents – Please be mindful of residents and park considerately, not blocking driveways or garages. Thank you.



This Month's Reading Recommendations EYFS

Nursery – Woolf! By Stephanie Blake

Reception – Press Here by Herve Tullet

Key Stage 1

Year 1 – a Bear Called Paddington by Michael Bond

Year 2 – The Problem with Pierre by C.K Smouha and Suzanna Hubbard

Lower Key Stage 2

Year 3 – Leon and the Place Between by Angela McAllister and Grahame Baker-Smith

Year 4 – Operation Gadget Man! By Malorie Blackman

Upper Key Stage 2

Year 5 – Clockwork by Phillip Pullman, Year 6 – The Crowstarver by Dick King-Smith

Emotion Focus for this half term:

Anger



We are excited to introduce our new half termly focus: Emotions.

This half term we will be learning about anger; how it feels, what causes it and how to deal with it in a healthy way.

Please discuss this emotion with your child at home.

Our newly formed wellbeing committee, made up of KS2 children, will be organising wellbeing activities to support everyone in school.

DIARY DATES

December	
7th	Nursery Dress Rehearsal
8th	8.45am Mince Pie & Mingle
8th	9.15am Nursery Performance
9th	PTA Festive Fun 11.30-3pm
11th	9.30am Reception dress rehearsal
11th	10.30am Year 1 dress rehearsal
11th	2pm Year 2 dress rehearsal
11th	Reception/KS1 Christmas lunch
11th	5.30pm KS2 Christmas Concert
12th	8.45am & 2pm Mince Pie & Mingle
12th	9.15am Reception Christmas Performance
12th	KS2 Christmas lunch
12th	KS2 Talent show
12th	2.15pm Reception Christmas Performance
13th	8.45am & 2pm Mince Pie & Mingle
13th	9am Year 1 Performance
13th	2.15pm Year 1 Performance
14th	8.45am-2pm Mince Pie & Mingle
14th	9am Year 2 Performance
14th	2.15pm Year 2 Performance
14th	3.15pm PTA Pre-Loved uniform sale in Dining room
19th	Last day of term for Nursery
20th	Last Day of Term – School finishes at 12.30pm
January	
4th	Inset Day Children do not attend
5th	Inset Day Children do not attend
8th	Term commences

Term time holidays

We are unable to authorise term time holidays. Absence can only be authorised if a child is unwell. If however, the number of unauthorised sessions reaches 15 or more within 2 terms, the local authority may issue you with a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice requires parents to pay a fine of £60 within 21 days. If this is not paid within the time limit, the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days.

Term time holidays have a negative impact on friendships and learning. Please avoid taking your child out of school. Term time holidays are not authorised. Absence requests can only be authorised if there are exceptional, unrepeatable circumstances. Section 7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory age attends school.



Commonswood Primary & Nursery 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 about children please contact 0300 123 4043.

Mrs G Seymour (Designated Senior Person), Mrs S Manning (Deputy Designated Person), Mr S Burt (Deputy Designated Person for eSafety & Mrs D Lindsay-Hill (Deputy Designated Person), Miss K Dean (Designated Senior Person) Chair of Governors Mrs Julie Noakes