



Bierton Church of England Combined School

Dear Parents,

The children have been working so hard this term across the curriculum and have been really enjoying their topic work. We have had several exciting opportunities for the children to enhance their experiences including a Greek Workshop for Years 3+4, a trip to St Albans to see a replica of Amy Johnson's plane for children in Beech and Birch and a trip to Oxford Castle for children in Year 5+6. These opportunities add to the children's work in class and are experiences that many children remember for years to come. We are aware that these come at a cost and we do our best to give you as much notice as possible for any of these additional experiences. We thank you for your support in sending in your contributions so that we are able to offer these exciting and memorable experiences to enhance the children's learning as they really gain a lot from these broad experiences. Within this newsletter there are some short comments about two of the trips that have taken place, but if you speak to any of the children they will tell you in great detail about these opportunities and always with an animated expression and passion for what they have discovered. This is why these broader experiences are so vital for the children and we thank you for your support in making these happen.

All the children have been very busy preparing for their Christmas productions and are very excited to share these with you. You should have now received your tickets for the performances. Please bring these tickets with you on the day. Can I also remind you that no children under 12 or babies are allowed in to the productions. We look forward to seeing you all at the performances. If you have any tickets that you no longer require, please drop them back into the school office so that they can be assigned to people on the waiting lists.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting your children and the school and to wish you all a lovely Christmas Break when we get to it. I hope you all get to spend some quality time together as families—another example of our Value for this half term—Love!

Ms Martin
Headteacher

Dates for your diary

Key dates for Autumn 2nd Half Term

November

Thursday 30th—Disco

EYFS+KS1 3:30—4:30pm

KS2 4:45—6pm

December

Monday 4th—KS2 Production 1:30pm and 6:30pm

Tuesday 5th— Santa Run

KS2 Production 6:30pm

Wednesday 6th—Children's Hot Christmas Lunch

Thursday 7th—2:30pm Year 3+4 Classes open session to share their Greek Work.

Monday 11th—EYFS+KS1 Christmas Production 1:30pm
Church Carol Service—Choir Performing.

Wednesday 13th —EYFS+KS1 Production
6pm

Thursday 14th—Senior Citizens Christmas
Treat.
3:30 -4:30pm Christmas Carol
Concert and Santa Grotto

Friday 15th—Image Theatre for the
children.
2:30pm EYFS Coffee Afternoon

Monday 18th—Children's Christmas Parties.

Tuesday 19th—Christingle Service

Tuesday 19th—School Closes at 1pm.

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Bierton Christian Values

At Bierton CE Combined School we have Christian values at the centre of our school ethos. These values are for all pupils and staff to live by and apply to their lives, in and out of school. We used to have 12 focus Christian values but we have decided that for the values to be more memorable and applicable to children's lives, we will now have 5 Bierton Christian Values. The new values are love, cooperation, honesty, respect and responsibility. The aim is for children to understand the importance of these values and apply them to their lives and behaviour. When embedded in school life, these values will create a happy, nurturing environment in which the children can learn and grow.



Love



Responsibility



Honesty



Respect



Cooperation

Each half term, we will focus on one of the values. The focus value for Autumn 2 is 'love'. The children will explore this value in assemblies and in class. We will think about friends and family, caring and sharing, feeling safe, wanting good for others and showing love to ourselves. In school, children can show love by being kind and considerate to everyone they meet.

Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes

A huge thank you to all those families who voluntarily put together a shoe box of gifts. It was lovely to see so many boxes coming into school. A real example of our Christian Value of Love this half term. I know they will be gratefully received—Thank you very much.



Children In Need

All the children looked great in their spotty mufti clothes to raise money for Children in Need. Thank you to those people who had baked or donated cakes for the sale after school. A particular thank you to the group of Year 6 children who had organised the cake sale and made some cakes to sell. Altogether we raised an amazing £380.08. Well done everyone!



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Oxford Castle Trip—Years 5+ 6

From pillories to porridge! On Monday 6th November, Year 5 and 6 visited 'Oxford Castle Unlocked,' as part of their history work on crime and punishment. The trip began when greeted by costumed character guides who took the children on a tour of the castle, where they climbed the Saxon-built St George's Tower and were transported back in time to the 11th century when Oxford was a fortified town. After learning about some of the gruesome punishments experienced by some of Oxford's most infamous criminals, the children were able to explore what remains of the old prison at the castle. The children also had time to scale the mound of the 11th Century motte-and-bailey castle where they were able to enjoy 360 degree panoramic views of the city.

After lunch, they participated in a workshop on crime and punishment through the ages, where they investigated how punishments have changed and evolved over the years. A carousel of activities enabled them to dress up in prison uniform; explore different types of 'hard labour' and discover more about some of the youngest inhabitants of Oxford prison. It was a fascinating and worthwhile trip which really brought the topic alive!



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Sickness and Diarrhoea

Unfortunately we have hit that time of year when germs are rife and spread quickly amongst the children. In order to reduce the spread of these germs, please can you ensure that if your child experiences sickness or diarrhoea that they remain away from school for 48 hours once symptoms have completely stopped. These are NHS guidelines as shown below:

Vomiting and diarrhoea. Children with diarrhoea and/or vomiting should definitely be kept off school until at least 48 hours after their symptoms have gone. Most cases of [diarrhoea and vomiting in children](#) get better without treatment, but if symptoms persist, consult your GP.

We thank you for following these guidelines as it helps to reduce the spread of the germs around school.

After School Clubs

All After school clubs will have their last session this week (W/C 27th November), with the last clubs running on Friday 1st December. This allows children and staff to rest in between performances as these last few weeks are extremely busy with a variety of events.

Club Lists for the Spring Term will be coming out shortly for children to put preferences down. Please look out for these and return your preferences so that we can ensure clubs are able to start promptly in January.

Unforeseen School Closures

 Please can I ask that in the event of the school being shut for any unforeseen circumstance (snow, etc) that parents check the Bucks County Council's website on www.buckscouncil.gov.uk and or listen to the local radio station (Mix 96—96.2 on FM waveband).

I anticipate that if the school is to be closed then a decision will be posted on the above website as early as possible in the morning.

In addition to this, we will endeavour to send out text alerts to inform you of any such circumstances.

Staffing News

In July, Mr Gadsby became a father again for the third time—three children under three! In order to allow him to be an active part in their lives while they are still young, he has taken the decision to take Shared Parental Leave and will not be teaching for the Spring Term.

However, we have managed to recruit an experienced teacher to take the post for the Spring Term and teach in Hawthorn Class. Mrs O'Brien has taught right across Key Stage 2 and has experience of the expectations in Year 5+6 so we are delighted to welcome her to our team.

Mr Gadsby will be holding a thorough handover with Mrs O'Brien to ensure she is able to continue where he has left off. In addition to this, Mr Gadsby will be carrying out Parents Evening alongside Mrs O'Brien in January so that he can fully inform parents of the children's progress. Mr Gadsby will also be taking 'Keeping In Touch' Days and will therefore be in school most Fridays. This will allow him to continue to work with the children in Year 5+6.



A reminder that we are now a **NUT FREE zone**. Thank you for ensuring that your children do not have any products with nuts in their school lunch boxes.

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Greek Workshop Day

Friday 24th November

Today we were treated to a range of Greek workshops when Lauren (Greek codename - Lyra) from 'Portals to the Past' came in. We started the day with an introductory talk. Children found out about the magnificent battles between Athens and Spartan as well as learning more on Athenian and Spartan people. Some of the children were recruited to play these roles and a couple were tragically killed (momentarily...)

We then broke into groups to take part in three workshops:

Workshop 1 - we completed a fiendish ancient Greek quiz where our knowledge of this topic was sorely tested.

Workshop 2 – we explored an Archimedes puzzle called Stomachian. In groups we were given a number of pieces that fit together to make a square. This was certainly more difficult than it looked and it relied on excellent teamwork skills. Those who completed this first challenge were stretched further to use some of the pieces to make a war elephant. This was not an easy task though we were assured that it was possible.

Workshop 3 – we played an ancient game called 'Petteia' which features in Homer's 'Iliad', the great story of the Trojan War. The games involved moving marble counters around the board and trying to trap your opponent's warriors (counters) so they could not move.

In the afternoon we all moved to the hall to re-enact some legendary Olympic games between the two most powerful Greek city states – Athens and Sparta. It was a close run thing but Sparta won the games and great celebrations ensued.

Finally, we re-enacted Jason's epic voyage to capture the Golden Fleece with the help of the acting skills of some year 3 and 4 children. All in all we had a wonderful day and learnt many new things about this fantastic topic!



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Reporting to Parents

Following observations last year, we have made a few changes this year as to when we report to parents to try and make it more timely and productive.

September:

In September we held our first parents evening so that all parents and staff had a chance to discuss how children had settled into their new classes and to share any initial concerns or queries.

January:

On the first day back after Christmas, children will come home with a brief progress report that will state where they are currently working in relation to the national curriculum expectations. At this point in the year we would only expect children to be 'Working Towards' their year group expectations, this will be explained in more detail at the time.

At the beginning of January we will be holding our second Parents Evening to discuss the progress reports and the aspects that your children are focusing on to continue to make progress.

April:

On the first day back after Easter, children will come home with a second brief progress report which will state where your children are working at that point in time and the aspects they need to continue to work on.

July:

In July you will receive the full report for the year with details of how your child is progressing across the curriculum.

Hopefully, these changes will allow you to be informed of how your child is progressing and what you can do to support your child throughout the year.

Homework Changes

Following the homework questionnaire that was carried out in the Summer term with staff, pupils and parents, we evaluated and adjusted our homework expectations for September. Learning logs were not popular with any party and we have therefore removed these from our homework policy. Maths and Reading were voted highly by all parties. We therefore, developed a homework expectation guideline which progresses as children move through the year groups.

EYFS

- Grid of key skills in line with characteristics of effective learning.
- Reading opportunities—picture books for discussion.
- Weekly RWI Sounds

Year 1

- Maths activity every week
- Reading weekly towards the global reading challenge.
- Weekly RWI Sound sheets.

Year 2

- Maths every other week – Arithmetic questions
- Reading Comprehension Questions every other week.
- Reading weekly towards the global reading challenge
- Weekly Spellings – for those children who are off RWI.

Years 3+4

- Weekly Arithmetic
- Weekly Maths activity linked to areas covered in class. Could be a short sheet or My Maths online.
- Reading weekly towards the global reading challenge.
- Weekly spellings.

Years 5+6

- Weekly Arithmetic
- Weekly Maths Activity linked to areas covered in class or My Maths.
- Weekly SPAG homework
- Weekly reading towards global reading challenge.
- Weekly Spelling

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Keeping Children Safe Online—This Month's Top Tip

It can be hard to keep track of what your child is doing on social networks, apps and games. Or know how to keep them safe. The NSPCC Share Aware Website has some useful top tips for having conversations with children about how they are using the internet and how to protect themselves.

Talk about their online world

We talk to children about crossing the road, bullying and speaking to strangers. But what about staying safe in the digital world?



Having regular conversations about what your child is doing online - just like you would their day at school - is the best way to keep them safe.

You'll be able to spot any problems, encourage them to come to you if they're worried and make sure they know what's ok to share online - and what's not.

You can find out more about the social networks, apps and games your child uses with our [Net Aware](#) tool.

3 tips to help start the conversation

1. Explore sites and apps together and talk about any concerns.
2. Ask your child if they know how to stay safe online.
3. Talk about personal information and what to share online.

Get more advice about how to [talk to your child](#) to help them stay safe.

Create a family agreement

Creating a family agreement is a great way to start talking about online safety.

It'll help your child understand what behaviour is appropriate when they're online. And they'll know who they can turn to if they are ever worried about anything they see or do.



Download and print our agreement template to get started.

For more information visit the NSPCC Share aware site at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>

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Keeping Children Safe Online—This Month’s Top Tip

Example of a family online agreement from the NSPCC Website:

Our family online agreement

Creating a family agreement is a great way to start conversations about online safety and to discuss any worries you may have. Make sure you review the rules together regularly to keep them up-to-date.

..... agree(s) to:
(eg check before I download a new app)

..... agree(s) to:
(eg ask my child's permission before posting photos of them on social media)

We both agree to:
(eg talk about what we're up to in our online world like our offline world)

SIGNED

SIGNED

For more information search **'Share Aware'**

 **NSPCC**
Let's keep kids safe online

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