

TALK OF THE TERM



HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

The academic year began with a massive relocation exercise from the Wyre Forst Hub into our main school building and four temporary classrooms, which were installed during the course of the summer. The staff worked incredibly hard to have the classrooms ready for the new term and the children settled in really quickly to their new accommodation. Having all of the school on one campus has really increased the sense of community amongst the staff and children. We now cannot wait for our new build to be ready! Work will be starting in January on the £1.8 million extension to the school, which will provide four brand new classrooms. This will enable the whole school to be under one roof for the first time and we know this will benefit the children even more.

Developing our sense of community has been enhanced by the introduction and promotion of ClassDojo, a means of communicating and sharing information and photos of special events and amazing work with our families. We love to hear parents' and carers' comments about events and activities and we value all of the feedback given.

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

Headteacher's Welcome

Reception

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

Year 6

Forest School

Mental Health and

Wellbeing

RE and Collective

Worship Department

CONT ...

We have been blessed with many visitors this term from other schools within the Trust, as well as external visitors. Without exception, they have commented on the incredibly calm and purposeful classrooms that they have visited, and we are proud of the children's wonderful behaviour for learning. It is such a pleasure to visit classrooms and see the outstanding range of learning opportunities that our children are given in all areas of the curriculum.

As well as professional visitors, we have welcomed our parents, carers and families into school for a number of musical extravaganzas over the last few weeks. From the Stone Age to the Great Fire of London, from the Nativity to Christingles, the whole community has been buzzing with the outstanding entertainment provided by children from Reception to Year 6 and we are proud of all of them for participating with such enthusiasm and vigour.

In addition to the musical treats, staff organised a fabulous Christmas Market for the whole school community. We are always grateful to everyone for getting involved as this enables the PTA to raise much-needed funds to buy new equipment for the children. The Christmas jumper sale was a new event in the school calendar and lots of people snapped up a bargain! The choir have also been active during the festive period, with a visit to Kemp Hospice and to Kidderminster General Hospital. As you can see, it has been an extremely term and I am sure the children and staff will enjoy a well-earned rest over the festive period.

On behalf of the staff of St. John's CE Primary School, I would like to wish all of our school community a wonderful Christmas and a very happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming the children back in January for an action-packed spring term!

BY MRS S. FINLAY - ACTING HEADTEACHER



RECEPTION - AUTUMN TERM 2023



The children's first term at St. John's seems to have flown by. They have embraced school life in such a positive manner and their enthusiasm for learning has been amazing. It has been lovely to see them building friendships and building confidence to enable them to grow and flourish

The children's first term at St. John's seems to have flown by. They have embraced school life in such a positive manner and their enthusiasm for learning has been amazing. It has been lovely to see them building friendships and building confidence to enable them to grow and flourish.

We started the term with the topic 'All about me', where we focussed on what was important to the children both at home and at school. The children talked about the people who they live with, what they like to do and where they like to go. They practised name writing and began to recognise letters and sounds in Phonics. The children engaged in our different learning areas and have helped to shape our new learning environment, back in the main building at St. John's.



We had a surprise visit from the air ambulance which fitted in well with us talking about 'People Who Help Us.' The local PCSO also visited us to talk to us about the role of the police.

Our Autumn 2 topic was 'Houses and Homes.'

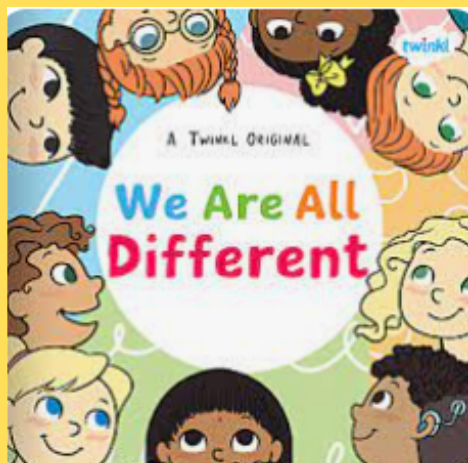
At the beginning of the half term we had a 'bonfire experience' where we ate hotdogs, had soup and learnt about firework safety. The children have used stories to explore the materials that different houses are made from, how houses have changed since the past, what houses look like in different countries around the world and have tried to think what houses might look like in the future.



YEAR 1 - AUTUMN TERM 2023

What a busy Autumn term in Year 1 have had! The children have settled well to their new routines. They have worked very hard and have had lots of fun!

What a busy Autumn term in Year 1 have had! The children have settled well to their new routines. They have worked very hard and have had lots of fun!



The children have also been working hard on their handwriting, focusing on letter formation, sizing and writing on the lines.

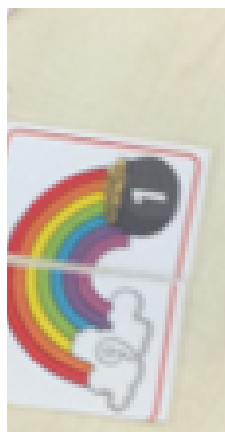
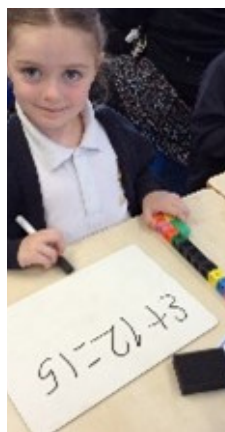
In the second half term, the focus for our English lessons was sentence construction where the children have learnt that every sentence needs a subject and a verb, beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop.

During computing sessions we focused on basic skills such as logging on to a computer, mouse work and keyboard skills. We then learnt how to use different art programmes and tools to create simple pictures.

We have also learnt some important online safety lessons.

In our maths lessons the children have been consolidating and extending their number knowledge and skills through a range of fun and practical activities.

They have also been developing their addition and subtraction skills, learning practical and written or pictorial methods for solving calculations.



We have been learning about materials in Science and have thought about their properties and why they are selected for different purposes. We investigated which materials would be best suited for a waterproof coat, a pair of curtains and we have also investigated which materials floated in a fair test.

During PE, we began the term with a focus on gymnastics where the children began by learning different balances, shapes and movements with a space theme. In the second half term, the focus moved to Dance. The children used different shapes, movements and levels to create a whole class winter dance.

In our R.E lessons, we thought about different groups that we belong to and have learnt about belonging to Christianity and Islamic faiths. We also visited Kidderminster Baptist Church to look for signs and symbols of belonging to a faith community.

Our art work in Autumn 1 was all about Wassily Kandinsky. We had great, messy fun, finding out what happened when we mixed primary colours with our hands. We also explored changing shades by mixing white and black with a chosen colour. We completed the topic by creating our own fabulous Kandinsky inspired 'Concentric Circles' art work using potato printing.

In Autumn 2, the children enjoyed exploring different types of puppets before designing and making their own hand puppet using cutting and joining skills as part of our D&T learning.

The history topic for the autumn term was all about how toys have changed over time. The children have looked at the toys that their grown-ups at home would have played with when they were the same age. They explored different toys to see how they have changed with a focus on the materials used and technological advances in toys over the years.

YEAR 2 - AUTUMN TERM 2023

What a very busy term we have had!

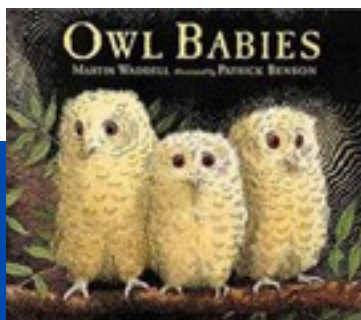
The children have worked incredibly hard and have achieved a huge amount since they began in year 2.

In English, they have looked at the story of Owl Babies. We used this text to develop the children's writing and they produced a lovely description about a forest. We have spent time working on their understanding of grammar and how to apply this to strengthen their sentence construction and punctuation within all of their written work.

In Maths, we have concentrated on ensuring that the children have secure place value knowledge, which has been applied throughout their addition and subtraction strategies this term. Children have become more secure in the use of Base 10 and blank number lines to help them solve calculations more efficiently.

In History, the children loved exploring the events of the Great Fire of London through drama and role-play. Mrs Hillman also worked with us to produce a wonderful, and informative performance about the event. The children sang beautifully and delivered their lines brilliantly. We also linked DT to our History topic and the children explored wheels and axles to design and make their own fire engine.

The children have been enjoying the more practical elements of the curriculum too, including Art. This term, we have been exploring colour mixing and creating block prints based on the nature-inspired work of Owen Mortensen. The children created some beautiful repeated designs using what they had learned.



The children have enjoyed using atlases and globes to discover all about the world in Geography. They have looked at the seven continents and five oceans, as well as countries, capital cities and surrounding seas of the UK. They have developed their fieldwork and map skills by creating maps of the school and local walking routes. The children have learnt about the geographical human and physical features of Tulum in Mexico and compared them to the geographical features of Kidderminster.

Our science work has seen us looking at living things and their habitats and we have found out how to distinguish between things that are living, dead and were never alive. The children have become experts in understanding how animals are adapted to suit their habitats.

We are really pleased with how quickly the children are developing their computing skills and they can now identify different types of technology and understand their uses. They have logged onto our computer network and have been using the iPads to record pictures and voice notes. We have looked at how we use information technology to take photographs, explored the differences between portrait and landscape images and how to take the best photographs and how editing can be used to change an image.

WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ON-GOING SUPPORT AND TO WISH YOU AND VERY
MERRY CHRISTMAS.

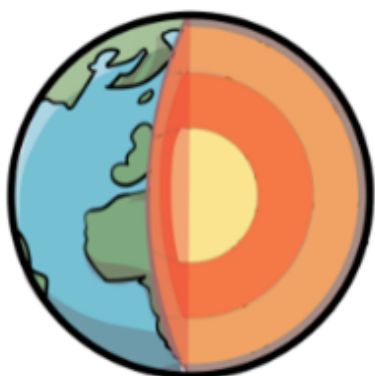
YEAR 3 - AUTUMN TERM 2023

Year 3 have settled into their new year group brilliantly. The step up into Key Stage 2 brings a few changes and we are proud of how the children have developed over this first term.

During the autumn term, the children have explored the topic of The Stone Age, through English and History, as well as D.T. and Science.

Within their History lessons, they discovered what life was like through each of the main time periods of the Stone Age right through to the Iron Age, finding out about how civilisation started and how agriculture was a major factor for the stone circles being built. They learnt how bronze and iron changed the way we interacted with one another and have used historical skills such as evidence and interpretation; change and continuity and historical significance amongst others.

In Science the children have explored rocks and soils. They have examined different rock types and conducted some investigations such as assessing their permeability and they explored how rocks are formed. They have examined different soil samples and explored the process of fossilisation. They really enjoyed making their clay fossil mould casts.



In English, the children explored the language and structure in 'The Stone Age Boy', wrote a diary entry and concluded by writing their own fictitious adventure for the Stone Age Boy.

The children read daily through either Reading Gems or Codex. In Reading Gems, the children continue to develop their comprehension skills as well as reading fluency with a variety of different texts. We encourage the children to read at home every day and appreciate your support in ensuring this vital practice takes place.

During the second half of the term, we have been concentrating on Grammar. The children have explored different sorts of nouns, such as proper and collective nouns as well as verbs. They are now working on full independent clauses and you may hear them saying: 'because it's a full independent clause with a subject and a verb, so I place a full stop at the end and then go back and add a capital letter.'



In Design and Technology, the children examined stable structures and built their own version of Stonehenge. They have looked at the different nets of shapes, cutting them out and building them up.



In Art the children have learnt about the artist Jackson Pollock and have particularly enjoyed creating their own drip paintings!

In Maths this term, we have been securing our knowledge of number and place value. Children have learnt column methods for addition and subtraction and have applied these to word problems. The children have been learning about multiplication of 3s, 4s and 8s and have used grouping and sharing to divide.

In R.E children have been reading from Genesis and learning about how we can look after the world, then learning about Noah and his covenant with God to look after the world- links have been made to how we should look after our environment.

YEAR 3 - CONT ...

In PSHE our focus has been on bullying and what to do if they are bullied or witness bullying. They have also learnt about different family types and during the first half of the term we established rules and consequences.



In Computing we have looked at how digital devices work and help us and how computers and computer networks are connected. This half term we are looking at Stop Frame Animation.

The children continue to develop and grow spiritually, through creating work for display for R.E. themes, Remembrance work and raising money for charity with Children in Need and The Rudolph Run for Kemp.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE A GREAT CHRISTMAS BREAK AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN THE NEW YEAR FOR ANOTHER FUN-FILLED TERM!

YEAR 4 - AUTUMN TERM 2023

We began the term by looking at a book called 'QUEST', which was the sequel to a book called 'JOURNEY' that the children read in Year 3. The children used their writing skills to produce non-chronological reports about the Mayans, inspired by a setting in the book.

During the second half term, we read a book called 'The Spectacular City' where a mouse and bear travel to the city and meet a cat. Cat seems nice at first but there is a huge twist at the end. The children then had a go at writing their own stories about two woodland characters with a twist.

In Maths, we started by looking at place value and then we worked on the four operations: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. We looked at fluency questions and then used our knowledge to answer reasoning type questions.

Our History topic was looking at The Ancient Greeks. We researched about their lives and the things that we still use today. For example, the democracy system and the Olympics.

In RE, we started by looking at the lives of Hindus in Britain, studying the deities, ways in which they worship and the festival of Diwali. To celebrate the Festival of Light, we made our own lotus flower Diya lamps and we tasted traditional Hindu sweets.



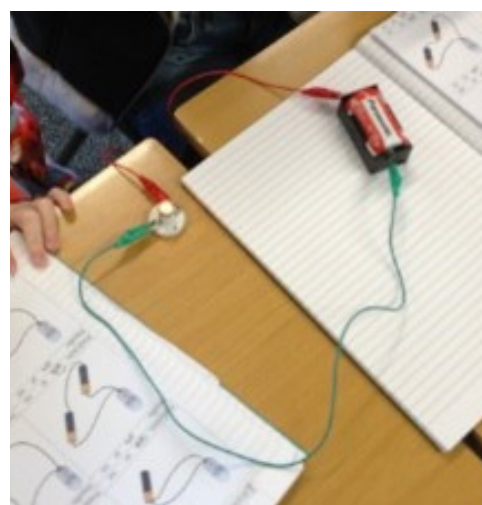
During the second half term, we studied the Trinity and its significance to Christians, especially during Baptisms. We explored ways in which the parts of the Trinity are represented using different symbols.

Our Science topic enabled the children to use their investigative skills while exploring animals and then electricity. We looked a lot at the different teeth we have, how to keep them healthy and the food we eat. We were lucky to have a Dental Nurse visit us and she gave us a tooth brush to take home!



The children completed a smelly investigation by leaving boiled eggs in different liquids including: coke, orange juice, water and even vinegar. Our classrooms did not smell very nice for that week! We also made our own digestive systems using tights and a bag full of orange juice, banana and crackers!

We then moved onto electricity where we looked at safety and different circuits that the children made and tested whether the bulb would light up.



Finally, in Art, we have been looking at Van Gogh and have been learning to sketch using perspective and proportion. We have created our own 'Café Terrace' picture and used our knowledge of mixing colours to paint it.

YEAR 5 - AUTMUN TERM 2023

The first term of Year 5 has absolutely flown by and the we are all really proud of how well the children have settled into the routines and expectations of Year 5. They have shown extreme focus in all of their work and lots of exciting learning has been taking place.

We began the year by looking at 'The Wolves in the Wall' by Neil Gaiman in English. The children enjoyed using this as a stimulus for their own story writing. After half term, we began a new grammar scheme, helping the children to correctly understand sentence structure, nouns, verbs, phrases, clauses, past, present and future tense.

In maths, the children have been looking at place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division (including dividing by 10, 100 and 1000 into decimal numbers) and addition and subtraction of fractions.

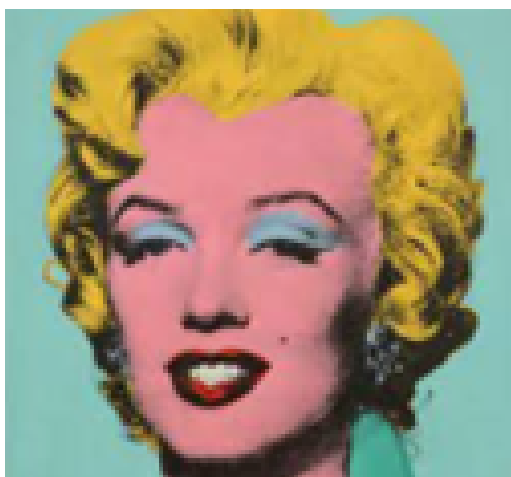
In science, the children have had lots of opportunities to work scientifically and have shown plenty of enthusiasm and excitement. We definitely have some budding scientists in the year! During the first half of the term they looked at properties and changes to materials. They carried out various investigations including how materials dissolve in a liquid to form a solution and sorting/grouping everyday materials. We then looked at forces where children had the opportunity to plan their own experiment to find out how the friction between an object and a surface differs when the surfaces are different.



In Geography, the children have identified the four countries of the UK, and their capital cities. They have also researched a range of famous landmarks and counties across the UK.

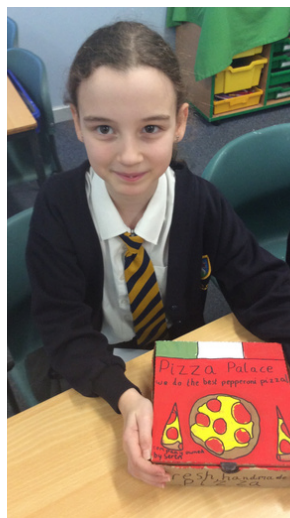
During their PSHE lessons we have looked at 'Celebrating Difference'. We examined what bullying is and what they should do if they think they are being bullied. We did some special lessons based on Anti-bullying Week, with this year's theme being 'Make A Noise About Bullying'.

In Art, the children focussed on the Pop Artist Andy Warhol to create their own portraits in his style. They mixed colours, spent time leaning how to sketch a face and print layers to create their masterpiece!



AS YOU CAN SEE, WE HAVE HAD AN EXTREMELY BUSY TERM AND THE CHILDREN DEFINITELY DESERVE A WELL-EARNED BREAK. WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE CHILDREN IN THE NEW YEAR.

YEAR 6 - AUTUMN TERM 2023



As we approach the end of this term, it is with immense pride that we reflect on the incredible accomplishments and experiences our Year 6 pupils have embraced. The children have settled down really well into Year 6 and their enthusiasm for learning is reflected in every task and activity they undertake.

Our English lessons have been an adventure in literature with the exploration of 'The Boy in the Tower'. The children showcased their creativity through various writing tasks - newspaper articles, narratives, Wikipedia entries and diary entries.

In Mathematics we have been covering Place Value, the four operations, fractions and percentages and the children have made lots of progress.

History came alive when we delved into the pages of World War II and the Battle of Great Britain. The engagement and enthusiasm displayed during these lessons was amazing, demonstrating a thirst for knowledge and an appreciation of the past.

Science took us on a journey of discovery as we explored evolution and adaptation, laying the foundation for a deeper understanding of the natural world.

Our adventures in Forest School added an extra layer of excitement and hands-on learning. In the latter part of the term, the focus shifted to the subject of 'light' where the children carried out various investigations including how shadows are formed.

In RE we have been having lots of discussion and debate about Christians' beliefs in God and whether creation and science are conflicting or complementary.

In art, the children painted some self-portraits in the distinctive style of Picasso. The creativity and individuality expressed in each artwork were a testament to their artistic talents. In DT creativity took a savoury turn as the children designed and made their own pizzas, complete with personalised pizza boxes.

In PE we have been lucky enough to have Kidderminster Harriers come and coach the children in 'Health Kicks' which will continue next term.

Finally, we have started having transition meetings with Baxter College to prepare the children for their secondary school journey. This marks a significant step toward ensuring a smooth transition and a successful start to their next chapter.



As the holiday season approaches, we want to take this opportunity to wish all of our parents a very Merry Christmas. Thank you for your continued support.
The Year 6 team.

FOREST SCHOOL - SPRING TERM 2023

We've enjoyed watching the Forest School site change from autumn to winter: a very mild start to the term, plenty of rain, beautiful autumn leaves, a bumper crop of sweet chestnuts and finally the trees are now almost bare and everywhere is rather soggy



We haven't always managed to dodge the rain showers but we've still been able to complete some great learning activities, have lots of fun and even a few campfires and s'mores along the way.



In Reception, we have been learning how to stay safe at Forest School by establishing routines, turn-taking and safety ground rules. The children have been improving their balance and confidence on the rope bridge, swing and climbing on our wobbly rope ladder. We've enjoyed learning about nuts, seeds and berries and playing 'the welly game' as a whole class.



In our Key Stage 1 sessions the children have been developing their independence by selecting from a choice of activities. As well as having a go at bug hunting, mud kitchen creations and tree climbing, they have also developed their teamwork by building some fantastic shelters. We have learnt about the homes of different types of woodland animals and how to identify trees and their fruits, nuts and seeds. Year 1 also made some beautiful Christmas decorations by using wool to decorate pine cones.

In our Key Stage 2 curriculum focused outdoor learning sessions, Year 3 created hunter-gatherer shelters, learnt how to identify edible woodland food, had a go at creating fire with a fire steel, and tried archery. Year 4 chose a science focus for their sessions and created their own woodland food chains. Year 5 explored the traditions of the Maya civilisation by creating 'God's eye' crafts and tasting chilli hot chocolate. Year 6 investigated how the plants and animals in Forest School may have adapted to survive in their environments for their evolution topic.

I hope that you all have a lovely Christmas holiday and that you get the chance to enjoy some time outdoors in the fresh air and hopefully a little bit of winter sunshine if we are lucky!

Merry Christmas!

Mrs Lomas and Mrs Williams

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELBEING - AUTUMN TERM 2023

It only seems like a short while since I was writing to you at the end of the summer term and here we are right in the middle of December! As usual the Autumn Term has been packed with action, from the Air Ambulance visit to fund raising for Children in Need to The Rudolph Run.

This year I want to talk about building resilience in our young people. Resilience is so important to ensure our children have the best start in life and enable them to grow into adults who are able to withstand, respond and recover from disruptions.

These attributes can be called the 7Cs:

Competence
Confidence
Connection
Character
Contribution
Coping
Control

As teachers/parents and carers we are responsible for teaching, encouraging and nurturing these skills. Understandably we can be nervous ourselves about allowing our children to fail and become upset but we need to allow children to experience situations so they can learn to develop strategies.

8 Ways to Build Resilience in Children

- 1) Let them experience disappointment so they learn sadness doesn't last forever.
- 2) Validate their fears and help them make plans to do things even if they're scared.
- 3) Let them take (reasonable) risks and experience natural consequences.
- 4) Encourage them to try new things, make mistakes, and learn from their mistakes.
- 5) Give them opportunities to make their own decisions and help them problem solve.
- 6) Tell stories of people who have faced hard times, persisted, and grown stronger as a result.
- 7) Reframe challenges as short-term problems, and opportunities for learning.
- 8) Remind them that although we can't control everything that happens to us, we can control how we respond.

Something we are using in school is a 'How Big is My Problem Chart' to enable children to problem solve for themselves (when appropriate).

Problems are rated from green to red - green being something they can sort for themselves with red being a problem that needs an adult to sort out. This might be something you could use with your children at home. Another area you can help us with is attendance. Children need to be in school everyday if they are fit and well. With improve attendance our children achieve better in school, socialise more and develop good habits to take them into their adult life. Our school target for attendance is 96% so we need to make sure they are in everyday to achieve this.

The following link from the NHS provides information about illnesses and when your child can be in school or if they need to stay off.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

We also need to ensure we take time to look after ourselves so that we are fit and well to support our children.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mrs Taylor



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND WORSHIP

AUTUMN TERM 2023

Worship and Religious Education

This term the children in Year 1 visited Kidderminster Baptist Church as part of their RE work. They learned so much to help them answer the big question 'What does it mean to belong to a faith community?'

These trips are such a valuable experience where it helps children to see the importance of developing tolerance, respect and understanding of different religions and cultures so that pupils can promote good relationships in the years to come.

They were made to feel very welcome and displayed impeccable behaviour while they were there.

Our RE trips to places of worship will continue after Christmas.

Our new worship representatives for this year have become more involved in our whole school worships. They have been leading the opening and closing prayers, welcoming our visitors and announcing our songs. We also have a rota for lighting the candle in the hall. Each class have folders to keep prayers in and their opening windows for each value.