

LINK ACADEMY TRUST CHRISTMAS 2022 NEWSLETTER



A Merry Christmas to All

FROM NICKY DUNFORD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Parents and Carers,

Another year started and as you will see from the school reports in this newsletter, our children are getting the full range of learning experiences we expect and love to see once again after all the previous restrictions are no longer holding us back. It is so good to see pupils in our schools making the most of the people and places in our lovely localities and learning to make connections. As often happens at this time of year some of our schools have been laid low with significant numbers of pupils with winter-time illnesses and the more worrying position of Scarlet Fever and Group A streptococcus. This can affect the number of staff we have in schools, but one of the advantages of being in an educational trust is that we have been able to employ 'floating' teachers in an attempt to help cover these situations. As is always the case though, they are in great demand and we have to prioritise where we use their skills. It does continue to give us the opportunity and ability to grow talented teachers from within.

This term a high number of Early Career Teachers (12) have started with us, they have had an excellent internal training programme delivered by Mrs Burns, the Academy Head at Harbertonford as well as the National programme. They are a really dynamic group of teachers and have settled into our academies well and have done an amazing job in their first term of teaching. We appreciate how hard it is to start off in this profession, so a big thank you goes out to our new staff! Staff changes were high this year and we needed to appoint a number of senior, experienced teachers which we, like many, found difficult to recruit, however we now have all of these posts in place and they are contributing to an excellent staffing structure across the Trust.

As a Trust with 16 small schools, many of which are Victorian buildings, we constantly need to maintain and develop our estates and this year Will Teague has joined the team and made a huge difference to keeping 'on top' of all the low-level maintenance tasks so a big thank you goes to him for his dedication to all the academies. Obviously we also have other major building projects underway- a new roof at Bearnes with replacement windows and roofing over the outdoor play areas has been well received and now helps to keep everyone warm! We have also had the less successful, ongoing position of Diptford's replacement classrooms which still have to be resolved as we continue to battle for the best possible outcome; a new build, on the same level as the school, with a covered walkway, toilets and break-out rooms. As always in these situations it is a very slow process and we have been really frustrated by the way we are being dealt with, however our local MP is once again involved and he is bringing Nick Gibbs the Education Secretary into the picture this week. We are pushing hard for a definitive outcome and the highest quality build before the start of next term and then we can plan our actions going forward. These situations are not easy but we continue to work hard to do the very best for all our small schools. It only remains for me to thank you for your ongoing support, you all make such a difference to what we can provide for our children in terms of experiences and resources.

Have a super Christmas and New Year and enjoy all the festivities, see you back in January.

Nicky

Bearnes Primary School



It's not until you are sitting here recounting the Autumn term that you start to realise how many exciting and amazing opportunities our pupils have encountered so far. This year has seen the introduction of our whole school 'World Explorer Day' in which every pupil will 'visit' and explore six different countries throughout the year. So far we have travelled to India and Mexico and have learned a lot about these different countries and their cultures within our House Teams. During their travels, pupils have explored and designed Rangoli patterns, created Día de los Muertos masks and sampled some culinary delights. It has been amazing to see pupils from pre-school to Year 6 working in such a collaborative way. As well as learning about the world we live in, we have also been looking at our school values with a specific focus around belonging and what this means to us. As part of this, our Year 5 & 6's have represented our school as part of our tag rugby team. They all did an amazing job and for some this was their first experience of rugby and competitive sport. Well done you

did us all very proud. As this term comes to an end we look forward to adding more experiences and opportunities to our curriculum next term for all of our pupils. Merry Christmas from everyone at Bearnes.

Broadhempston Primary School



It's been a busy term from Roman gladiator visits to Occombe farm cooking experiences and cultural champions sharing their beliefs and practices - a lot of varied and interesting experiences. Love your school day ♥ was a HUGE success. It makes such a big impact when everyone comes together to do all the little jobs that make such a difference when they are all tackled - it gave the school such a facelift! The children thoroughly enjoyed a week of colour and printing during Arts Week - some great learning and pieces for our exhibition which took place after half term! Sandra from Salty's Studio in Ashburton worked alongside our children, giving them a new experience with printing - the lino cutting gave us a few fingers and thumbs worries but the results were fab! (fingers & thumbs all good!) We also took part in a Planet Action Workshop which looked at how the natural world impacts on our minds. Experiments helped us to see how our ability to concentrate changed with different background noises, and finally spent time outside making up activities and games designed to address specific

wellbeing challenges. The Crochets & Quavers choir has been introduced this half term - amazing harmonies and singing drifts through the school and has provided an angelic end to term with visits to Quay Side extra-care living centre at Totnes and a concert in St Peter & St Paul's to round off our Christmas offerings. The term has ended with Christmas and all the joy it brings- who could ask for anything more?

Cheriton Bishop Primary School



Cheriton Bishop primary has been a hive of activity during the Autumn term as we collated all the input from the children, families, staff and wider community before distilling and creating a set of school values. The set of 'Hive Values' is already allowing the children to become more aware of what is special about the school and the behaviours we want to celebrate!

The children have been on trips to Dartmoor, Museums and have enjoyed welcoming local artist, Steve McCracken who has taught us more all about his street art. The children in Year 3 and 4 have then taken to the streets of Cheriton with their own art, inspired by Steve, and are awaiting to see if any of them are spotted by the local community. The preschool children are enjoying ever increasing opportunities to get busy alongside the Reception children with weekly welly walks, shared time in provision and being able to spend the day together on Fridays our youngest children will be more ready for school than ever come September!

Diptford CofE Primary School



Another term has flown by in school. It doesn't seem long ago that we welcomed our new Reception children. We have seen them flourish and grow in confidence as they have been welcomed into our school family. This term, we have enjoyed developing our global awareness through our World Explorer days when we 'travelled' to the USA and Mexico, exploring the culture through art, music, food and traditions. All who took part in the 'Mexican Hat Dance' will forever remember the fun and aching legs too!

In November, during COP 27, older classes debated the major issues affecting climate change whilst the younger children thought about the effects of climate change on our Earth both now and in the future. We also continued to support charities through our involvement in the ever popular Rudolph Run, Harvest donations for Totnes food bank and a bake sale for Children in Need. FODs continued with their fundraising efforts organising the cauliflower cards, tea towels, a spooky disco and bags for school. This has helped fund books for our library, new forest school equipment and a visiting theatre

show to look forward to in January. Thank you FODs and to all our families who support these events.

At the end of term, the whole school came together to share the magic of the Nativity story with parents and members of the local community. What a fantastic whole school effort! Well done to all our pupils. Finally, a thank you to each and every member of staff for your hard work and enthusiasm to make every child's school journey through Diptford a special one. Have a wonderful break and a very happy Christmas.



Drake's CofE Primary School



What a fantastic term it has been. The children came back from their summer break full of enthusiasm and energy to get stuck into their learning. We welcomed a number of new families to the school, who have instantly become part of the school community. The whole school had a wonderful time at Escot in October. They started the day with a trip into the maze! Then we went on a wild animal walk and saw wild boar, wolves, Lynx, otters, owls and buzzards, although the bear had already started his winter hibernation! Key Stage 2 took part in a 'Living Histories' Saxon Day. They experienced some of the everyday lives and jobs of a typical Saxon in 900AD and even got to bring home some of their creations. The children attended a variety of sporting events this term - swimming, multi sports and cross country. During these events the children showed excellent sportsmanship, perseverance and determination. The cross-country team qualified for the finals and took part against much larger schools from East Devon - well done team! The end of the term ended with the children performing 'Straw and

Order' as well as singing carols in East Budleigh church. The Key Stage 1 children visited Father Christmas at the local shop and the children enjoyed the end of term fun!

Have a lovely Christmas everybody.

Harbertonford CofE Primary School



After another action-packed term, which has included trips, sporting festivals, visitors, a Global Citizenship Day on climate change and World Explorer "trips" to the USA and Mexico, as well as seeing our parent and toddler group numbers grow, we have ended the term with a real focus on our community. Thanks to the continued support of Lawsons, who donated bulbs, compost and plant pots, our Kestrels children have been able to create gifts for the lonely or isolated this Christmas. The Church provided the resources to enable all the children to take part in creating ornaments for their tree and the Eagles had the honour of decorating it. All the classes have had the opportunity to cook with Miss Harris this term and the Eagles learned how to make pastry, using their skills to bake their own mince pies. They invited members of the village and people who have helped the school this year to afternoon tea, where they served up some of their creations. It was a great opportunity to meet people from different generations and allow the children to share all they

have been learning about this term and thank them personally for their support. We wish everyone a peaceful and happy Christmas and we hope you are all able to enjoy celebrating with the people you love.



Hennock Primary School



As Autumn term at Hennock comes to a close, it lends a chance to reflect on all the fun and exciting things that have happened already this academic year. We have welcomed several new and enthusiastic members of staff, all full of energy and keen to enhance the learning experience of our pupils. The children have had the opportunity to take part in lots of sports this term, with plenty more scheduled in: Hennock Primary took two teams to the Link Academy tag rugby tournament, with one team making the semi-finals and the other winning! Children have also practised gymnastic routines that were recorded and judged by PE leads across the academy. We were all set to take part in a cross-country competition at Stover, but the weather had other plans - thankfully, the children have still managed to do some cross-country running in an after-school club. The children have had the opportunity to enjoy netball and multi-sports clubs after school too, in addition to their PE lessons. Our pupils have demonstrated their musical and dancing talents by performing during our

Harvest festival that was held at the church. They have also had fun playing glockenspiels, samba drums and preparing for the nativity on our last day of term. Pupils have had the opportunity to join sound and lighting club as well as gardening/cooking club after school. With the last week just around the corner, we have exciting things such as our Christmas meal, nativity, attending Teign production of 'Oliver!' and Rudolf Run still to come! We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ilington CofE Primary School



This Autumn term has been a great start to the new academic year, with record numbers of children joining our Reception class this term. Many of these children have come up from our pre-school provision and so have enjoyed a very relaxed transition into primary with adults and children that they know already. We were delighted to be able to welcome three new members onto our team this autumn. Miss Stewart Watson, a newly qualified teacher now teaches our 3/4 class, Middlecott and we were also lucky enough to add our new administrator Sally Cox and fulltime teaching assistant Jade Hawkins to our team. In November, the school held its first 'Love Your School Day' which was very well attended by many of our families and also by the local Rotary Club who provided new fruit trees and created a fantastic composting system for the school garden. Adults and children set up new flower beds and made a fantastic job of tidying and pruning the school grounds, then enjoyed a well-deserved barbecue. We look forward to the next one in the spring.

We have already packed a great deal into this term with trips to Bear Trails, The Eden Project and Link Academy sports events, exhibitions of the children's work half termly and virtual visits too, such as this week's to Germany. Now as we whizz towards the end of term, we are all wishing you and yours a very merry Christmas from Ilington CofE Primary School.



Landscape CofE Primary School



At the start of term the Eco and Ethos teams have set about some challenges which will support our Global Neighbours Silver accreditation. The children have enjoyed completing an environmental health check with the People and Planet reps and setting some targets. The 6 challenges we set are to reduce single use plastic, reduce food waste, reduce fossil fuels (this is about travel to school), support local carbon sequestering, making space for others, to increase wild space by 10% and finally to share our ideas with others –there has been some super action taken so far!

Cultural Champion, Sandhya Dave, spent the morning sharing fascinating Hindu artefacts and talking to us about her faith, beliefs and culture. We learnt to count to five in Hindi, developed our understanding of Hindu symbolism and explored geographical features of India. We were also able to spend an amazing morning at Sparkwell Orchard picking apples and getting involved in the apple-juicing process - it was great fun. The children also picked fresh

kale, carrots and leeks and back in school made a delicious vegetable soup served with freshly made bread rolls and all washed down with our very own scrumptious apple juice. Yum! We've ended the term with some fantastic Christmas performances. We have journeyed to Bethlehem across a week - each journey different but so very special. The KS1 event was simply delightful with a real sense of joy that made it memorable for all. And the KS2 shows? Well, every single child contributed to two very polished and entertaining performances. A heart-warming start to Christmas!

Morcharad Bishop CofE Primary School



We have had an amazing first term at Morcharad Bishop CofE! It has been great to see the children return to school with such a passion for their learning and an enthusiasm to be the best version of themselves. There have been plenty of engaging learning experiences and seeing the children participate in science experiments and DT projects has been a real highlight. Class 4 have been getting messy when looking at solutions in solids, liquids and gasses whilst Class 1 have visited space in their role play area! In other areas there have been parachutes to test forces and some fantastic sewing skills on show in Class 3.

Across the first term, we have been involved in a number of local events including a tag-rugby festival with other schools in the Trust, singing at a local village market and were the winners of the Crediton Library reading challenge. A real highlight has been taking part in Children in Need and being involved in charity fundraising. This is something that the children have a real passion for and will continue to be advocates for causes that they believe in. It was great to be recognised for the children's hard work by our local MP Mel Stride and we received a letter to thank us for our efforts.

Merry Christmas from all of us at Morcharad Bishop.



Moretonhampstead Primary School



buns and ran a very competitive colouring competition! It was lots of fun and raised over £100 for the charity. We are now racing towards Christmas and working hard to perfect our performances of 'Nothing Wraps Like An Elf' and 'Cheeky Cherubs' which include every child in school! We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

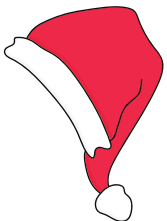
As we fly towards Christmas, it is great to reflect over the last term. Just before October half term, we had a super Harvest assembly. This year, we were able to invite the parents back indoors to enjoy the children's singing. The children thought about people who are in need and made a collection of tins and jars for Exeter food bank. Our Year 6 children enjoyed a focussed week working with MED theatre. The project (funded kindly by The Paul Hamlyn Project and the Helen Foundation) enabled the children to work with staff for an intense block of play writing, costume creating, learning words and performing. The play was based on WW2 and included local stories and events. The children performed to parents on Remembrance Day.

We held a Friendship week (National Anti-Bullying week) where the children wore odd socks to celebrate difference. The children learnt about what bullying is and what to do if someone is 'being mean' several times and on purpose. For 'Children In Need' day, our School Council (children from Y2 to Y6) decorated and sold

Otterton CofE Primary School



It has been a busy term at Otterton. We have welcomed new families to our school, both in pre-school, Reception and throughout the school, this is a great reflection on our school and our place within the local community. The children have taken part in a number of sporting activities including our year 5 and 6 girls, along with those from Drake's reaching the School Games Cross Country Finals, which was a very proud moment for us all. School trips are back and Otters Class went to Exeter on the train. Whilst there they visited the Museum and the Library, it was very exciting for everyone. Heron Class have also been on a trip to Exeter as part of their Literacy based on the book 'A Walk in London' and their History topic of World War 2. We were also very lucky to have a visit from two local police officers who talked to Otters Class about their jobs, uniforms and all about the cars that they drive! Members of our Ethos Group went on a litter pick around the village using equipment kindly loaned to us by Budleigh Salterton Lions Club and this has received great feedback from those that saw them out and about. Christmas this year at Otterton feels very special, the children have visited the local residential home to sing Christmas songs to the residents, we have held a Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children and our production of 'Sparkle' was something to behold.



Stoke Gabriel Primary School



We started our school year with several new members of staff and pupils who have all settled in well. We say goodbye to Miss Ward, and we are so grateful for all she has done for Dragonflies this term. In January we will welcome Mr Somers and his well-being dog, Moose to the team.

This term has been bursting at the seams with trips and experiences which have enhanced our learning. We've been sailing, walking, planting, exploring and learning to nurture our mental health. The first International Day of the year saw us explore Indian culture with the support of Elaine Clark from the Woodleigh Local Board; a truly immersive experience! Spiders and Butterflies were pleased to have been invited to take part in a community tree planting day in the village, as part of a Woodland Trust project. The children helped plant $\frac{1}{2}$ a hectare of new woodland.

It has also been wonderful to see the links between our pre-school (now known as Bumblebees) and Reception go from

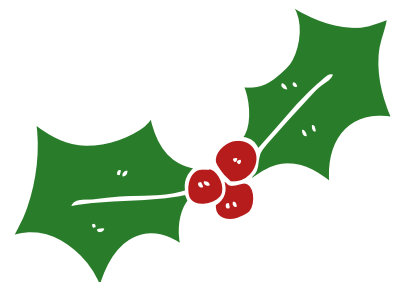
strength to strength and the time spent working together is always so valuable. Our new school council members have been proactive and have taken on their role of 'pupil voice' with enthusiasm. The school PTFA continues to support us wholeheartedly and this year we are focussed on improving our outdoor spaces- we're off to a great start already! FOSS have also kindly put on a Winter Movie Night for all of our children. The Autumn term ends with our various Christmas traditions and it has been a delight to see these come together- well done to all involved. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Tedburn St Mary Primary School



Another busy term comes to an end at Tedburn St Mary with Christmas celebrations across school. It was lovely to see our Willow and Birch classes perform 'Little Angel gets her Wings' and KS2 perform in their musical assembly. Well done to all our children who have been working incredibly hard across the term, the children have shown a real desire to learn and improve in all aspects of their work. With lots of exciting and fun ways of learning being explored in classes, from Victorian and WW2 days, visits to Morwellham Quay and The Golden Hind. Our new World Explorer days saw the whole school learning all about traditions, festivals and celebrations of Spain and India and we look forward to exploring more of the world next year.

We finish off the term with a whole school visit to the panto and fun and parties and would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Widcombe-in-the-Moor Primary School



Despite the winter fog creeping upon us this Autumn Term, it hasn't dampened our creative spirit. All our children have been accessing outdoor learning in our bespoke provision at Southcombe and have revisited land in Newbridge to see how saplings, which the children planted in the spring 2020, were flourishing! Our Friends have also supported us with developing our green spaces around our school and have big visions for the future alongside our Eco-committee who received the Green Flag Award for their efforts last year. And, as always, we were delighted to be involved in the Widcombe Fair where we fully immersed ourselves into the traditions and celebrations of our local community. Our school has been growing too! As well as welcoming several new children and their families into our school, our newly formed Reception class - Cherry Brook - has been flourishing in their new classroom and outdoor provision. We have many budding violinists in key stage two who have been learning a plethora of songs, that were shared

with our local community in a delightful end-of-term concert. Every child in school has visited the theatre this term; Key stage one took part in an enchanting Hansel and Gretel production at Ashburton Arts Theatre, years 3 & 4 gritted their precious teeth watching 'The Demon Dentist' at the Princess Theatre and years 5&6 watched the dynamic 'Back to the 80s' performed by the students at South Dartmoor College. Finishing the term with our own Christmas production was the perfect send off into the holidays - Merry Christmas from Widcombe!

Yeoford Primary School



It has been a full and busy term at Yeoford Primary School with everything from school trips to Crediton to Hosting Tag-Rugby Competitions (and managing to avoid the rain). The children have also really enjoyed the opportunities to work with children across the school in their various roles of responsibility. The children have also been benefiting from so many exciting and engaging activities within our own school grounds. The biggest news was that there were bears found on site by the Reception children during their bear hunt! Luckily, they had a secure shelter to hide away in!

The wider community have shown their support to the school this term as the building works for the school's new library, rightly placed in the heart of the school, edged towards completion. From Parents donating time to paint murals, to local bookshops supplying us with books. We have been so grateful of all the support which is going to further allow us to celebrate a love of reading with the children.

*Finally, we wish you a
very Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year.
Please stay safe.*

