



Friday 16th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Shining Brightly:

Wow, what a brilliant final couple of weeks of this term! There have been wonderful nativities, church service, a whole school trip to the pantomime, a visit from father Christmas to our breakfast club, Christmas lunch and alongside all of this, children have continued to fully access and enjoy learning from our 'Shine' Curriculum so a good mixture of Christmas sparkle and brilliant learning too! I have just been on a learning walk of the school and my heart is bursting with pride. We are in the final couple of days of school and all classes are calm, purposeful and fully engaging in the Shine Curriculum and loving every minute! Despite Christmas festivities, we don't waste a minute here and make sure the children really do access the best learning opportunities possible. Sit back, get cosy and relax and enjoy reading this very shiny, but slightly extended festive newsletter!

Congratulations



Art Success: We are incredibly proud of Evie in Year 3 and Livia in Year 5 for their brilliant entries to the Oxemann art competition which our art lead Miss Usher offered to pupils to take part in. We were delighted for them both with Evie in Year 3 who came in second place and Livia in year 5 who was highly commended. Their art will now be on display in the Oxemann alongside other winners many of which were adults! Amazing! Well done to everyone who took part.

Here are pictures of the wonderful art they produced Evies' is the Octopus and Livia's the Winter scene; they are stunning!



Maths Success: Nate in Year 6 has made it through to the bonus round of the Primary Maths Challenge <https://www.primarymathschallenge.org.uk/online-pupil-results> which will be held in Feb next year. It was a very challenging competition with 58,000 pupils

participating so he's done really well to be in the top 3% of participants. So huge congratulations to Nate. Well done to all who took part in both the Art and Maths competitions.

Congratulation to our school AKPS! We were again in the **Times top 125 schools in the country 2022** for a third year running, what an incredible achievement which recognises nationally what an amazing school this is and how we really do ensure that ALL of our pupils make incredible progress and achieve so well during their time here. Well done to all of our incredible staff team, the children for their brilliant learning and behaviour and to parents and carers for their superb support! I feel so proud to be Headteacher of this wonderful school, we are certainly Shining Brightly!



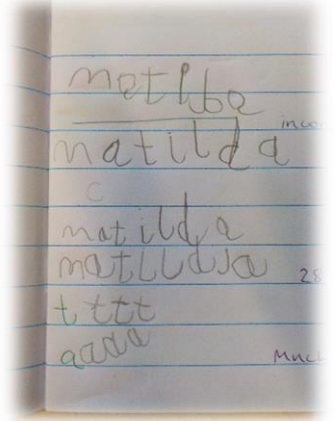


★ REACH FOR THE STARS

Reception and KS1 Nativities

'Sparkle and Shine' Nativity season has been and gone, the children from all three classes were absolutely incredible. The costumes were amazing, the singing was fantastic, the acting brilliant and the pupils who helped with stage management and direction were super. All of the children and staff had a fabulous time. Thank you to parents and carers for helping with costumes and with learning lines and songs, it is much appreciated. Thank you also for your lovely feedback, it truly did set our Christmas spirit in motion and warmed our hearts. Thank you very much to the amazing FOAKS team who provided refreshments at each of the four performances.

Class R Class R's term began with a trip to Westonbirt to inspire our learning about Autumn. We explored and learned about leaves, seeds and trees and even created some beautiful natural art. Climbing, crawling, balancing and jumping were skills practised when we played on the adventure park built from tyres and tree trunks. It was a great first trip. The following week we enjoyed Class R's first bedtime story session. Children came back to school as it was getting dark to listen to stories and have hot chocolate and cookies by the fireside. Our favourite teddy bears came too. Not only did we listen to stories read by the teachers but we also had the chance to share books

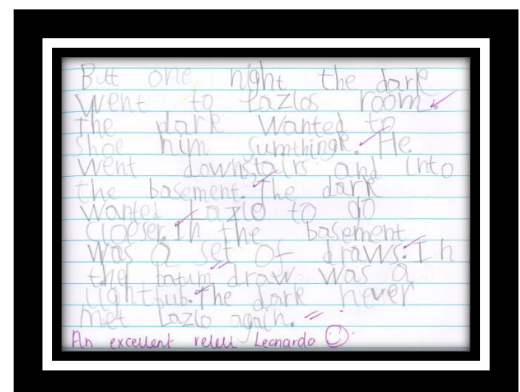


with our parents.

Our themes this term have been autumn and space and we have fully immersed ourselves in both. We've learnt about the moon, the planets and how to be an astronaut. A big focus for this term has been practising writing our names clearly and with correct letter formation. This has been a real success and we are really proud of the progress made by all children. Our term has finished with a festive focus where we have learnt all about the nativity story. Our Nativity show was a triumph, full of super singing, dancing and sparkle. Well done Class R!

Class 1

Our book in focus this term has been 'The Dark' by Lemony Snickett. We have been very inspired by this book and have been working hard on our writing. We have been writing sentences, poems and letters about the dark.





We have been out and about in the village combining two topics – signs of winter for our science learning and how the village has changed over time for our history project. The children loved looking at the buildings and thinking about how they might have been used. The weather wasn't great but we all had fun!



We have been looking at the importance of Christmas for Christians and this led us to look at advent. The children thoroughly enjoyed making Christingles and loved the class visit from Rev Shirley.



Class 2

The children have ended this term by performing their Nativity *I'm Gonna Shine!* They have worked incredibly hard to learn their lines and all the songs. We hoped you enjoyed the show!

This term Class 2 have learned all about how Ashton Keynes village has changed and were fascinated by the changes to the school and how much it has grown. Everyone was relieved there is no longer a dunce's hat or the cane as punishment!! Here is an old picture showing former Ashton Keynes Pupils:



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE





Class 2 have learned all about programming and algorithms. They used Bee Bots and took turns to create sequences of instructions which their group used to predict the outcome of the sequence and predict where the Bee Bot would travel to on the floor mat. They even became human Bee Bots and programmed each other to move across the floor!

Other exciting experiences during the Autumn term have included a visit to the pantomime, a visit and workshop with the author Elka Evalds, a session with the Skinny Jean Gardener learning about pollinators and pests in the garden, life-saving skills with Wiltshire Air Ambulance, a STEM workshop visit from Mr. Barry and pupils at Pinewood School and an exciting assembly delivered by the comic artist Kevin F Sutherland. What a lot of fantastic experiences!

Wishing you all a merry Christmas from the Class 2 team.

Class 3

Class 3 have had such a fantastic Autumn term: the children have shone so brightly! Top of our list would have to be our trip to the Corinium in Cirencester a couple of weeks ago. We were lucky enough to take part in a gladiator workshop,

where many of the children were able to stand up and try on armour, hold weapons, and even take part in mock battles. It was fascinating to hear how the Emperor of Rome would put this entertainment on to keep their people happy, and that the battles would become more specialised throughout.

As well as trying on armour and wielding weapons, we were able to look at artefacts that have been found from the Roman era, and the children were even able to spell out their names using Roman letters.

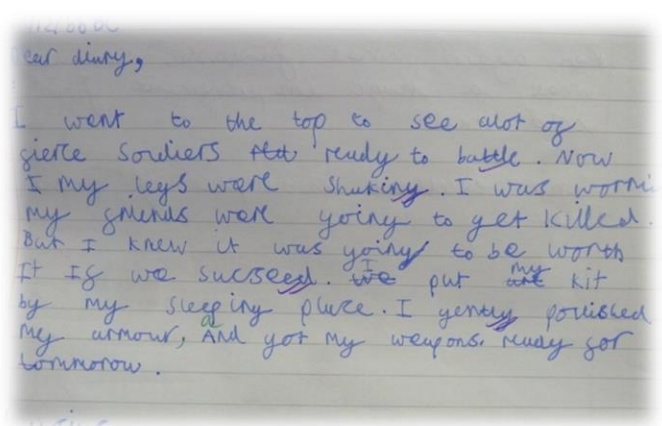
We've had 2 terms of looking into Romans in a lot of depth, which the children have adored, and they have produced some fantastic pieces of writing, including a non-chronological report and a diary entry. Both pieces have included fantastic language features

throughout, such as time adverbials, adverbials of manner and even similes and metaphors. Sometimes it's been hard to believe that I'm reading a Year 3 child's work! We can't wait for Spring term and all that is to come!



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE





Class 4 Autumn term has been a busy one for class 4. We have immersed ourselves in the life of the Romans including a fantastic visit to the Corinium museum. The children had an amazing time exploring all of the local artefacts and finding out about the history that is underneath our feet! Their favourite part was the gladiator workshop; the gore, interaction and opportunity to try on some of the gladiator kits they had available. We also took a rather wet walk to the remains of the Roman town gates in the Abbey Grounds to see what parts of history are left.

The Romans have also inspired most of our writing. We have produced non-chronological reports filled with facts on the Romans, diary entries from the perspective of a Roman soldier and instructions on how to build a Roman Road. There have been lots of opportunities to show off our grammar knowledge as well as adding to our growing understanding of writing for a range of purposes. The NCRs now take pride of place on the walls of the classroom. The diaries really capture the emotions that must have been felt by those at the training camps.



Of course, we have to mention our visit to Viney Hill, our winter residential. The children were so incredible; challenging themselves, supporting others, working as a team, facing fears and doing all of this with smiles on their faces. We tackled a low ropes course, a building climb, crate stacking and archery. In the evening, we had the pleasure of a night walk through the quiet Forest of Dean (at least it was quiet before we entered!) with Jas guiding us and telling us facts about the history including Henry VIII's ownership. We got back in to the warm, wrapped up nice and cosy in our PJs and listened to Miss Chomicz





SHINE BRIGHT ★ REACH FOR THE STARS

telling the story of 'How the Grinch stole Christmas' before heading up to our beds to get a full night of rest before the activities continued the following day. All of the staff were incredibly impressed with the resilience shown by all children in some chilly temperatures!

Class 5

Class 5 have had a brilliant Autumn term! The children performed their class assembly to parents and carers fantastically, sharing their knowledge of Brazil and their learning experiences from our Geography unit of work. The children sung in Portuguese and we even had an electrical safety quiz and some very passionate footballers!

In English, the children have been continuing with the high-quality



Dearest Diary,

Today has been a very frustrating day. Literally mixed up like scrambled eggs in a million different emotions. But I knew I had to keep my promise with Clovis. If you dare, read on...

It all started with Mrs Carter not letting me go to see Clovis out in Little Lord Fauntleroy, and then it ended up like this. I ended up getting a map from Mr Carter's study after looking at his strange collection of eyeballs and figured out that all I needed was the map to get to Manaus! I got so over the moon I was stupid enough to escape the stuffy and sweaty house and ended up getting lost in the jungle!

text 'Journey to the River Sea' by Eva Ibbotson. The story involves a young orphan, Maia, who is sent to live with distant relatives in Brazil near the Amazon River. Maia is initially excited...but when she arrives in Brazil, her new family leaves much to be desired. Mr and Mrs Carter seem to hate the land they live in and their children, twin girls Beatrice

and Gwendolyn, are selfish and spoilt. We wrote diary entries as Maia, explaining her initial concerns and confusion after arriving at her new home in Manaus. Have a read through a few of our diaries:

Dearest Diary,

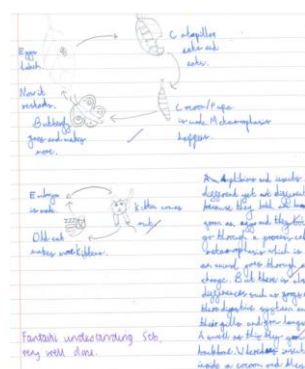
Today has been perfect day. A n absolute mindbender. I've never had such a sitting feeling in my tummy. I'll show you what I mean...

Over lunch, I heard from Mrs Carter that I would be joining the rest of the house on their visit to the theatre. Of which gave me a massive wave of heart-breaking sadness. As the imitating Carter started, I started to feel like I was going to be the last person to leave the house of death (it was so nice to be outside). Diary, so so nice!

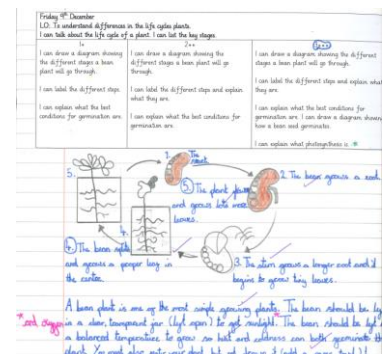
I As I heard through the jungle my thoughts racing. I suddenly realised that I was in the middle of nowhere! A get slowed down I tripped and grabbed on a branch just above my head. OW!

A wave of searing pain washed over me as I saw how deep the wound was. I then had deep deep into my innocent skin. My hand was shaking, my feet magically light-headed and

In Science, we have been learning about classification. We have been looking at different animal groups and how species are classified. We compared the life cycles of different animals (mammals, insects and amphibians) and investigated the life cycle of the bean plant. We also researched Carl Linnaeus and the importance of the Linnaean System for scientists today.



We have also been rewriting the story of The Gruffalo and turning it into a Year 5 narrative by using a range of sentence types, more adventurous punctuation and reporting clauses to make the dialogue more engaging for





the reader. This has linked to our Design and Technology, where we have been planning and designing their own pop-up books based on the traditional story of The Gruffalo, using different structures and mechanisms to make our books engaging and aesthetically pleasing!

Class 6

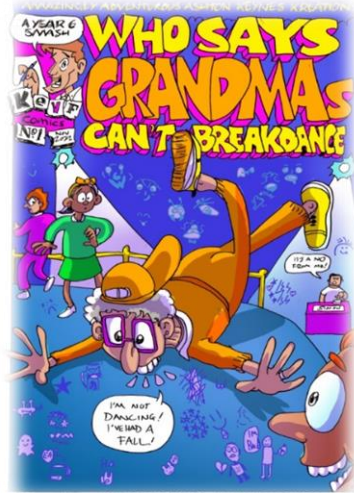


Year 6 has been given the opportunity to learn to fence and leave Ashton Keynes School with their Grade 1 fencing level over six weeks of lessons. With the fencing teacher, Year 6 learnt how to stand En-Garde, lunge and parry. Year 6 also learnt the correct way to put on protective fencing clothing and use a fencing sword. The lessons ended with a demonstration of fencing skills to parents and other children in the school. Year 6

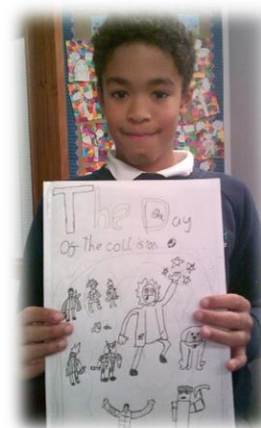


LOVED it!

Drawing comic strips with Kev F Sutherland. Year 6 had an amazing morning with the well-known and very talented comic strip creator Kev F Sutherland who has drawn for many comics including the Beano and Marvel! In this session Year 6 learnt how to set up and draw a successful comic strip, how comic strips are made and how to draw

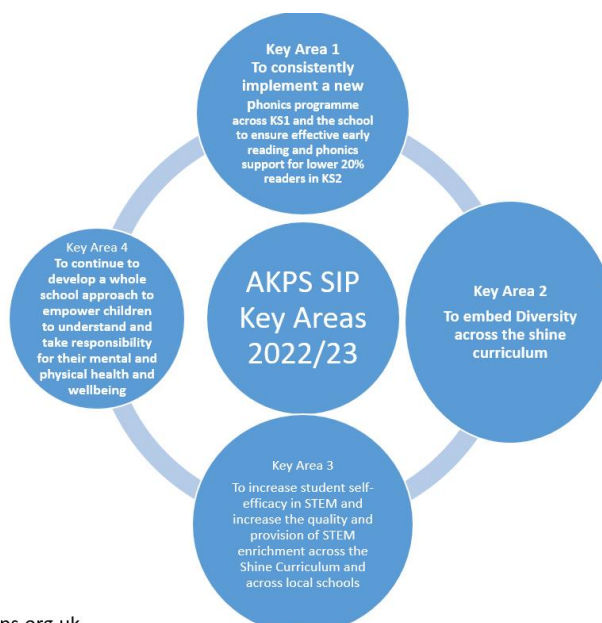


in the style of other graphic artists. Year 6 ended the session with their own class copy of all their comic strips (Who says Grandmas can't break dance) and a portrait of themselves drawn by Kev. This session was amazing! Everybody loved it! In fact it inspired a lot of Year 6 to go home and make their own comic strips...





We have been working really hard on our 'reach for the stars' school improvement areas:



www.akps.org.uk

School Improvement Plan 2022 2023

A brief summary of where we are in the first 3 months, I will update again at Easter:

Area 1: Phonics and early reading- our new 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' phonics programme is in place and proving to be very good and we are constantly monitoring to ensure our phonics and early teaching of reading are the best for our pupils to help us achieve our constant drive to ensure everyone is a reader at AKPS. We have extended our range of reading books and ensure these are all phonetically matched for our children. Staff have all been trained and parent workshops provided and resources can be found on our website www.akps.org.uk to ensure we are show absolute fidelity to the programme to ensure success.

Area 2: Embedding Diversity: we have been working to continue to ensure we provide a diverse range of high-quality texts across the school, to ensure our school uniform is not gender specific and ensure that we consider a wide range of diverse resources across our 'Shine Curriculum'. We have been looking at diversity in Music to ensure each class learns about a specific musician from a diverse range and that children access a diet of music from many cultures and times.

Area 3: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) On our drive to ensure high quality STEM across our curriculum we have been successful in a bid to lead a STEM partnership with 3 local schools and design some exciting activities to develop STEM across our Shine curriculum and ignite aspirations for future employment. We have been working with Science and IT hubs to access some brilliant staff training. We have purchased and trained staff to use data loggers and will be using these to do an environmental project in our forest school sessions. We are also planning the development of our bespoke AK STEM lab in school which is very exciting indeed!

Area 4: Mental Health and Wellbeing We have written a bespoke AKPS Wellbeing framework, appointed and trained our Upper KS2 Wellbeing pupil ambassadors and are working with us to launch our new wellbeing star and 'stretchy people' gifts and teach the children about the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' in the New Year. We will reach out to families in the





Spring term when the pupils plan a week of wellbeing workshops which parents and carers will be invited to share strategies from our framework. We have our cosy cabin at lunchtimes run by our trained ELSAs to support mindful activities and support for all of our pupils over lunch and many children really enjoy visiting the cabin. Staff have workshops to support their own wellbeing and workload I am so incredibly thankful to Caroline Siddell (Jasper's Mum) for her incredible professional expertise and generous giving of time to work with me and the team on this important school improvement area to benefit our pupils, staff and community. We have much more in our plan which we will update on at Easter.

On behalf of my wonderful team, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you all in 2023 for another brilliant year together!

Your very proud Headteacher,
Mrs Saville

Friday 16 th December	'Heroes and Heroines' 9am in school hall and outdoor under the hall canopy (dress warm if standing out) (parents and carers warmly invited) 'Sparkle' Christmas day -non-school uniform and something festive 3.15pm End of Term 2
Christmas Eve 24 th December	7 pm Leigh & All Saints Church, Carols with Candles
Christmas Eve 24 th December	11 pm Holy Cross Church celebrating the birth of Jesus at the midnight mass service
Christmas Day	10 am at Holy Cross; join us for our Christmas celebration. All ages welcome
Wednesday 4 th January	Term 3 starts at 8.45am

