



Coombe Bissett Primary

Newsletter 5 (half-way Term 2)



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

It is amazing to see that already, some of our children are beginning to achieve Bronze awards in their Merits or in their Reading Olympiad. To achieve this now, with a few weeks still to go before Christmas, is a fantastic achievement. To achieve a Bronze Reading Olympiad the children need to read 50 times at home – that is a fabulous commitment. To achieve a Bronze Merit award the children need to have produced 25 pieces of work that are excellent at their own personal standard.

Our 6 children elected to the positions of Chair, Vice Chair and Scribe of School Council wanted to share some celebrations – in their own words:

“During covid we have taken lots of precautions so everyone feels safe at school. There are good friendships at Coombe Bissett because everyone lets people play and enjoy their breaktimes. We have lots more equipment in school so we can learn more and have more fun – I love school this way – more PE equipment is especially good during covid-19. We are very glad (it’s great to see) that even more support has been given to those children who need it, this is good because some children struggle at some subjects and therefore need support. The new resources are VERY helpful like individual learning packs, table organisers and a new app to help us with our times tables. It’s great to see more girls in the school clubs and also the clubs are great to play your favourite sport, make stronger friendships and learn more about that sport. We really like the new displays helping our learning and also making it easier to see the learning of the younger children.”

Wow! Thank you children.

It is indeed truly joyous walking around the school seeing the children enjoying their learning, making progress, and reveling in the new resources put in place to support them both in their academic learning and in their wellbeing / social development.

A MESSAGE FROM MRS GILLET

Here at Coombe Bissett, we love reading!

This week, Mrs Paterson visited in her role as English subject governor and I had the pleasure of showing her the exciting learning happening in all our classes. There were children reading high-quality texts from our reading spine, asking and answering questions about them. In all classes, the school’s investment in resources was clear to see with chalkboards for book recommendations, lots of lovely new books and displays to engage every young reader.

On our trip around the school, we saw so many lovely things: Oak Class’s voting system for choosing their end-of-the-day story; Elm Class’s ‘Spotted Reading’ board where mystery readers have to be identified; Fir Class enjoying ‘The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe’ complete with Top Trump character cards; Ash Class’s new reading journals full of exciting vocabulary, reflections and predictions on their class novel.

As English subject leader, it makes me proud and very happy every time I visit the classrooms. The children, the staff, the Friends and all those adults who support reading at home deserve a massive ‘thank you’.....and with apologies to ‘Strictly’, KE-E-E-EP READING!

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EXTERNAL CELEBRATION OF COOMBE BISSET SCHOOL

It is wonderful to see Wiltshire Music Connect recognizing Coombe Bisset School in their review of “fantastic examples” of music across Wiltshire schools as part of their ‘don’t drop the music’ campaign. Well done to all, but an especial well done to Fir class.

COOMBE BISSETT AND HOMMINGTON EXPRESS

The winning entries for the art competition have been chosen and returned. We look forward to congratulating the winners next week as Mrs Macaulay, who leads this project, will have the joy of announcing this to the children. Each winning entry, as well as the children who wrote so eloquently about their return to school after lockdown, has been given a copy of the magazine (displaying their work in print – a great memento for a scrap book) as well as the prize for winning. A huge thank you to the Coombe Bissett and Hommington Express for enabling our children to have this opportunity, and to Mrs Macaulay.

VALUE FOR LIFE

This term our Value for Life is BELIEF. We continue to focus on: believing in yourself; believing in your friends; friendship and anti-bullying; being trustworthy so others can believe in you, forgiveness, building our house on strong foundations.

As part of our approach we have a termly ‘Diary of Reflection’ worship where some children share their own reflections on the value. This term, due to current covid restrictions placed on places of worship, we held the service outside on the field. It was so beautiful to hear their thoughts and dreams, and especially wonderful to share them together in a covid-secure manner and in sight of our beautiful church. When the children said they believe in their friends, they believe in themselves, they believe they can achieve their goals it was simply a gorgeous moment for everyone. Because the children have enjoyed recent outside worships, and because as a school we love outdoor learning, we have begun the process to create a dedicated outdoor worship point that will be organized, designed and created by the children.

COVID RESTRICTIONS - UPDATES

Unfortunately, due to current restrictions, we are unable to hold services in church. As a result, it is with a heavy heart that we have to cancel the staggered lantern walks and Christingle services on Monday 14th December. Thank you to the FOCBS who had begun to organize lantern ideas even though we all knew it was a gamble. Instead, the church has kindly offered to donate Christingle packs to each family that day, and as a church school, we have purchased ‘day by day’ advent booklets for each child to further enhance their learning around this theme with you at home. These were issued today. We hope that the children enjoy using them.

It is deeply sad that despite all our ambitions, plans and efforts, due to current covid restrictions on numbers allowed at the Village hall and the Government restrictions on parent events in schools and for performances, we are unable to provide parents with live access to the Oak and Elm Nativity performances. However, Mrs Webster has very kindly offered to film the performances and will be making the video’s available to purchase. Whilst this is not the same as performing live to their parents we are still completely committed to the children experiencing the opportunity to work collaboratively, develop their confidence, develop their speaking and listening skills and to enjoy being part of a performance. Drama and the Arts remain hugely important to Coombe Bissett. Government guidelines for schools in Tier 2 reference schools to follow the DCMS guidance updated on November 26th as follows:

“At present, audiences are not permitted to attend performing arts performances.”

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The hospital swimming pool have informed us that they will be unable to offer school swimming during the spring terms, but they are confident they will be able to offer this in the summer terms. As a result, we will be postponing Fir class swimming until the summer terms.

As of Monday 30th KS2 children will form an outside ‘double bubble’ at playtime and lunchtime, with the ‘dividers’ in place to protect all staff and children, thus bringing KS2 in line with KS1. But, as was part of the original aim, we look forward to a time when these dividers can then be re-purposed for other sporting activities. Children in Early club and Late club are looked after by support staff in the hall and library, but in their class bubble sections socially distanced from other class bubbles. All of this is to ensure that all staff get a reasonable comfort break, and to further build those ‘connections’ between children.

To ensure the very best learning during the provision of non-contact time for Teachers we aim to use, as often as possible, known staff for the cover. This means that it is impossible to avoid staff crossing bubbles. As such, in the event of a positive case, our bubbles could potentially be at risk of an enforced self-isolation wider than just one bubble. This term we aim to have, wherever possible, staff from within a key stage providing this cover and thus limiting the potential to within a key stage. However, from January onwards it will not be possible to continue with this approach due to staff wellbeing. As such, there is an increased potential for an enforced whole school self-isolation should there be a positive case. However, this has actually always been potentially the case as certain staff do need to / are required to cross bubbles in order to manage behavior or first aid, which is fully in line with guidance. Clearly, all our mitigation has been very effective as we have managed to avoid this potential. Of course, the vast majority of our covid procedures will continue – excellent hygiene, excellent cleaning, staff protecting each other through masks / visors, etc. This move brings us closer in line with the vast majority of schools similar in size to Coombe Bisset who are actually a full single bubble in all aspects.

The Government guidance to schools updated on 26th November states:

“All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. This will be particularly important for secondary schools. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults. Again, we recognise this is not likely to be possible with younger children and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer.”

As remains the case, if you have any worries about any of the above, or indeed about anything else please do not hesitate to discuss this with me 1:1 on the playground / via email / or in a meeting. I would be more than happy to provide further details if you need them.

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

This year we have had to adapt our Christmas events due to covid restrictions. However, there is still a wonderful range of celebrations to make this season just as special for our wonderful children:

- Children can begin to write their Christmas cards to others in the school and post them in the Christmas letterbox that will be on the playground. Cards will be stored for 72hrs decontamination before being sorted and distributed, so please do not deliver cards after Tuesday 15th. Please write the recipient’s name and class on the front.
- As a new thing this year, because most children are not moving through the hall, the staff and FOCBS thought it would be a lovely idea to have an outdoor Christmas tree. We hope that it will arrive by Friday 4th. This will be put up, for the Christmas period only, underneath the pergola of the Reflection Garden. Parents are invited to hang a decoration for each of their children on that tree as part of a lovely community activity. Parents can help their child to hang it on the tree when they arrive at school or are collected at the end of the day. Those children who come by taxi will be helped by school staff. It will be lovely to see the tree ‘grow’ over the next few weeks. There is no colour scheme – it will be lovely to have a ‘rainbow’ tree

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this year. The decorations will not be sorted at the end so if you wish to have your decoration back please collect it from the tree yourself on the last day of term, or if you are happy to simply donate the decoration then it will become part of the school stock for next year.

- Next week the children will be making Christmas Tree Baubles as part of a fundraising opportunity for the FOCBS. Please see FOCBS information for details of how to buy these.
- Next week, our Christianity focus 'Journey Day' will be based around Christmas. The children will be making placemats for their Christmas dinner in school that can then be taken home, Christmas tree wishes to hang on our Christmas tree, 'fimo' art designs for the school values to make a beautiful whole school art installation, and 'prayer pebbles' for long-term continued use in our Reflection Garden.
- On Friday 11th the FOCBS Xmas Fayre will be held. Please bring your donations to the cedar room on Friday 4th – please see the FOCBS letter for more information. Thank you to the FOCBS for organising this fundraising event.
- A socially distanced, class by class, Panto (the Elves and the Shoemaker) has been booked for 15th December. Thank you to the 100Club / FOCBS for continuing to fund this lovely opportunity for the children, as in previous years.
- On Thursday 17th December there will be the school Christmas dinner. This will be held in each class bubble but will still be a lovely event. Parents can book their children's Christmas Dinner through the normal menu system – information will be sent out soon by HC3S.
- On the afternoon of Thursday 17th December each class will hold a Christmas party (class by class only, within their classroom). Teachers will soon send out relevant information for their own class.
- On Friday 18th children can come in to school in their normal school uniform but replacing their jumper / cardigan with their Christmas jumper. £1 from each child will be collected in aid of the 'Save the Children' Charity focus on Christmas Jumper Day.
- On the afternoon of Friday 18th December there will be an Interteam Boardgames tournament (held within each class) just as was introduced last year.

REMEMBRANCE

It was another wonderful Remembrance week this year. On Friday 6th Ash class went to the war memorial for a special wreath laying service where they met a veteran and recited the poem 'On Flanders Fields'. Then at 11am on Wednesday 11th the whole school took part in a Remembrance service and a minute silence on the school field, led by Rev Jenny.

It was also lovely to see all their poppy-art on display in our new Remembrance Garden. Thankyou to all those parents who have commented on how nice it looked.

Some children will soon be planting up the remembrance garden to enhance it further.

As a further development, once adaptations have been made, I do hope to be able to enable children on or around their birthday to raise the flag, and to have flags flying for our Value in focus and maybe even for our Interteam tournaments. This sense of togetherness and pride in what we do is not only great for wellbeing but also links in with our school vision and values and with British Values (an aspect that all schools are required to deliver).

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CLOSING THE GAP

Here at Coombe Bissett, since September, we have been running whole class closing the gap phonics and maths sessions in the afternoon to enable ALL children to close the gap to where they should be in relation to national standards (Age Related Expectations). This is part of our curriculum provision for all children. We have also been delivering 'interventions' (additional Maths or English small group sessions in the afternoons) to support those identified children who need additional help. And of course, we have been providing the specific support for those children with defined SEN needs. This 3 tier 'closing the gap' approach is having a good impact.

You may be aware that the Government announced it would fund schools an additional amount for 'Catch-Up' for those few children that each individual school identified as most in need or where support would have the most impact. Here at Coombe Bissett we see this as an opportunity to do even more (extra) than we already do for these identified children, and not just deliver the interventions that these children would normally be receiving anyway (and indeed are receiving currently). We are using our funding in this way to achieve the very best possible learning outcomes for these children. The parents of these identified children will soon be receiving a letter seeking their permission for / commitment to this extra support.

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