

School Newsletter

February 2023



ST. ALBAN'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
LEAD THE WAY

End of Spring term 1

Dear Parents,

Another busy and exciting half-term at St. Alban's is at an end and once again, an enormous amount of learning has taken place.

On my visits to classrooms over the past few weeks, I've seen some fantastically creative learning, from scientific experiments, D.T. projects (amazing Iron Man models), wonderful Art work (particularly the landscape paintings based on Etel Adnan's work) and some brilliant creative writing and lots of other wonderful work.

I'm really proud of all the children. It's great to see them working with such enthusiasm.

Many thanks to all the staff who have worked so tirelessly this half-term.

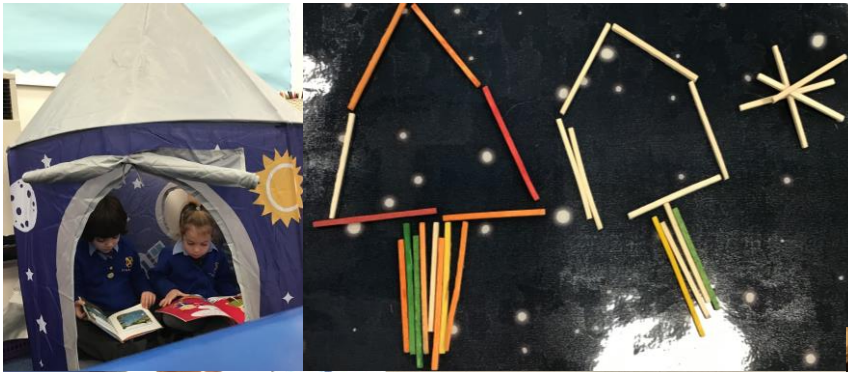
Thank you for your support and I hope you all have a good half-term.

Mr Brannigan



Reception

This half term we have been learning about Space. The children have been fascinated by the Astronauts we have learnt about and have thought about what qualities a good Astronaut would need. We enjoyed learning about the different planets and how they are made up. This led to very interesting discussions about planet Earth and why it is the only planet that is known to have life on it. We looked really closely at the surface of the moon. We talked about what we could see and what we thought might have created the craters. We then found out that it was space rocks or comets that had crashed into the surface. We experimented with different sized/weighted rocks to see the difference in crater size. This led to a discussion about why the footprints of Neil Armstrong are still visible on the surface. We made footprints in the flour and then blew on it for the afternoon – we could see that they disappeared and so understood that the moon footprints are still there because there is no wind on the moon.



We have made textured paintings, moon buggies, pastel Earth pictures, space maps and lots of rockets.





Year 1

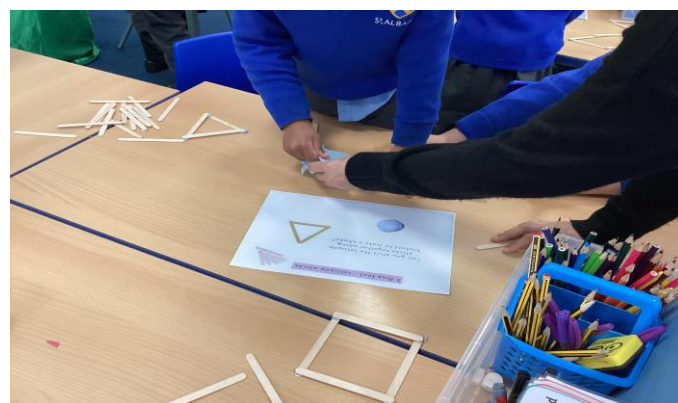
Topic –Houses and Homes

We began this term with a visit from Chertsey Museum. We explored a range of objects that were found in homes during the Victorian times. We got to ask questions and explore, whilst comparing what we find in our homes today.



Design and Technology

The purpose of our structures project this term was to build a house strong enough to not be blown down by the Big Bad Wolf. We have been looking at different materials and how we can make it strong enough for the Three Little Pigs.

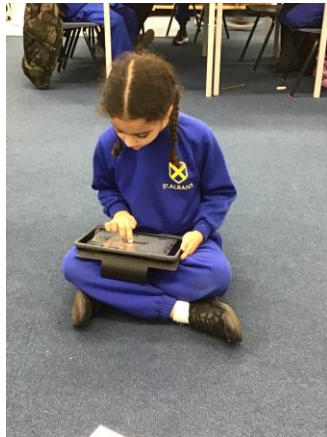


Year 2

Year 2 have had a great half term learning all about traditional tales. We have been creating our own writing based on the story "Once upon a Wild Wood", and at the end of the term the children have written their own stories, in the style of a traditional tale.

Computing

During this term, the children have been using their multimedia skills to create a quiz about their traditional tales using purple mash. Each group picked a tale and created a series of questions to quiz their peers on.



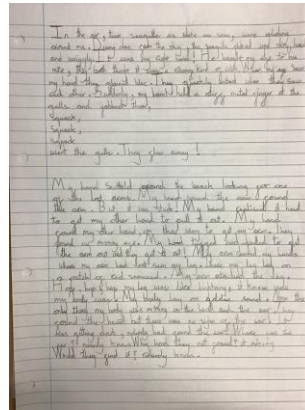
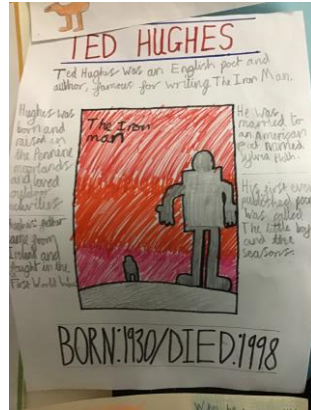
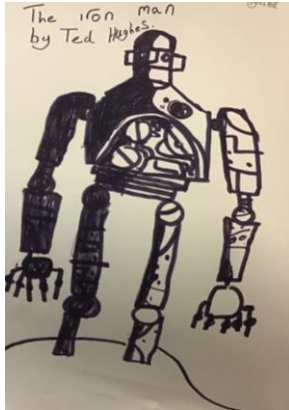
Geography / Art

The children have been exploring hot and cold places around the world. We have been looking at life in the polar regions, in the Sahara desert, and in the tropics. Our art topic has linked to the use of hot and cold colours. The children have been mixing their own colours and creating landscape pieces based on the work of artist Etel Adnan.



Year 3

This half term in Year 3 the children have been reading The Iron Man in English. It has been a fascinating story all about an Iron giant and his friendship with Hogarth.



Art and History

During this term, we have been learning all about the Bronze Age. Our art topic was to design and create Bronze Age tools and jewellery. The children used wire to create the shape and then coated the shape in mod rock. It was very messy but great fun.



Science

This half term in Science we have been looking at plants. We have been looking closely at features of a plant and using scientific vocabulary to label its parts. The children also have learnt all about pollination and seed dispersal.

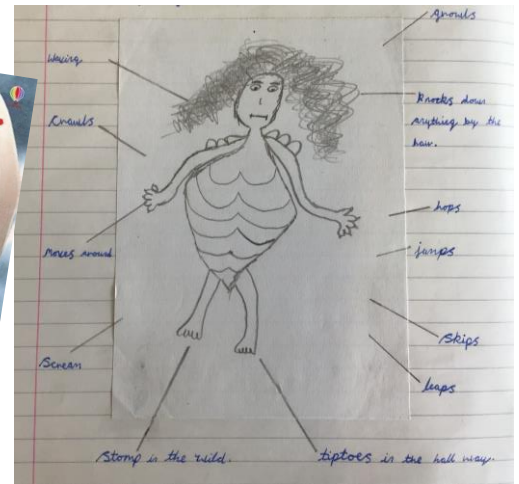
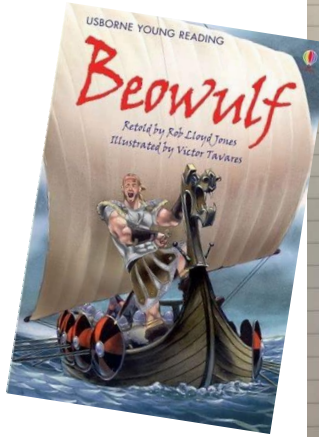


Year 4

English

In English we have been studying the Anglo Saxon Epic 'Beowulf'. We have thought about how the author has used different devices and techniques to develop characters and settings and we have even had a go at designing our own monsters and heroes using superlatives.

We have considered how the author creates tension throughout the story and we have begun writing our own Anglo Saxon style epic stories using the techniques we have learnt.



Science

In Science we have been learning about states of matter and how objects can change between solids, liquids and gasses. We have thought about the real life applications of these principles and considered different ways to speed up evaporation and help laundry dry quicker.

We also conducted an experiment looking at how quickly chocolate melts and thought about ways to speed up or slow down this process.



Computing

In Computing we have been using Excel to learn about spreadsheets. We have learnt how to put data into a spreadsheet. We have used formulae to make calculations on a spreadsheet. We have learnt how to present data from our spreadsheets using graphs.

Year 5

Design & Technology

In DT, we have been investigating and building our own bridges which could be used to connect two mountains. We researched the different types of bridges and designed our own based on our findings. We then tested them, ensuring that we used our Scientific knowledge of fair testing.



Geography

This half term, we have been learning about Mountains. We have used both atlases and Google Earth to identify different features of mountains in Europe. We have used our Maths skills as well to compare the rainfall of mountain ranges around the world.



Science

We have really enjoyed finding out all about Earth and Space. After our trip to the Science Museum just before Christmas, we were eager to learn more! We have learnt about the phases of the moon, how day/night/seasons occur and made sundials to show how shadows can be used to tell the time.





Cooperative learning

We have really enjoyed working with each other in a variety of subjects this half term. In Maths, we have worked with resources to solve complex multiplication calculations and completed many team Maths challenges outside.

In English, we have worked together to explore how to write from the perspective of different elements of nature, e.g. mountains, the weather, etc. Our in depth discussions led us to create some spectacular poetry about the mountains.



Year 6

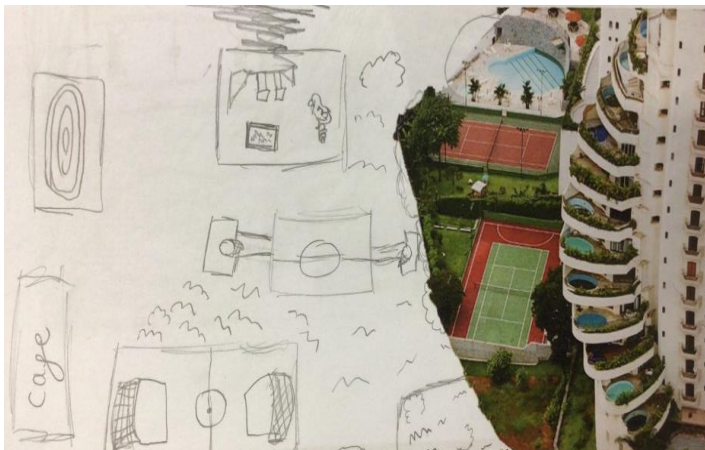
English

In Year 6 we have been joining Maia, who is an orphan, on her Journey to the River Sea (The Amazon River). Her daring voyage has been the inspiration for some incredible writing – from scintillating setting descriptions to poignant personal letters. In addition to weaving a captivating storyline, Eva Ibbotson has provided us with many opportunities to see superb grammar in action, which has enabled Year 6 pupils to upskill their own work. The Year 6 teachers have been especially impressed by the use of relative pronouns, which have been applied to create relative clauses in sentences. The passive voice has also been used expertly by children in their non-chronological reports to add an air of formality.



Geography

Expectations:



Reality:



Linking beautifully with our English work, Year 6 have been studying Brazil and the Amazon Rainforest in their Geography lessons. Alongside their fabulous home-learning projects, they have begun to explore the country's climate and have observed that it differs significantly between cities due to the sheer size of Brazil. Their independently constructed climate graphs illustrate their findings. Year 6 are able to differentiate between climate and weather and have also discussed various physical and human geographical features of the country. It was incredibly eye-opening comparing the rich and poor neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro.

Science

Our Year 6 scientists have been investigating electricity this half term. Kick-starting this electrifying topic, each pupil was set the challenge of trying to light as many bulbs as possible (using only two cells). After drawing accurate scientific diagrams and noting their observations, the classes used drama to get to grips with some complicated concepts. To understand what actually happens when we create two different types of circuit – series and parallel – the children acted as the current or amps. They observed that the voltage of the battery was fixed and that there was a limited amount of charge: in a parallel circuit, each bulb drew the full voltage from the battery, making the battery run out twice as quickly as in a series circuit. Some pupils thought that the respiratory system was a good analogy for a circuit with the battery performing the role of both the heart and lungs.



Computing

Using the block based programming tool, Scratch, Year 6 have been investigating variables and their use in games – both online and in real life. We looked at scoring systems such as those used in football and rugby and then replicated these by adding variable blocks to the code of three sprites.



RE

Following on from a lesson where Year 6 learned how to look up various Bible references, we took some time to reflect and think about a particular passage from the Bible that spoke to us. As an expression of what the passage meant to us, we created representations of stained-glass windows.

Green Team

At the end of the autumn term the weather turned very cold and icy. We took this as an opportunity to go out to our wildlife garden and appreciate the nature we have around us. We decided to capture the moment through drawings and poems so we could reflect on it in the summer term.

*The Wildlife Garden a wonderful place,
It has trees and plants and a pond.
A chilly breeze in Winter,
It's pretty in Spring,
In Summer all the plants have bloomed.
By Lottie*



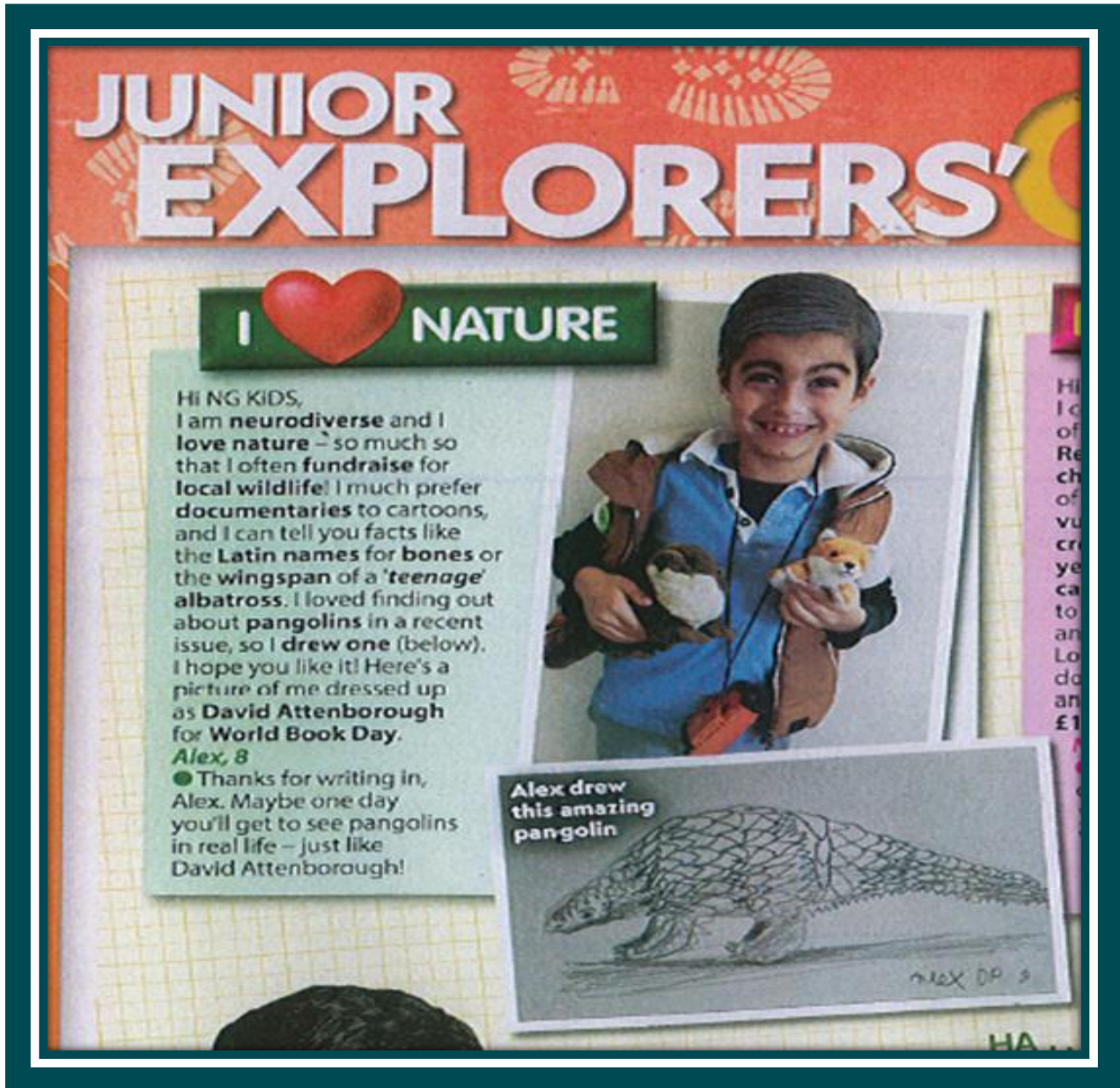
In our second week back we were very lucky to have a visitor come and talk to our Green Team about wind turbines and renewable energy. The children were enthralled and had lots of questions to ask!



Since being back after Christmas the Green Team have been very busy organising competitions and ways for the whole school to get involved with their passions. The first thing was we entered the BIG BIRD WATCH for RSPB. All the results will go towards us earning a Wild Challenge Badge for the school. Another challenge the Green Team set the school was to write a poem based on something to do with the environment. These will be sent off to the Young Writers competition where the children have the opportunity to win prizes for themselves and the school and also be published in a book!



Congratulations to our Junior Explorer!



Congratulations to Alex in Year 4 who went above and beyond with his love of nature. He managed to get his article put into the 'National Geographic Kids' magazine. What an amazing drawing! Well done- we are very proud of you.

Great
Work



Polka Theatre Trip



On the first week of January, 19 pupils from Y1-6 attended a performance of 'Crackers' at the Polka Theatre. The children thoroughly enjoyed the performance and were also given the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with the actors.

Indoor Athletics

Well done to our Y5&6 pupils who represented St. Albans at the primary indoor athletics competition. The children worked as a team and completed a range of track and field events over the course of the morning.



League Updates

Netball

After half term, the netball league will begin for Y5&6 pupils. Best of luck to our Year 5 team and Year 6 team. They will play two matches against other schools.

Football

Both mixed football teams are through to the semi finals – congratulations! They are expected to play their matches after half term.



Information from the school office

School Office Vacancy

We are looking for an organised and professional School Office Manager to join the team at St Alban's. The Office Manager is responsible for the day to day support and supervision of the School Office team.

For further details please see the job advert on Eteach:

[Office Manager - Eteach](#)

Attendance Expectations for This Academic Year

Just to remind parents/carers that if they take their children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive) they will be liable to receive a penalty notice. Currently the amount payable under a penalty notice is £60.00 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days. Thereafter the amount increases to £120.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices.

If you feel that your absence should be considered for exceptional circumstances to have leave approved, please complete a 'Request for leave of Absence' form that is available from our school website. The form should be submitted to the school office and at least 2 weeks' notice is required. Please see attached letter regarding Penalty Notices.

Outstanding ScoPay Payments

Please can you check your ScoPay account and settle any outstanding debts for historic and upcoming trips/workshops.



Parking and road safety

We would like to remind and encourage all parents to park safely and considerately.

Please always bear in mind that by not parking safely the consequences of your action can be life changing. Please support the school in this very important matter.

- Always looking for a safe place to park – Beauchamp road is very long with lots of parking available a short walk from the school gates
- Never stop in the middle of the road to let your children out
- Never let your children exit the car straight onto the road
- Never park on the zig-zag lines
- Drive well within the speed limit and be extra vigilant when approaching the school
- If you live close enough to walk then please do – walking is a great way to start the day with fantastic health and well-being benefits

Key staff teams

For our new parents, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our key SLT, SEN and DSL members.

Senior Leadership Team

Mr M Brannigan	Headteacher
Mrs C Martin	Deputy Headteacher
Miss C Clarke	Assistant Headteacher
Miss E Daly	Assistant Headteacher
Mrs A Mettrick	Assistant Headteacher
Mrs L Atkinson	SLT

SEN Team

Mrs C Martin	SENCO
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Safeguarding Team

Miss C Clarke	Designated DSL Lead
Mrs C Martin	DSL
Mrs A Mettrick	DSL
Mr M Brannigan	DSL
Miss E Daly	DSL

For any confidential matters, please email the DSL team at:

dsl@stalbans.surrey.sch.uk