

STAPLEHURST SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents & Carers

This week the snow has been an enjoyable distraction for us all, and it has been a joy to watch the children on site having such fun on our amazing field! We were delighted that we were able to remain open, as it is important to us that we continue to serve the families of critical workers, even when presented with these additional challenges. Thank you to the dedicated staff team on site for continuing to go the extra mile for our children.

Parent Voice: thank you to those parents who attended Parent Forum last week; your comments were very positive. We have captured this, and feedback, from our recent home learning survey in today's newsletter. We truly value your responses and suggestions as to how we can continue to make small adjustments to our provision.

Today our phase leaders have shared their favourite highlights from this term; goodness, it has been incredibly busy with superb remote learning! Thank you for working in strong partnership with us to ensure your child has the best provision and support, and a special thanks to the staff working remotely; they have delivered a very strong and highly inclusive remote learning curriculum.

Have a restful half term. We return again for children of critical workers on Monday 22nd February 2021. Should the government announce plans for schools to re-open we will communicate with you regarding this at the start of term 4.

Have a lovely break

Miss Davenport and the Senior Leadership Team.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM EARLY YEARS

We have had a very busy term in Early Years. The children had to work out our topic for the term using a clue, which the children correctly guessed was a nest. They suggested different birds which could have made it. Many of the children enjoyed watching the birds in their gardens and made some fantastic bird feeders. Our Power of Reading text this term was 'Owl Babies'. We enjoyed watching an animated version of the story and using different techniques to create our owl art. The story was set in the forest at night and we had fun exploring the dark using torches. Some children said they found the dark frightening, but we then realised that dark could be fun by creating our own shadow puppets. We produced some fabulous writing using the story, writing speech bubbles for the owls, and creating wanted posters to help to find Mummy Owl.



Home learning has shown that Early years' parents are not only supportive but also creative! We have seen some very imaginative learning, using toys, sweets and other objects for counting and comparing amounts, very much continuing the learning through play approach, making our maths fun. We have created balances for comparing weight, made playdough during our capacity work and used pasta shapes for measuring. The children have enjoyed watching the White Rose videos as well as challenging themselves with the additional activities.



As well as literacy and maths, we have enjoyed the wider curriculum, expressing ourselves during children's mental health week, exploring ice and comparing hot and cold, as well as enjoying music, dance and PE activities. It has been lovely for us to see each other (and some pets) during our zoom assemblies. Despite only having been in school since September, the children have demonstrated our PRIDE values and we are very proud of how they have coped during this time. Well done Early Years and thank you to our parents for all of your support.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM KEYSTAGE 1

This term we have had an exceptionally busy half term in KS1. In Year 1, the children entered the fictional world of 'Where The Wild Things Are', retelling the story using actions and story maps. Impressively, they then used these skills to create their own version of the story. Year 1 also used 'Dear Greenpeace' as a focus for their letter writing. Once again, the work produced was fantastic. The children even discovered some animals in their gardens and enjoyed researching all about them. In Topic, Year 1 explored land art and even created their own pieces using natural materials which they had found. Take a look at some of the outstanding work produced by our very talented children!



In Year 2, it was Land Ahoy! as the pirates landed in Staplehurst. During English, the children became non-fiction writers, producing non-chronological reports all about pirates. The children used videos and books to find information before transferring it into their own reports. They also wrote letters to the local councillor when 'The Pirates Next Door' arrived. Some children wanted them to stay as they would share the treasure, others wanted them to leave. In Geography, Year 2 travelled the world, visiting different continents, countries and oceans. In DT, the children researched, designed and created their very own pirate ships using junk modelling. As you can see they were extremely creative.



It has been fantastic to see the children expressing themselves throughout this half term. Zoom assemblies provided a great opportunity for us to reconnect and celebrate in year groups. We are exceptionally proud of all the children in KS1. It has not been an easy term but they have demonstrated PRIDE values and an incredible positive attitude towards learning. Well done to all the children and a huge thank you to all the parents for all of your support this half term!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM KEYSTAGE 2

What a term of fantastic learning across Key Stage Two! Starting 2021 as a virtual school once again, in every year group, children have dived into the challenge of blended learning, demonstrating our school PRIDE values at every opportunity. Despite unsettling times, the children have excelled, at home and in school, in all aspects of their learning. We are so proud of their many achievements, and have enjoyed celebrating these with the children each week.

Year three have been fully immersed this term in their Romans topic, and linked this to their Literacy text 'Escape from Pompeii'. The children combined their work in History and Art to create a Roman shield, bringing their creations to life in a battle! Drawn into Roman life, they then became engineers, building aqueducts from recycled materials and learning about what an important invention they are.



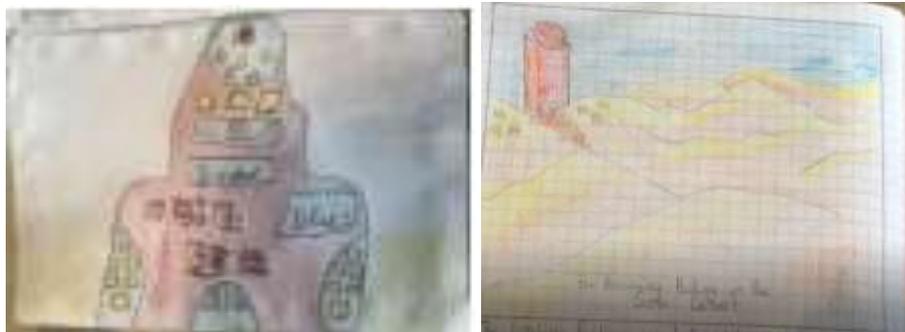
Year four have also been learning about ancient civilisations, engaging in history learning on the Egyptians and the Shang Dynasty. Inspired by ancient Chinese artists, they designed their own intricate bronze vessels, willow plate patterns, then using their skills in fine art to create Dancing Dragons, using a range of different materials. They were then set the challenge of creating a pyramid: some got very creative, using the snow, Lego and even blankets to recreate the Great Pyramids of Giza! Their topic influenced their writing too, using texts including Egyptian Cinderella and The Story of Tutankhamen. They created impressive narrative pieces, detailed (and slightly gross) instructions on how to make a mummy and informative non-chronological reports about the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb.



It's been brilliant to see so many of the children joining in with PE this term, taking on our PE at home challenge, trying new skills and activities including dance lessons, high intensity workouts with Joe Wicks and Marcus Rashford, yoga and Miss Callen's burpee challenge - which was particularly impressive! What a great way to get the whole family involved and beat any lockdown blues!



Year 5 have enjoyed reading *Cosmic* by Frank Cottrell Boyce, using clues from the text and their imaginations to design and describe 'The Possibility Building'. Inspired by the infinity of space, they used similes, metaphors and personification to create fabulous poems about the moon. They then linked the circular image of the moon and loved learning about the life and work of Wassily Kandinsky and, inspired by his work, produced their own 'Concentric Circles'. Their topic this term has focused on the history of medicine. They've learned about important historical figures and how they improved life expectancy.



The moon is like a Diamond shining down on us every night from the galaxy.

The moon is an eye watching over us bottling up all our memories over the years and never lets go. We will always have our memories but they will be just out of reach... in the floor.

The moon is a Scoop of ice cream, galaxy glacier, making sure we are enjoyed for the day ahead.

The moon is a clock ticking gracefully for the time it has to play before the Sun comes out again.

The moon is like a Disco ball happily lighting the way through the night sky.

The moon whispers tonight's been great.

The moon is a rainbow intergalactic disco ball spinning in the sky.

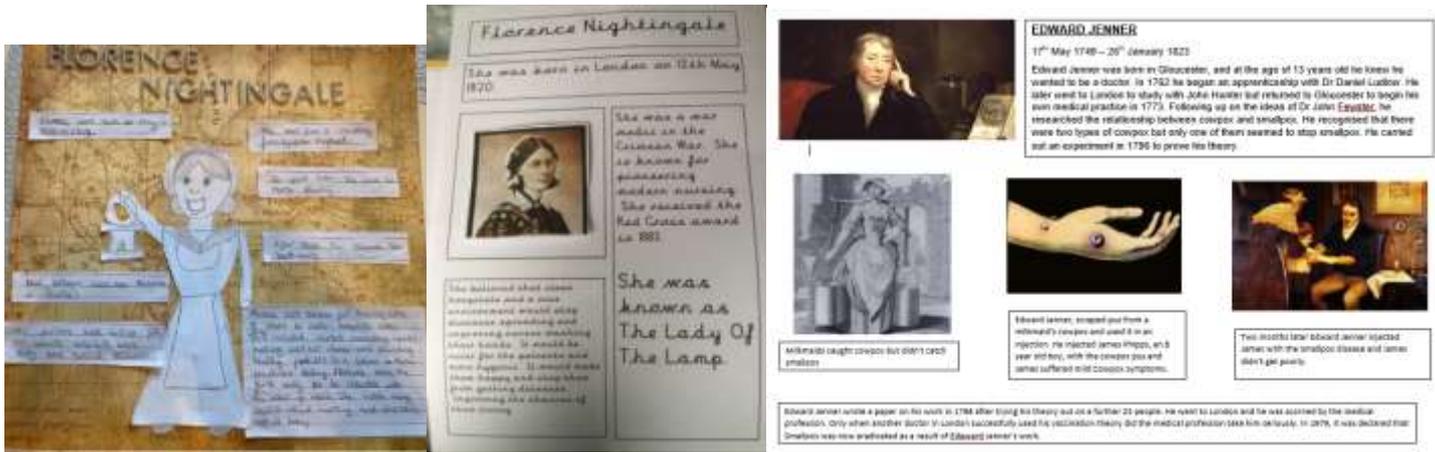
The moon is a bumpy, glass white golf ball shot through the universe.

The moon is a big wacky face hovering silently above the earth.

The moon is like a huge bird - they always change the dark blue sea.

The moon is a lightbulb lighting up the dark black earth at night time.

The moon says tonight is your night.



Year 6 have gone global this term! They've enjoyed learning all about globalisation and the impact on their lives of a connected world. They've raided their wardrobes and kitchen cupboards, and found that globalisation has had a much bigger impact than they first realised, affecting almost every part of their lives. They've also been reading 'Holes' by Louis Sachar. They enjoyed reading about the barren, arid landscape of Camp Green Lake and have created some fantastic writing inspired by the book. Inspired by America, they learned about the history of Pop Art, particularly the work of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, then created their own pop art, inspired by these famous artists.



Despite learning from home, the children have still been able to engage in some brilliant science learning. Year Six conducted some hair-raising experiments into static electricity, whilst Year Three have been learning about light. They created shadow tubes using different materials to create patterns, then experimented to learn how shadows are created and their size and shape changed. Some children even used their new learning to create an inventive shadow puppet theatre.



PRIDE CERTIFICATE FOR SCHOOL BUBBLES

EYFS	We have chosen Dougie Ward for making good choices on the carpet and having a positive attitude towards everything he does.
1& 2	Mia Levitt - For working extremely hard in maths. Mia has done a fantastic job using manipulatives to compare numbers up to 50.
3&4	Our certificate for 3/4 bubble goes to Chloe Keeshan for excellent effort in all her classes. She has produced a fabulous piece of writing in Literacy this week and is always very helpful to others in both classes. Well done Chloe.
5&6	Charlotte has shown resilience and courage since the start of term and always produces work to a high standard.

PRIDE CERTIFICATE WINNERS

EYKR	Charlotte has worked extremely hard this term, always thinking about how she can add more to her work or complete it in different ways. We have really enjoyed looking through your work this term.
EYG	Tommy has put so much effort into his home learning, always with a smile and positive attitude. It has been lovely to see his comments on our blogs too.
1A	Isla has a brilliant attitude to home learning. She approaches each task with lots of enthusiasm and shows a great amount of determination to tackle tasks she finds hard. She has recently listened to feedback from the teacher, taken it on board and this has shown in her future work. Well done!
1SS	Jasmine has been showing the PRIDE values of Independence and Determination. She always tries to push herself in tasks and often takes on the extra challenges. She recalls previous learning and uses it in her work, e.g. using number lines and part whole model drawings herself. It has also been lovely to see Jasmine having such fun taking part in the Wellbeing Week activities.
2S	Neel has put in a fantastic amount of effort this week especially in Maths, even when he has found tasks difficult. A huge well done!
2O	Archie has put in fantastic amounts of effort into his home learning. I am particularly proud of Archie's letter writing in Literacy over the past two weeks and his use of words, such as 'therefore' to engage the reader.
3S	Emily . For showing a great enthusiasm for her home learning, Emily has been pushing herself in maths and has completed the Flashback 4 each day and even attempted the daily challenge. Fantastic work Emily!
3HS	Emilia has shown huge enthusiasm for her home learning. She always tries hard and contributes to the blog with positive messages and images of her activities. She is particularly inventive with her use of manipulatives in Maths! Well done!
4LC	Chloe for persevering with her reading and having a good go with her work last week. Even when things were tricky.
4NC	Lauren has shown real perseverance with her maths this week. Not shying away from challenges, even when they are tricky. Lauren has also been logging on and trying every single piece of work set, as well as engaging with the blog. Well done!
5W	Bluebelle . For consistently producing high quality working and presenting it to an excellent standard. Bluebelle created an informative fact file on Florence Nightingale and produced some great writing in English. Well done!
5S	Albert . For listening to and taking on board feedback in maths, which has really helped his understanding in this last week and for his effort in all other subjects, particularly history, Great work Albe - keep it up!
6F	Lydia . For her amazing art work, both that which she has been set and the work she has undertaken independently and shared with us. Well done Lydia.
6T	Poppy for putting such effort into her work every day, particularly her writing around Holes. She's been highly engaged in her home learning and producing work to a consistently high standard.

Remote Learning & Parent Survey Highlights:

We asked: What are we doing well?

You said:

“Videos help child feel connected with teachers and learning.”

Staying in contact and encouraging the children.

Video lessons are really helping to make my daughter feel engaged.

We love the videos. They are of a very high quality and really clear. We love that they are videos, not live lessons so we can do the work to fit in with our day. In the live assembly, it's nice to see other children.

Feedback is helpful. Assemblies are great. Videos with teachers are good.



Phone calls are good, especially as I'm still having to go to work so can't always support the home learning.

The teachers are being very responsive and encouraging. They mark submitted work very quickly. The tasks are well explained and the videos are helpful.

Up to date marking, good quantity of work.

There is always someone there to help and support me when I need it.

“Up to date marking, good quantity of work.”



“You are doing amazing job! Everything is on time! Thank you so much for your Work!”

Contacting us has been brilliant. Praising the children really helps with encouraging them to do the work and do it well.

The video blogs explaining the lessons. The mixture of work each day. Introducing the new concepts with lots of explanatory content.

Giving daily feedback to work updated and submitted communication.



Our response - Based on your feedback we will continue to work with you on the following areas after half term:

- We will continue to provide the daily requirement of learning, but to give additional flexibility we will provide longer deadlines for tasks over the week
- We will build an additional live session each week to increase pastoral opportunities for your child
- We will ensure our PRIDE values assemblies acknowledge effort and the completion of all home learning

Please know that we truly understand the challenges that you are facing to provide home learning while working from home and juggling other home life responsibilities. If you need some additional support please inform your child's class teacher or speak to our Family Liaison Officer, Mrs Bonny Sullivan.

A Few highlights from our recent Parent Forum:

Your concerns regarding pupils catching up academically and emotionally during home learning

- Are our children learning the same curriculum as the children who are currently in school?
- Are our children at par with the curriculum and not falling behind?
- Did the children catch up with their school work after the first lockdown?

We replied:

- Mrs Davenport advised the parents that the school made slightly changed the curriculum but adhering to the following guidelines:
 - KS1 – 3 hours, KS2 – 4 hours
 - Adjustments will be considered and looked into regarding missed work
 - Yes, children made significant recovery with school work and emotional health after the first lockdown. They coped very well.

A parent shared requested for more than one Zoom Assembly weekly. Assemblies seems to work for her child and encourage some kind of normalcy.

We replied:

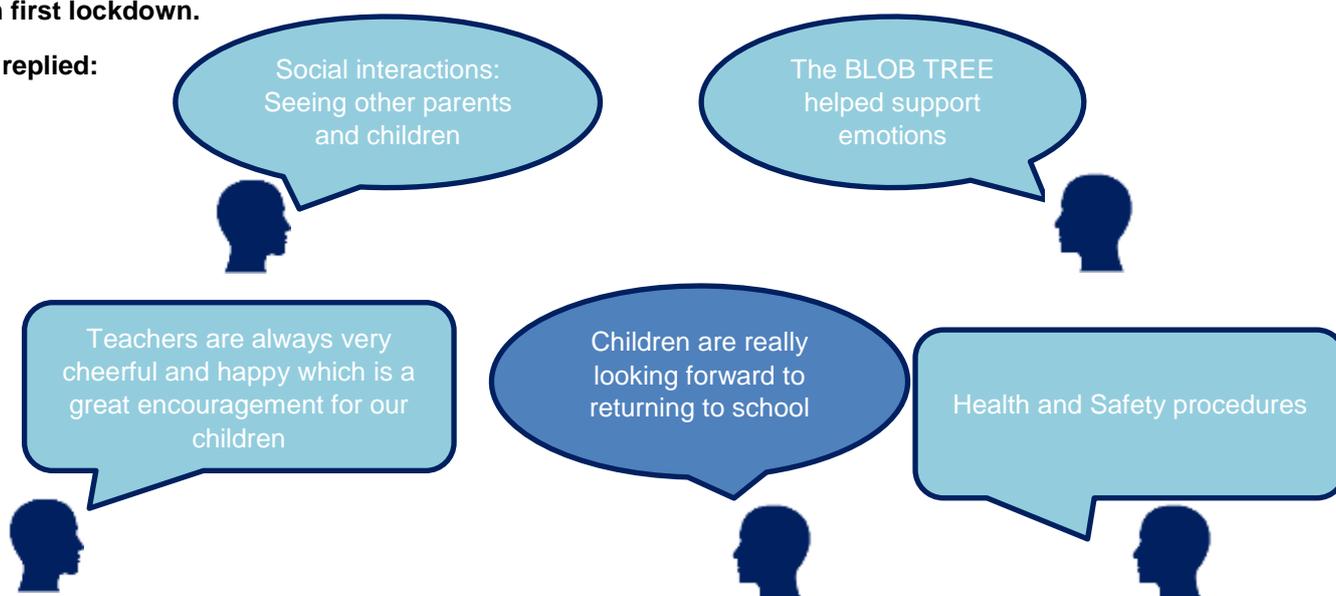
- Mrs Davenport acknowledged her concern and advised that she's looking into options to help children with their emotional as well as academic needs.

A parent queried if the school staff are alright. She shared how positive everyone is in school despite the pandemic and demises. She shared some success stories regarding Sebastian's learning and thanked Mr J Smith's innovative ideas for it.

- Mrs Davenport thanked her and informed her that talking about how to improve learning and emotional wellbeing is part of our school culture.
- Mrs Davenport also talked about the availability of asymptomatic testing kits for staff which reassures them about their wellbeing and safety

We asked: (if school returns to full session from March 8th) what worked and what hasn't after return to school from first lockdown.

You replied:



Concerns

- During lockdown, children get 1:1 assistance at home whereas after lockdown is over, they will return to class settings. How is this going to be addressed?
- Blending into social groups after being away for so long.

Our response: School will take on board your comments when planning to reopen.