



Brackenbury Curriculum News

Core Subjects – Autumn Term

Reading

We love reading at Brackenbury! Every class has been immersed in a range of different texts this term, and they have inspired us not only in our writing, but in all areas of our learning! All year groups have been reading exciting stories and fascinating non-fiction texts in guided reading sessions each week, delving deeper into the minds of the characters, the meaning of words and the language choices of the authors. These books also have included some classic texts, such as 'The Wind in the Willows', 'Charlotte's Web', and 'Black Beauty'. On top of the texts they have been studying, each class has a class novel that is separate to their topic. This has meant that every child is listening to a range of genres and writing styles, which is an important part of developing as a reader, a writer, and a learner in general. Also, to support us in our exploration of a range of vocabulary, each class is starting to look at a 'word of the week', which challenges the children to learn a new word, and use it as many times in their writing and in their conversations over the week - make sure to ask your child about their 'word of the week' in the new term!

Looking forward towards the Spring Term, we are enthusiastically planning one of our favourite weeks of the year – World Book Week! As World Book Day is on the 7th March, we will be celebrating reading as a school over the week, with lots of exciting activities planned in each year group. This will involve a reading relay, where the teachers will switch classrooms and read one of their favourite stories to different classes around the school, as well as the whole school dressing up as their favourite book characters! KS2 children will also have the chance to be involved in a Shakespeare workshop, looking at the play 'Hamlet' and performing small sections as a class. Finally, please keep an eye out for information on parent workshops that will be available in the spring term, to support developing reading at home.

Writing

We have had some fantastic writing throughout the Autumn term. Since introducing the 'Writer of the Week' in Autumn 2, we have been able to share many examples of excellent writing across the school. Each week the winning entries are read by each class and displayed for the week for everyone to see. I have been really impressed in particular with the use of ambitious vocabulary to engage the reader, as well as the way the children tackle different genres of writing, and I am looking forward to continue to read fantastic writing in the Spring term! This use of ambitious vocabulary has also been seen in many classes through introducing a word of the week. Children in nursery have been describing people as 'cunning', children in Year 2 have been very 'adventurous' and children in Year 6 have been learning words such as 'tangible' and 'tenacious' and introducing them into their writing. Some children in Year 6 have also been working as journalists and publishers to write and edit their own magazine called 'What's Up!' The first edition will be available for children in KS2 at the end of this term and subsequent editions will be printed on a termly basis- keep a look out for it! The dedication of the children working on the magazine has been amazing to see, and they have all learnt a lot about writing for an audience- well done to all involved! Looking ahead to next term, World Book Day will give the children the opportunity to explore different authors and their writing, and the children will continue to take part in lots of fun and engaging practical activities that will help to develop their writing skills.

Maths

Brackenbury has had a busy first term in maths, and we have been thrilled by the excitement and enthusiasm that all students have shown us in lessons. Children have spent the term learning about place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. We have seen a wide variety of lessons from children in nurse and reception practising counting using various objects, all the way up to Year 6, who have been using their reasoning and problem solving skills to solve and explain mathematical problems. Children were able to extend their understanding of place value by using a wide range of resources to support their learning, including place value counters, base 10 and cubes. By being able to represent a one, ten or hundred using a concrete resource, children are able to physically move them between columns and exchange them when completing calculations. This has meant that children have been able to take part in a range of practical maths lessons, that support their learning of calculation.

As you are aware, this term we have introduced our new Mathletics Star of the Week throughout the school. Children who are working on their Mathletics tasks and multiplication tests every week, may be awarded a certificate and a prize in Friday assembly. Mathletics is a fantastic way to practice the maths we have learnt in class, solve mathematical problems, and to continue learning our multiplication tables, all whilst having fun and playing games. So far, we have had winners from almost all classes, and have seen many more children working extra hard on their Mathletics tasks each week. Keep up the good work!

Next term, we will be focusing on using the A.P.E model to explain our answers mathematically, particularly when solving true or false style questions. This is where we answer the question, prove our answer using calculations and evidence, and then explain our reasoning; developing this skill will really support the children in their problem solving. The teachers are looking forward to seeing everyone's fantastic mathematical thinking in their lessons when we return in January.

Science

Children have enjoyed a busy term back at Brackenbury, embarking on new topics in their new year groups. Year 4 had a great day at the Science Museum exploring the Wonderlab exhibition. The hands on exhibit, which included talks by scientists as well as live demonstrations, encouraged the children to be curious, to look closely at details and to be creative – skills that are invaluable to scientists.

To promote Physics in school, Brackenbury were lucky enough to be gifted a box full of resources and experiment ideas from The Ogden Trust (A charitable organisation that supports the teaching of Physics in schools). Year 4 and Year 6 have been taking advantage of all this wonderful equipment by making circuits, experimenting with bulbs and buzzers and creating games that need electricity to power them. With Ravenscourt Park being so close to our school, it is not surprising that many year groups have taken advantage of having visited the park to observe the change in seasons and discuss what they saw. Year 2 even created "Spotter Guides" to illustrate what they had found when they went to the park to investigate animals in local habitats.

We finished the term with a "bang" when a group of children from across Years 5 and 6 showcased a number of different experiments they had learnt during Science Club at the Christmas Fair. The children made lava lamps, demonstrated how to make slime using only cornflour and water and even raised some money for the school with their buzzwire games that were made using circuits. Next half term there is even more to look forward to as we get ready for Brackenbury Science Week (11-15th February) - more details will follow in the Buzz in the new year.