

Newsletter



Term 3 Clubs

Monday Yoga

Tuesday Board Games

Wednesday Choir/ Music

Wednesday Science Book Club

Thursday Spanish

Friday Brass Band Club

Carols

To spread some Christmas cheer, all children from Class 2 sang some Christmas carols at Stratton Court for the residents. The children particularly enjoyed learning the carol 'Feliz Navidad' because some of the lyrics are in Spanish! They also delivered Christmas cards to the residents that they had made. We have been invited back next year to read and do crafts with the residents.

Treasure Island Panto

On the 19th December, to end the term, all children at Down Ampney went to watch the production of Treasure Island at the Barn Theatre. The children loved listening to the songs and were amazed by the cast's ability to play a variety of musical instruments. The performance had all the children laughing at the characters and clapping along to the songs. After the show, all the children walked across town to the Salvation Army Hall. Once they had their lunch, they played some Christmas party games such as 'In and out of the snow' and 'Who is head elf?'. Overall, the children had a memorable day full of fun and festivities!

Arctic Webinar

As part of our work on Sustainability and through our involvement with The Geographical Association, we were invited, as one of 12 schools in the UK, to



take part in a webinar led by Wicked Weather Watch and 'Hearts in the Ice' Explorer, Hilde Fålnun Strøm, to hear about her experiences of living in isolation in



the Arctic. Hilde was the first female scientist to spend the winter in the Arctic and her talk focused on how the generations of the future can help protect the Arctic

from the climate challenges it faces.

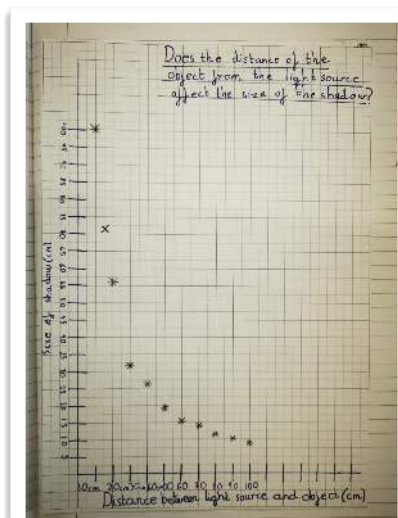
Science: Making Connections

Every unit of work in Science and Foundation subjects begins with a session on Making Connections with prior learning before beginning to learn new content. Our Term 2 Science topic of Light began with children exploring a range of activities and drawing conclusions about what they knew about light, in order to explain what was happening. Children made infinity mirrors, created rainbows using prisms and CDs, explored optical illusions, reversed writing using glasses of water, used infra-red light to reveal secret messages, changed the colour of white light using coloured filters and thought about how humans see in low light and discussed the statement "Our eyes get used to the dark".

Working Scientifically in Year 5 and 6

A big part of the Science curriculum is learning how to work like scientists by practising key skills, as well as learning the content of each topic. Our Light topic this term focused on recording data and creating graphs and annotated diagrams, as well as

using practical resources to test scientific ideas. Children took measurements and recorded data to explore whether the size of a shadow was affected by the distance of the object from a light source. They decided which measurements to take and set up



their investigation and created line graphs from their data.

As part of our work on diversity through Science, Class 3 also explored the work of Professor Robert Pal, who uses high powered light microscopes to study cells in the body to help come up with cures for diseases. They made their own light microscopes,



using their knowledge of how to reflect light. The children made convex lenses using water droplets and studied dragonfly nymphs from our pond! They then drew diagrams to explain how the image was

magnified and made links to other uses such as glasses and microscopes.

The children explored angles of incidence and reflection and built light mazes with angled mirrors to try and get the torch light to shine onto black



paper the other side of the maze. They then drew diagrams, using protractors to show the angle of their mirrors; a link to our Maths work on shape and angles. Children then applied their knowledge of angles and light to make periscopes. We also learnt about how

images on the retina are inverted and made pinhole cameras using boxes and tracing paper to demonstrate this.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 8th Jan - Term 3 starts

Thursday 11th Jan - Dodgeball

Monday 15th Jan - Mosque visit & Christingle at the Cathedral

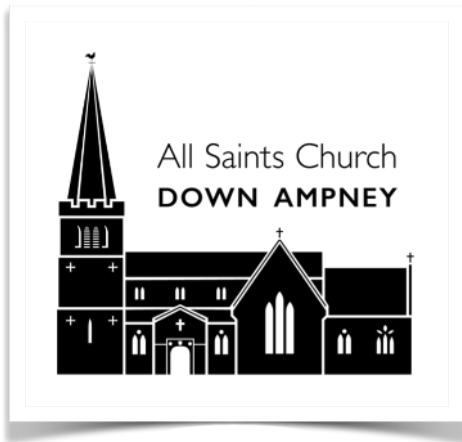
Tuesday 23rd Jan - Gymnastics Festival Y3 & 4

Monday 29th Jan - Delta Gym Day

Wednesday 31st Jan - Young Voices at the O2!



Thoughts from The Rev'd Canon John Swanton



Down Ampney C of E Primary School is an important part of the life of the village and the parish. As a 'church school' it has two Foundation Governors whose role is to ensure that the Christian Ethos of the school is maintained. As Vicar, I am a Foundation Governor and Mrs Horton – whose grandchildren are at the school is the other Foundation Governor.

Being a 'church school' means that we are here to serve everyone, regardless of faith and belief; and it is wonderful that we have families of different faith traditions in our school. We work to ensure that the school is a place that is caring, loving, nurturing, understanding and encourages curiosity and enquiring minds.

It is one of my joys to come into the school regularly to lead Collective Worship – when the whole school has a special time of reflection, some singing, and a short prayer. It is also wonderful to welcome the school to All Saints' Church for the Easter, Leavers and Harvest Services and on other occasions as well.

We have a wonderful 'Open the Book' team – volunteers from the village - who come to school a couple of times a term to re-enact stories from the Bible. There have been some Oscar winning performances! Everyone seems to enjoy the Open the Book visits – and acting is a great way to engage with the story. Some of the children are usually involved in the performances as well. They are in Noah's Ark in the photo!



The link between our church and school is very special. At church, we regularly pray for everyone at our school; and we do what we can to support and encourage the school's activities. It is great that activities like 'Christmas in the Community' is a joint effort between the PTA, the School and the Church raise funds for all of our organisations. I am looking forward to working with the Eco Team of children at school to help our church and churchyard gain an 'Eco Church' award in 2024 – as we learn from the excellent work of our school which has gained Eco School' status!

I am truly proud of this wonderful little school – the quality of education, the opportunities for pupils to engage with; the afterschool clubs and the nurturing environment. We are blessed with the team we have – staff, volunteers, PTA, governors and partners. Thank you.

Here's looking forward to 2024 and a good year for all the partnerships within our village and at our school.

As ever - John
 The Rev'd Canon John Swanton
 Vicar of Down Ampney
 Foundation Governor of Down Ampney CofE Primary School

A Message from our Chair Of Governors

As we approach the festive season I would like to pass on the thanks of the governing body to the pupils, the parents/carers and families and the PTA who have been so supportive of all the school's new and varying activities. Of course, a big thank you also goes to all the school's staff for achieving so much over the past year. In particular the outstanding Class 1 Nativity Play that was supported by the whole school and was seen by a "capacity audience" in the Village Hall.

The overall message from the governing body is that the school continues to do well and has received numerous complements from external visitors. This is reflected in the historically high number of pupils we now have in the school. As we look ahead to 2024 we are anticipating another busy year. We are actively looking at the how and when the school should move across from Local Authority control into a Multi Academy Trust. This will be a major change for the running of the school and we are aiming to ensure we get the best possible outcome for the school and to do so under our chosen way forward. We will provide regular updates as we progress down this path.

We are also aiming to make the replacement of the Class 1 classroom a priority. The current classroom is notionally a temporary structure but was erected in the late 1950s! We are engaged with the Local Authority to see what funding options might be available to get a new classroom that is fit for the 21st century.

Finally, we expect an inspection by OFSTED sometime during 2024. We are all aware that this brings an element of stress to the whole environment but we are collectively working hard to ensure that when the call comes we are fully prepared and assessed in line with what we see everyday providing quality education and opportunities to our young cohort.

With best wishes to all for 2024.

Geoffrey Booth

Chair of Governors

Down Ampney C of E Primary School