



DIARY DATES

January 2021

Jan 4th

Occasional Day – school closed

Jan 5th

INSET Day – Talk4Writing staff training

Jan 6th

First day of term

Jan 7th

COVID-19 Safe Open Morning – final session before the Reception application deadline.

Jan 15th

Parent Forum meeting – virtual

Deadline for Reception and Junior School applications.

Jan 28th

COVID-19 Safe Open Morning – Nursery admission

Throughout Jan

Balanceability courses for EYFS

Unfortunately we have had to postpone a number of planned events due to the recent lockdown. We will update the calendar as soon as we can confirm the new dates.

18th December 2020



This week has been a wonderful end, to this unprecedented year. The staff and children have adjusted to this 'new normal' exceptionally well and we are thrilled to have made it to Christmas!

Father Christmas visit



We were lucky to have a socially distanced visit from Father Christmas this morning. He even had his own 'Hand Santatiser'. Fortunately everyone was on the good list and received a gift to bring home this evening.

A message from St Peter's Church

This Christmas at St Peter's will be a little different, but we look forward to welcoming you to celebrate with us. All services must be booked in advance as spaces are limited. Information on how to book is on the website www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk

The Nine Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve Midnight Mass (11.30pm) and Christmas Morning services will also be streamed on our website and on our Facebook page (@stpetersberkhamsted) so you can watch and sing along at home.

SEND Information Report

Included on the newsletter ParentMail is the Swing Gate SEND Information Report. This is the school's view of our SEND offer, but all stakeholders (parents, staff and Governors) are welcome to contribute to this document. You can view it on the school website at <https://bit.ly/2K97mCF>. If you have any questions or comments then please email these to the school office.

School learning

Squirrels have been enjoying the new balance boards bought with the PE budget given to schools to help improve the physical health of children. Balance and core strength are not only good for improving PE skills but also core-stability improves pre-writing skills and being physical is one of the five ways to wellbeing. Here is Ethan having a go.



Badgers Class have been making Snowmen Jam Jars ready for Christmas.

Owls have been decorating Christmas trees.





Pause for thought



Herts Help

This year has been hard for so many. We all need a little support at times, whether that's with buying food and essentials or heating our homes. If you or your family need help this festive period, please call @HertsHelp on 0300 1234044 or email info@hertshelp.net or visit <https://www.hertshelp.net/hertshelp.aspx>.

Festive fun this week

All of the children had a virtual visit to the pantomime this week to see Goldilocks and the Three Bears. They had a great time – 'Oh no they didn't', 'Oh yes they did!'

We hope you have had a chance to enjoy watching your child's nativity performance via their Google Classroom log in. These will be available to view for four weeks.



Christmas lunch was a delicious feast prepared by our lovely kitchen team, Shelley and Fay. Some of the classes had table service from special waiting staff too.



Coronavirus

We have sent a separate email today about reporting if your child or a member of their immediate family receive a positive coronavirus test result over the holiday period. Please ensure you email the school office immediately on admin@swinggate.herts.sch.uk. The admin inbox will be monitored throughout the holidays. Do not leave messages on the office answerphone, as this will not be monitored.

FoSG Update

Last week Miss Bruce, Mrs Coleridge, Ms Di Giuseppe and Mrs Hobley plus Mrs Hobley's sister and Mr Bedlow (Lucy in Foxes daddy) braved the cold to help collect donations with the Berko Rotary Santa Sleigh. Local children were delighted to see them and the money raised will be shared with FoSG and other local charities. You can still make a donation at their Justgiving site here: [Berkhamsted Santa's Sleigh 2020](https://www.justgiving.com/Berkhamsted-Santa-Sleigh-2020). Thank you to the fabulous volunteers, we are hugely grateful to you all.

We'd also like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has supported FOSG this term – from the volunteers who have helped come up with and run new events and everyone who has joined us or donated money. We've been overwhelmed by the generosity of our community. Also huge thank you to Mellow Moon Candles and Apple Blossom Flowers. So far this term we've raised just over £2,700 which is amazing given the circumstances.

Some highlights include:

- Pumpkin Carving competition £420
- Virtual Balloon race £387
- Christmas Cards £194
- Tea Towels £595 (so far)
- Xmas Wreath Kits £179
- Virtual Race Night £277
- Christmas Shop £334
- Christmas market stall £370.



We've been able to purchase the new set of Chrome Books already being used by the classes, and also a range of new mathematics resources, and books to support the Talk4Writing project.

Merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Friends of Swing Gate

Parent Forum Feedback

Following on from a very positive Parent Forum we wanted to thank you for many lovely comments that meant so much to staff when they received them. This year has been a huge challenge for everyone and knowing we are getting lots right was a huge lift. Here are some of them:

'Children are very enthusiastic about the history topic and they come home discussing the facts they have learnt. Positive feedback to the teachers that they are making this engaging.'

'Thank you for organising the class birthday parties – the children are enjoying being able to celebrate with their friends.'

'I like all the thoughtful touches too, like the weekly poem that gives the children a chance to teach me something for a change!'

'I'm blown away by how much my child's writing has improved this half term – all down to how the teachers teach it to them.'

'Parents really like the welcome at the gates and classroom. It has been wonderful and gives a great sense of community.'

'Suddenly writing/reading crazy – I don't know what magic they sprinkle (or just amazing teaching) but it's working.'

'The whole school assembly went down really well. I think the children really enjoyed seeing all the other classes on the whiteboard.'

Website

We have had a lot of positive feedback from current and prospective parents about the new website.

Remember that there is a search facility at the top of the page, this



might be an easier way to find what you are looking for.

We also have a translation facility, so if English is not your first language then this is also a useful tool. You may wish to use this just for fun!

Healthy Start Vouchers

Are you pregnant? Do you have a child under 4? Did you know you could be missing out on free fruit and vegetables or milk worth up to £200 per year? If you are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old, and are in receipt of certain benefits, you could be entitled to healthy start vouchers worth £3.10 per child per week (£4.25 a week from April 2021), to spend on milk, plain fresh and frozen fruit and vegetable and instant formula milk. You will also get free vitamins designed to help pregnant and breast feeding women and growing children. Check out your eligibility on www.gov.uk/healthy-start. You can also use the benefit checker on the County Council's website, and access free information about benefits that you are entitled to www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/benefits

Mathematics

Arrays

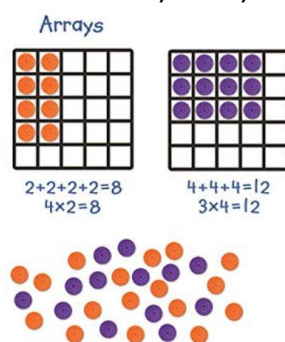
When learning mathematics at Swing Gate School, the children develop a conceptual understanding through the Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract (CPA) approach where children handle physical resources, use pictorial representations and record using traditional abstract numbers and symbols. To help you understand this approach, we will explore some of the key pieces of equipment and representations that we use at school. This week, we are looking at arrays.

Arrays can be made physically or by drawing pictorial representations. In Key Stage One, children create arrays by arranging objects into rows and columns. This helps them to visualise multiplication as repeated addition.



They are also an effective method of helping children to understand the link between multiplication and division.

At home, children could use a variety of objects to explore this concept. They could place toys or food in even rows and check how many they have in total. Children in Key Stage One could use a chessboard and investigate how many different arrays they can make.



Wellbeing in Action



Christmas Smoothie



Ingredients
 1 large banana
 20 fresh cranberries
 6 strawberries
 400ml cranberry juice
 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
 1/2 tsp ground ginger

Instructions

- Put all ingredients in a blender.
- Blend until smooth.

Mindfulness

Christmas tree pose

Children are to:

- Stand up straight and tall. Breathe in and out and feel your feet rooting into the floor. Keeping their eyes focused on one spot.
- They then need to lift up one leg by bending at the knee and placing that foot on the ankle or calf of the other leg.
- Have them inhale and exhale while in tree pose and imagining they are being covered in decorations or snow.
- Then they lift their arms in the air. Try to hold for 3 slow deep breaths.
- Slowly place your foot back on the ground and repeat on the other side.



Second hand uniform

If you are having a clear out over the holidays we would be grateful for any second hand Swing Gate jumpers and cardigans and grey trousers that are in good condition. Equally, if you would like to buy any second hand uniform, then ask at the office.

And finally...

I would like to take this opportunity to thank ALL the children for their wonderful positive attitudes this term and the fabulous team of staff for all their hard work, especially in a pandemic. Also to you, as parents, who have given the school so much support during these unprecedented times.

Thank you also for your kind wishes, gifts and cards that the staff and I have received. We appreciate your generosity. I want to express heartfelt gratitude at the little but important things the children have done which mean so much to us - such as a smile, a Swing Gate hug or a kind word.



I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas. I hope you enjoy spending time together over the break, in your 'Christmas Bubbles' and I look forward to welcoming you and your children back to school on Wednesday 6th January 2021, hopefully rested and refreshed and ready for the New Year.



*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)
Headteacher*



Kings Road Church Hope Food Bank Appeal

'We are a small food bank offering support to those in food poverty in Berkhamsted. This year, we have seen a huge increase in the demands on the HOPE Food Bank – as an illustration, we had five visits in January and in September we had 30! We also organise food hampers in December for the neediest in our town. We are mostly supported by the congregation of Kings Road Church, but have received food donations from schools in the town before.'

Swing Gate School has agreed to act as a collection point this December, if you would like to contribute something from the list below, please leave your donation in the collection box outside the school office on the 7th or 8th December.

Food	Toiletries
Tins of meat ie 'stewed steak & gravy' or 'chicken in white sauce', hotdogs, meatballs etc .	Toilet roll
Tins of chilli con carne, chicken curry etc.	Shampoo
Spam, tinned ham or corned beef	Toothpaste
Tins of tuna, sardines, pilchards	Toothbrushes
Jars of pasta sauce	Shower gel
Jars of curry sauce	
Tins of custard	Household
Tins of fruit	Washing up liquid
Tins of rice pudding	Small boxes of washing powder
Packets of biscuits	
Breakfast cereals	Christmas 'goodies' e.g.:
Small bags of Sugar	Handcream,
Cartons of long life milk – semi skimmed	Xmas chocolates
Small jars of coffee	Xmas biscuits
Small packets of tea bags	Nice soaps etc.
Hot chocolate powder	
Gravy granules	
Tins of carrots, peas, sweetcorn, tomatoes, potatoes	
Instant mash potato	
Instant packet rice	
Pasta	
Packets of instant flavoured noodles	
Jam, honey etc.	
Baked beans	
Spaghetti hoops	
Tins of soup	

Swing Gate Infant School & Nursery

Newsletter

