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Newsletter



March 2017

Principal's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

It really feels like Spring is here at Montem, not just because the evenings are getting lighter (and the days warmer) but because we have actually had chicks born in Early Years.

It was lovely to see how excited the children were to watch the chicks hatch out of their shells. A real landmark event - one that I'm certain we will be repeating in the future.

There have been a number of school trips this term with Year 1 visiting the Nature Discovery Centre; Year 2 enjoying a day at Woolley Firs and Year 5 learning all about the Living Rainforest. As you know school trips play a very important role in your child's education and it was fantastic to see so many enjoying their "day out."

This term the children have been busy collecting for two very important charities - Save the Children and Comic Relief. I'm really pleased

that so far this year Montem children (with your help) have raised almost £1,000 for Save the Children and (to date) over £600 for Comic Relief. A massive well done to all involved and, hopefully, we can raise even more over the coming months to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

This term saw a number of Cross-Federation events. Well done to all those who took part and huge congratulations to Emir Abid-Ali in 4 Elder who won the first ever Park Federation Young Musician of the Year. We are all very proud of you!

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and safe Easter break; we look forward to seeing the children back at school on Tuesday 18th April.

Yours sincerely

Ms A. Probert
Principal

Egg-citing news!!! - Chicks in Early Years

Our Early Years children have been very lucky to be part of our fantastic chick hatching experience. On Monday 13th March 2017 Nursery and Reception saw the arrival of our live chick eggs. 10 eggs arrived and we quickly learnt that they needed to be kept at a constant 37.7 degrees in their incubator. The children were really excited to learn all about chickens and even made links to the swan in our Stick Man story. Spring and new growth are a wonderful time of year and the Early Years children are looking forward to having the opportunity to handle the chicks, of course making sure to be egg-xtra careful! They will be able to watch them grow and help to care for them, learn the life cycle of a chicken and much, much more!

All the children have been extremely keen to watch the eggs, carefully looking for signs of cracks and the appearance of the first chick. We are planning to create a super egg-xtra special display in the Reception atrium to record all our wonderful experiences so watch this space on the next newsletter or pop in to share the learning with us.



We will be able to watch our chicks grow into fabulous chickens and we are really happy to know that they will be going to a good home, as one of our staff will take them home to live with her chickens, when they are old enough.



to question is to grow

Year 1 – Nature Discovery Centre

What a marvellous time year one children had at the Nature Discovery Centre in Thatcham at the beginning of March. During a short walk the children learned about a range of different plants including oak, ash, sycamore, beech and hawthorn trees. They learned to recognise plants that can sting or scratch e.g. nettles, brambles and were able to see blossom and buds that were appearing on the trees.



Soon the children arrived at Butterfly Lake and during a brief introduction to the activity from the instructor, the children learned how to make a paper pot and plant seeds. In no time at all the class were busy making and filling small pots and planting sunflower seeds and a mixture of wild flower seeds.

Later, we watched the wild birds on the lake as we ate our lunch at the picnic tables. Then we set off on a seed safari: as we walked through an avenue of trees we found and collected a variety of seeds and then sat on the log chairs to share and talk about what we had found.

After that, we visited a small copse and made friends with a tree. The children worked in pairs. One child was blindfolded and then taken to a tree. The child felt the bark and trunk of the tree for characteristics to try to identify the tree later when the blindfold was removed.

Finally, the children were dressed up as flowers or bees and played a pollination game. The bees collected pollen from the flowers and took it to their hive.

We really enjoyed our day!



Year 2 - Woolley Firs

On the 14th and 15th of March, the children in year two visited Woolley Firs nature reserve centre. The day was fun-packed with a great mix of indoor and outdoor educational activities. The children learnt about insects/mini-beasts and their environments and habitats, with plenty of opportunities to practically explore both. Our visit linked in perfectly to the topic of 'Habitats' in Science.

The day started with children watching and discussing a presentation about which creepy-crawlies they can expect to encounter throughout the day, as well as any health and safety advice and procedures. This gave them some background and prior information that would be useful, should they come across any mini-beasts...which they did!

Pond dipping was next on the agenda, where every child who attended the trip had the chance to use a 5-foot net to see which mini-beast they can capture from a huge pond! The catch of the day was baby newt, which the children were fascinated by.



After having an outdoor lunch, (thanks to good fortune with the weather) the children acted as environment explorers and visited the main habitats that host some of the most common British mini-beasts and insects. This was done in small groups, each led by an adult. When we re-grouped with the whole class, the children had the chance to hold some of the finds as well as discuss their features and suitability to the environment they were found from. (The creatures found were of course returned to their homes without harm!)

The day was a great mix of practical and theoretic learning, and both children and adults definitely had an amazing day.



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Year 5 - The Living Rainforest, Newbury.

This Half Term, Year 5 are undertaking Educational Visits to The Living Rainforest in Newbury, to further their understanding of how animals and plants adapt to their habitat and gain an appreciation for the rainforest environment.

The children have the opportunity to enjoy exploring the three types of rainforest enclosure, gaining a first-hand impression of the warmth and humidity to be encountered in tropical regions.



Whilst being wowed by the huge foliage, the children use their spotters-guide to identify different plants and animals. To their amazement, a number of the animals that inhabit this magnificent place are free to roam the greenhouses, as they would in the wild- but extremely thankful that the more dangerous (and therefore interesting) creatures are to be found behind glass enclosures or netting!



At some point in the day, small groups are taken on a guided tour of their new surroundings, with many of the fascinating aspects of the rainforest being explained by experts. The focus of this tour is the adaptation needed to survive in tropical climates. One of the interesting facts to be disseminated include why

many of the animals have black fur, skin, or feathers to blend in with the dark 'understory' layer beneath the Canopy to avoid predators. Another is an explanation of how water can instantly run-off some plant leaves so that they do not get wet and block the sunlight in the process of photosynthesis.



It has been said by many of the children who have been already, that their visit to the 'jungle', and obligatory trip to the gift shop, was one of the more enjoyable, informative and exciting trips that they have been on!

Thank you Living Rainforest Newbury!



Year 6 - SATs News

The Spring Term, as always, has been an extremely busy one in Year 6 as the children and staff alike have been setting their sights on the all-important SATs week at the beginning of May; it goes without saying that every pupil and member of the Year 6 team have been working meticulously to ensure that they reach their full potential.

This term saw a large number of children attending extra tuition sessions on Tuesdays after school to help further develop and refine their skills in Reading, and an even larger number of children attending school on a Saturday morning to help improve their Maths! What is even more positive is that the overwhelming majority of our children are really starting to see the benefit of all the hard work they are putting in and there is an exceptionally positive feeling amongst the whole of the Year group and a real "I can" atmosphere!

There are of course still a few more weeks to go before SATs start and parents/carers are still more than welcome to speak with Mr Stewart, Mr Ruane and the rest of the Year 6 Team about any queries, questions or concerns they might have and ways in which they can help their children.

We have been incredibly lucky to work with such a hard-working and conscientious group of children and we are very proud at the way in which they have approached their final Year at Montem.



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The Park Federation Cross Federation Events

Cross Country Championships

The Year 6 Cross Country Team took part in the Federation Championships on Thursday 9th of March at Lake Farm over a testing 2 kilometer course.

The standard of competition was very high and added to the fact that the weather was particularly hot on the day (18 C). It was a tough day for our runners, but everyone did their best and ran as hard as they could.



First finisher for Montem in the Girl's Race was Khadija Hassan in 22nd Place, closely followed by Manmeet Multani in 23rd. In the Boy's Race our first finisher was Walid Jabarkhal in 24th place.

Overall the combined Boy's and Girls Team finished in 6th place with 311 points. **A very big well done to all that took part!**

Young Musician of the Year

On Thursday 16th March The Park Federation held the first ever Young Musician of the Year competition at Lake Farm.

It was a fantastic evening showcasing wonderful musical talent from across the Federation with ten students competing for the trophy and title of Young Musician of the Year.

Montem was most ably represented by three fabulous young musicians - **Weronika Kowalczyk** and **Gabriela Bivol** both from 5 Cedar and **Emir Abid-Ali** from 4 Chestnut.

Weronika and Gabriela performed a stunning duet on the piano with their rendition of "One Dance" by Drake. Whilst Emir thrilled the audience with his performance (also on the piano) of "Lullaby."

We are absolutely delighted to announce that Emir, who has been studying piano for the last four years at The Masters Music School" in Ealing, was awarded the top prize and is this year's Park Federation Young Musician of the Year.

Huge congratulations to him for such a fantastic achievement and very well done to Weronika and Gabriella.



Emir Abid-Ali
Young Musician of the Year

Red Nose Day at Montem

Red Nose Day is a UK-wide fundraising event organised by Comic Relief every two years. On Red Nose Day everyone is encouraged to cast inhibitions aside, put on a Red Nose and fundraise – celebrities included! It culminates in a night of cutting edge comedy and moving documentary films on BBC One. Red Nose Day unites the entire nation in trying to make a difference to the lives of thousands of people across Africa and the UK who are facing terrible injustice or living in desperate poverty.

It was high jinx galore on Friday 24th March as everyone here at Montem celebrated Red Nose Day in style in an attempt to raise as much money as possible for Comic Relief.

The school was a splash of red with children (and staff) wearing red tops and donating £1 in honour of the day. During the morning every KS1 and KS2 class took part in a special "Red Nose Sponsored Spell" with children raising money for every word spelt correctly. Shanai Laggha (in 3 Elder) was our "star" fundraiser collecting a massive £49.50 in sponsorship money. Well done Shanai - we hope you enjoy your Red Nose prizes!



Our day ended with a really fun assembly. Mr Skinner read out some jokes from the "silly joke box" that children had been submitting entries into all week and some of our teachers went up against our best spellers in our special Red Nose "Spellathon." Unfortunately the teachers lost and, as a result, were "silly-stringed" by some of our children - thanks to the teachers involved for being such good sports.

Well done to all that took part in our fantastic Red Nose Day - to date we have raised over £600 (and rising) for Comic Relief!

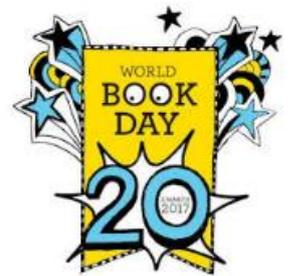


Shanai Laggha - 3 Elder
Our Top Fundraiser

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World Book Day Fun at Montem

As you all know Thursday 2nd March was World Book Day which was celebrated with great gusto here at Montem. All year groups took part in the day's festivities with many children (and adults) dressing up as their favourite fictional characters. It was an opportunity to raise money for our charity of the year Save The Children through "non-uniform day" donations and a scrumptious cake sale both of which raised over £500 for the charity.



Our Year 3 and 4 groups have produced the following reports about this fantastic day for you to enjoy.

Children in Year 3 have thoroughly enjoyed World Book day this year. Reading has been a vital focus for Montem Academy this year and each class set aside some time to discuss their costumes and ideas ready for World book day. The children had a wonderful day and there were a wide range of costumes. The creativity of some

of the children and the effort some parent go too was extremely pleasing to see.

This year we had a variety of book characters coming from many different genres. More of the popular characters included Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Winnie the Witch and Horrid Henry. Some of the children also dressed up as the characters they have been studying in Big Reading as well as the books they have read during their class reader. For example Oliver Greener Simon in 3 Olive came dressed as a Goosebump character. Some time was set out for the children to discuss their favourite books and book characters with their friends as well as enjoying good quality reading time with their class teacher.

Many thanks to all the year 4 children and teachers who made the effort to dress up in amazing costumes to celebrate World Book Day. We really enjoyed seeing how books have inspired the children and how they used that inspiration to bring some amazing characters to life. World Book Day is a wonderful chance each year to emphasise the importance of reading and how stories can transport you to another world or put yourself in another character. This year was particularly special as it was the 20th year that World Book Day had happened. To mark this event some of our favourite children's authors wrote stories just for this occasion.



The ten official World Book Day £1 books cater for all ages from pre-school through to young adults. The official World Book Day 2017 illustrator is Liz Pichon, children's book writer and illustrator/creator of the Tom Gates series.

Peppa Loves World Book Day (Ladybird)

Everyone Loves Underpants by Claire Freedman & Ben Cort (Simon & Schuster)

Where's Wally? The Fantastic Journey by Martin Handford (Walker Books)

Princess Mirror-Belle and Snow White by Julia Donaldson & Lydia Monks (Macmillan)

Horrid Henry: Funny Fact Files by Francesca Simon (Orion)

Good Old Timmy and Other Stories by Enid Blyton (Hodder)

An as yet untitled book by David Walliams (HarperCollins)

Butterfly Beach by Jacqueline Wilson (Corgi)

Island by David Almond (Hodder)

Dead of Night: A Front Lines Story by Michael Grant (Egmont)

It would be ideal if the £1 book token that each child received could be used to buy a book that could persuade even more of us to take part in this fabulous event next year.



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Thank you for your
continued support.

Ann Probert
Principal Montem
Academy

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Dates for Your Diary:

Date	Event
Friday 31 st March	END OF TERM – school closes normal time
Monday 3 rd April to Friday 14 th April	SPRING BREAK
Monday 17 th April	Bank Holiday – SCHOOL CLOSED
Tuesday 18 th April	School Re-opens normal time
Friday 21 st April	Red, White and Blue Charity Day
Saturday 22 nd April	School Council Coach Trip to Henley-on-Thames
Monday 1 st May	Bank Holiday – SCHOOL CLOSED
Monday 8 th May to Friday 19 th May	Year 6 SATs
Monday 22 nd May to Friday 26 th May	Year 2 SATs
Monday 29 th May to Friday 2 nd June	HALF TERM
Monday 5 th June	School Re-opens normal time
Tuesday 6 th June	Sports Day – Years 1, 2 and 3
Wednesday 7 th June	Sports Day – Years 4, 5 and 6
Friday 9 th June	Sports Day – Early Years
Wednesday 21 st June	Year 2 Trip to Ruislip Lido (details to follow)
Thursday 22 nd June	Year 2 Trip to Ruislip Lido (details to follow)
Friday 23 rd June	KS1 Road Safety Magic Show – 8:30 to 2:30 (in school)
Friday 30 th June to Monday 3 rd July	Year 5 and 6 PGL trip
Friday 7 th July	Year 6 Trip to Chessington World of Adventures
Friday 7 th July	End of Year reports – all year groups
Tuesday 11 th July	Parent Meetings – Years 1, 3 and 4
Wednesday 12 th July	Parent Meetings – Years 2, 5 and 6
Friday 14 th July	Summer Fete
Tuesday 18 th July	Year 6 Graduation
Wednesday 19 th July	Year 6 Prize Day
Friday 21 st July	END OF TERM
Monday 4 th September	INSET DAY – SCHOOL CLOSED
Tuesday 5 th September	School Re-opens normal time

Attendance

This is a reminder to all parents that any absences connected to a school holiday will need to be supported by medical evidence to be authorised. We are asking this of parents due to high number of absences at the start and end of school holidays. Without this evidence, pupil absences will be marked as unauthorised and will be referred to the Local Authorities for review. Please note this can often lead to the Local Authorities issuing either a fixed penalty notice (fine) or your child being placed on a fixed penalty warning.

Also, routine medical and dental appointments during school hours are on the rise, this all has a significant impact on the schools overall attendance level. Please make sure you arrange these appointments out of school hours. If an appointment is unavoidable during the school day, your child is expected to attend school prior to and after the appointment in order for the absence to be authorised, your child does not need to take a whole day off. Failure to provide any evidence of an appointment (appointment card or letter) will also result in an unauthorised absence.

Number of Fines issued to Parent/Guardians from Slough Borough Council for February/ March Absences = 5

Number of Pupils put on a Fixed Penalty Warning Notice from Slough Borough Council for March = 5

