



St Lawrence Headlines

Special Edition

February 2021

Mr Tucker has written to you today and you will find his letter attached to a forthcoming email. However, I am pleased to have this opportunity to write to you myself and share with you some of my thoughts about this half term.

It certainly started out in a very unexpected way. We were fully prepared to have the children back with us in January, so to receive the news that we weren't was shocking to say the least. Immediately, teachers, parents and especially our children rose to the challenge of remote learning and we are so proud of the way everyone has played their part. There has certainly been a lot of learning and development along the way but we seemed to get into the swing of things pretty quickly.

We would like to thank all our school community for being adaptable, flexible and understanding as we have navigated our way through the different challenges.

Being able to see the children daily – whether in school as key worker children, or remotely through Google Classroom – has been a delight and very rewarding. You will find some of the key highlights from each class in this newsletter. The lessons they have attended, the work they have completed and the activities they have taken part in have all continued to help the children progress in their learning and development. We were particularly grateful to have been able to celebrate Children's Mental Health Week together and thank Mr Hall for all his support in putting it together.

We are hopeful that it won't be long before the children are all back with us again. In the meantime, we wish you all a very well deserved restful, healthy and happy half term. Best wishes, Sally Cary



WRENS—MISS WHITE

I can honestly say that I've never been prouder of a class of children than I am of Wrens class now. If you look up the phrase 'rising to the occasion' in the dictionary, you'll see a picture of my class. They'll all be making funny faces at the camera, but they'll be there.

As much as the past six weeks have been challenging, I am blown away by what my class has been able to achieve. Together online, we've celebrated the hard work of our peers, a few birthdays, the arrival of two kittens, a puppy, and a baby brother! My goodness, we've been busy! In a time of uncertainty, and without much warning, I have been privileged enough to witness these students move from strength to strength - finding their voice, realising and embracing undiscovered talents, and finding ways to enjoy every day of school. The highlight of each of my days over the past six weeks, has been seeing beautiful faces of children who are filled with joy and ready to produce amazing things. I cannot wait to have them back in the classroom, but I cannot believe the wonderful things they have achieved outside it.

I extend a huge thanks to all the parents for their ongoing support and encouragement, even when I'm sure things did not always go to plan! I'm glad I have shared this experience with you all.

TOUCANS—Mrs Whitfield

Toucans have been incredibly engaged for online sessions. In Year 5, we do group chats every day on top of our live lessons. In these, we've been enjoying quizzes (some set by the children) and doing lots of Show and Tell. I have seen more animals this year than in my entire life, including dogs, cats, guinea pigs, hamsters and - the star of the show - Tiddles the Tortoise! Lots of children have also been completing the Weekly Fun Photo Challenge (an idea borrowed from Year 6) on a specific theme. We had some great entries to our An Unusual Tower competition.

QUETZALS—Miss East

Quetzals did an excellent job with the Times Tables Rock Stars battle against Toucans last week. They had a clean sweep, winning mini-battles each day and had an overall win of 7,029 points to 4,596. Also, we have had two children a week leading guided reading sessions where they read a chapter of their favourite book and ask questions about it. They have done a fantastic job and it has been a great opportunity for the rest of the class to discover new stories and adventures!

SWANS—Miss Chalmers

They all enjoyed sharing their work during the week, they especially enjoyed showing and playing the instruments they made on Monday. These included shakers, drums, wind instruments and "guitars". We managed to take our mute buttons off and they all played together, which I think could be described as a beautiful cacophony of noise!

They also loved the "footballs" about themselves, which were very creative and were a brilliant representation of how wonderful the children are. We also enjoyed watching the dance that Jess created, with a little help from her sister and old St Lawrence pupil.

OWLS—Mrs Rey

This half term has been a busy one with many new challenges and experiences for the children and staff alike. My favourite part (apart from seeing the children's happy faces) has been reading our class book, Skellig by David Almond, together online. We have enjoyed sharing the text; discussing the plot and making predictions at different stages in the book; and completing work based on the text.

For the children in the Year 6 school bubble, my favourite activity was when they chose an inspirational quote to be written on a T-shirt to wear on the Friday of Children's Mental Health Week. Jack's stood out to me the most: 'no one is perfect. That's why pencils have rubbers.' He even wrote his own quote for the back of the T-shirt.

Well done to all children in Owls/Year 6 for working so hard this half term.

SWIFTS—Miss Huffer

Swifts class have been working very hard despite the challenges of this half term. I have been particularly impressed by their creativity! The beautiful artwork they have submitted on google classroom has consistently brightened my weeks! This week, year 3 have written and produced their own shadow puppet shows and in doing so have come up with some delightful stories. Watching them has been a very cheerful end to the week!

EAGLES—Mrs Cary and Miss Carter

Meeting each day with Eagles has been a real treat and we have thoroughly enjoyed all our live sessions with them. The children have been positive, fun and enthusiastic in their approach and we have been so impressed with how independent they have been with their learning. Despite the challenges, the children are definitely developing important skills that will be with them for life and certainly stand them in good stead for secondary school.

Some of Eagles highlights this half term have been thrashing Kites and Owls in Times tables rock stars battles, reading Skellig together, writing tense narratives that literally sent shivers down our spines, learning about evolution and finding out about all the weird and wonderful adaptations we hope that humans will develop in the future. Also, how can we forget being introduced to Harrison's new puppy? Our key worker children have also been very hard-working, but our particular favourite activities with them were dancing away to 'Cotton Eye Joe' and baking chocolate chip cookies.

KINGFISHERS—Miss Saunders

Kingfishers have been an absolute joy to teach this half term, despite the strange circumstances. Every day, they have logged on promptly and with enthusiasm, which has certainly made my days both enjoyable and rewarding. I have been very impressed by their commitment to the work set and the quality of its content – well done everyone! Together, we have battled through: technical difficulties, interruptions from pets (and siblings), participating parents, pupils dozing off, to name but a few, yet we have still managed to end every day on a high! Weekly scavenger hunts have been a particular highlight and have made me laugh out loud at the competitiveness and crazy responses. I must also mention the key-workers' children and the way they have settled so well into their daily routine, greeting me with big smiles every morning and remaining positive and enthusiastic. Needless to say, I cannot wait until everyone is back in class where they belong. There are so many fun topics and trips I am hoping we will still be able to do. Thanks to all the parents for supporting your lovely children throughout this term. You should be very proud of your children's achievements – what a lovely class!

HERONS—Mrs Raymonde

Here is a small summary of the highlights that Herons have shared this half term: Levitating dogs, unruly cats, life size recreations of Narnia, Narnia in Lego, Narnia in cupcake form and homemade Turkish delight. Cover drives, fantasy football scores, Lockdown haircuts and stories about little visitors who have been made homeless by the aforementioned shearing. Heartwarming wishes for world peace, wishes to put an end to global warming and a plea for a four-day working week!

Lots of brilliant long-suffering Mums and Dads, Grannies and Grandads, older brothers, one brand new brother and the hilarious gurgling and startled expressions of the three famous triplets.

We Herons have worked together as a team, trying to keep each other positive, amused and entertained and I am so thankful to have been able to share this half term of Home Learning with such a lovely class, even the more so now that they are all switching their cameras on!

KITES—Mr Hall

A massive thank you Kites for making online learning as enjoyable as possible! It has been great welcoming an army of pets into our lessons too. We've had cats, dogs, fish and geckos... and even some stray siblings appearing too.

I am certainly looking forward to you all returning one day soon!

ROBINS—Mrs Searle

Robins have been having lots of fun with our remote learning, despite missing coming to school, and I have been really impressed with their enthusiasm and dedication. Over the past weeks, we have gained several extra class members from dogs to hamsters, most of which appear to have slept through my teaching!

Scavenger hunts have proven highly popular during our small group meetings, although I must apologise for the moments of chaos caused as children dash around to find the shiniest spoon, biggest shoe or (my personal favourite) 'items that look like an elephant'.

The 'Let's-pretend-our-screen -has-frozen' game has also caused great hilarity and confusion - although none of us are very good at remaining still for long!

The children are currently working on a shadow puppet project, and I have been blown away by the ideas and videos that have been shared.

Thank you, Robins, (and parents) for making lockdown a little more enjoyable.