



Message from Ms Cooper...

Another term has come and gone already...time passing so quickly just demonstrates how crucial it is for us to get this right. As Ken Robinson said, 'Childhood is not a rehearsal' – we only have one chance at this. Everything we are doing as a school is about ensuring we are putting in place what is needed for your children – it's about always adapting, evaluating and reflecting on how we can improve. School is a place of constant change – every day is different; every child is unique and each day brings new challenges. We must keep assessing what we are doing and adjust our sails accordingly.

As we return after the break, we will begin to see all the signs of new life and new hope. Spring is almost here, with the promise of sunshine, laughter and anticipation for what is to come.

We have had an exciting term, which you will see in some of the highlights as you flip through our newsletter. As I've said, our job is to find what 'ignites passion' in our children and our staff. Therefore, creating as many opportunities and experiences for our children is vital in unlocking this. Thank you to some of our parents who have taken up the challenge of running lunchtime clubs – we now have an awesome art and craft club and a chess club! For those interested, we have a 'Volunteer Evening' coming up at the end of February. This event will be to help parents and any members in our community who are keen, to fill in the associated paperwork and undertake all the safeguarding training during our fun, social evening, to encourage as many people as we can to become volunteers. We'd love you in school to listen to reading, to help with any activities that you enjoy such as gardening, crafting, sewing, knitting – whatever skill you can bring to our children, we want you here! If you know anyone in our community who may be interested in offering some time each week, please do let them know.



Message from Ms Cooper...

We have so much to look forward to in the next few months. New children and new staff joining our team, new opportunities for our children and new visitors to help inspire our community. A massive thank you for Fink Food for coming in to run cooking sessions with all of our year 5 children – the children absolutely loved this event and we thank all those in our community who are willing to give up their time to provide these fantastic opportunities for our children. If you know any company or organisation that would be able to offer anything for our children, or to help with various projects at school, please do let us know – education is very much about getting our community involved in as many different aspects as we can, to enhance what we are able to provide.

This term, six of us have had the privilege of undertaking our Level 3 Forest School qualification. You've probably seen some of the photos and videos on our Instagram and Facebook accounts. We still have two assessment days and a rather lengthy portfolio to complete, however, we have embarked on this training to ensure we can offer a dynamic and well-equipped Forest School curriculum across the school. News about what further developments in Forest School will be happening, will be coming out later this month. However, currently we offer Forest School in FS2, year 1 and year 2. From after half term, this will extend to FS1 and year 3 with the potential for small groups across year 4, 5 and 6. Keep an eye out for more communication about this.

Thank you to the team at John Rankin Schools for always going above and beyond. There is always so much to look forward to.

Onwards and Upwards!
Have a great half term.
Your Headteacher,
Miss F Cooper

Nursery News...



The children have been busy planting seeds for Eco-week and loved getting stuck into the soil! They planted basil and cress seeds and have been observing their growth closely! It was wonderful to see the children working collaboratively and communicating with each other using lots of lovely new language.

Library book choosing has been a massive hit and the children are always eager for it to be their book changing day to be able to choose a new book! Its lovely to see the parent comments on the record sheets and we can share this with the children. Thankyou for your engagement with this.

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FS2 News...

FS2 were super excited to have a visit from Red Watch firefighters this week. They asked lots of questions, explored the equipment and even had the chance to sit in the fire engine!!

Miss Knape, was offered another new job too.....Haha!

Under all that heavy protective clothing, is a very hot Miss Knape.....



A BIG thank you to 'Red Watch' for giving up their time to come and visit us.

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FS2 News...



Our trip to Tiny Town in Newbury, was a huge hit with all the children and reinforced our learning about 'people in the community' that help us. It was lovely to see the children exploring the 'real life' environment and seeing them immersed in imaginative play.



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Tiny Town...



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FS2 News...

As part of our learning this term, the children have been visited by members of the Royal British Legion. They answered any questions that we had and explained how the Army and the Navy help us.

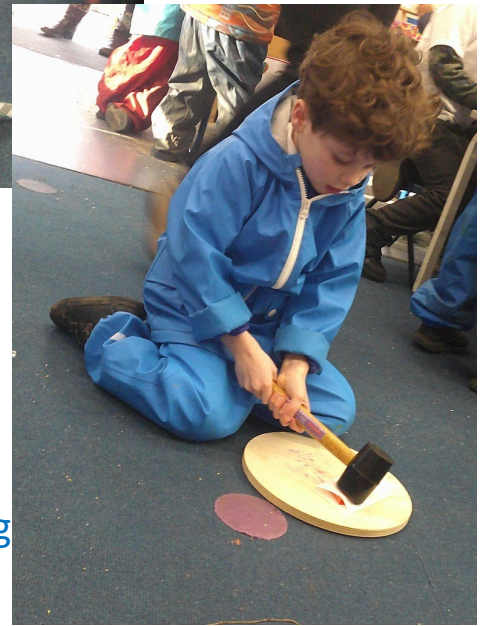
The children got to look at their medals, try on different hats (including a special WWI helmet) and have a go at drill! They learned the commands "salute, halt, at ease, attention and quick march".



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FS2 News...



As part of Art Week, the children enjoyed creating flags using the techniques of Hapa Zome. We then proudly paraded around School, waving our flags for all to see.

We enjoyed toasting crumpets for our half-termly forest school cook.

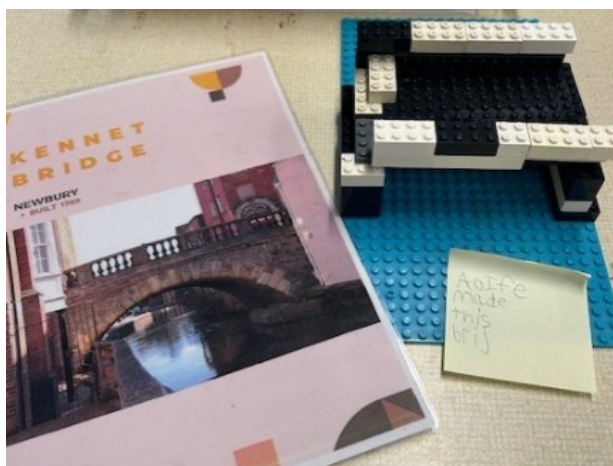


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Year 1 News...

This term's 'Big Idea' has been 'Creating a community'. The children have really enjoyed finding out more about what makes up the community around us locally as well as communities from around the globe. When thinking like a geographer, the children identified buildings from Newbury and are now able to talk about human and physical geography in our area. The children wanted to do more working in groups

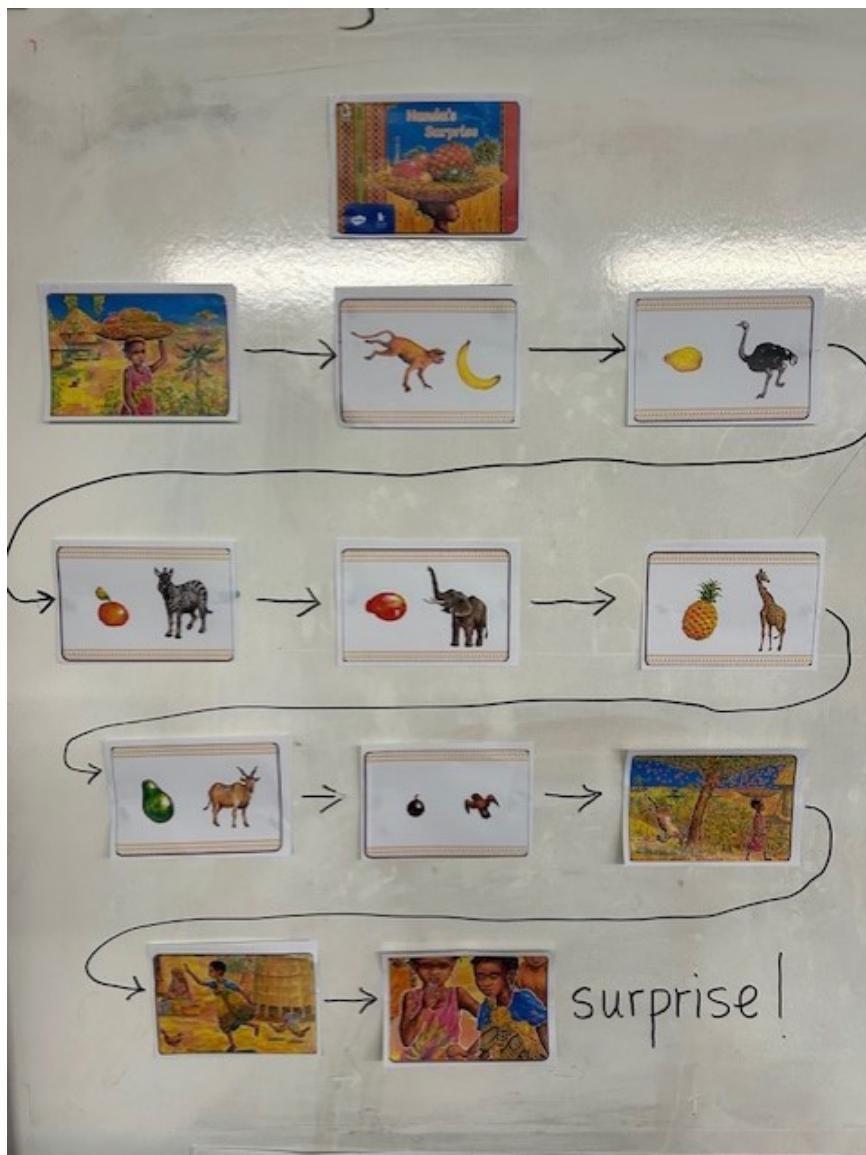


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Year 1 News...

Throughout this half term, we have been using the book 'Handa's Surprise'. The use of this book has led the children to writing their own fantastic 'Surprise' stories as well as guiding our learning deeper into Kenya and the community that Handa is from. I wonder if the children can use the photo below to retell the story of Handa's surprise to you at home or to tell you about the story they wrote themselves.....



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Year 2 News...

Year 2 embraced Art Week and produced original collaborative art in the style of African artist Owusu Ankomah. They enjoyed working in small groups to complete their jigsaw shapes. The completed artwork will be displayed in the Infant school.



You may have been wondering what the children made with the pebble they brought in for Art Week....

We had fun getting creative and decorated them with fun bright colours, many of them included messages of kindness. These will be displayed with all the rocks from the rest of the school in our Kindness Garden.

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Year 2 News...

Last week there was much excitement in Year 2, due to our visit from Finn from Zoolab, with his collection of African animals.

Children got to stroke the different animals: gecko, snake, hissing cockroach and the giant snail. Happily for the adults in the room, Rosie the tarantula was kept safely with Finn!

The children were able to ask lots of questions about the animals and their habitats. All of Year 2 were beautifully behaved, and were calm and composed for our little guests to the school.



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Year 2 News...

This week Year 2 had a visit from Ray from Drum With Us and each class took part in an African drumming workshop.



Ray was extremely knowledgeable and was able to say where the different types of drums were from in Africa. We were taught how to drum on different parts of the drum, how to keep time, and sing along to the sounds.



Everyone had to pay close attention and it was quite hard work! As you can see from the photos, the workshops were a great success.



Ayda from Maple Class said that it was "the best afternoon ever!"



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Year 2 News...

Year 2 have enjoyed successful Forest School lessons this half term, which have included making individual wands and discussing fictional characters that may live in the woods.

While making wands, the children first had to sharpen their stick and scrape part of the bark off with a potato peeler. This required a level of skill. They were then able to decorate them using a selection of craft items.



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Year 3 News...

This half term, Year 3 have been learning about our community as part of our whole school big idea 'Creating A Community'.

In Geography, we have been exploring the location and features of our local area. The children have used maps, internet searches and images to explore our locality, in particular, its physical geographical features such as hills, rivers, etc.

We also explored how different communities use of local area and how many of these are linked. The children were particularly interested in the amount of schools and religious buildings in our area.



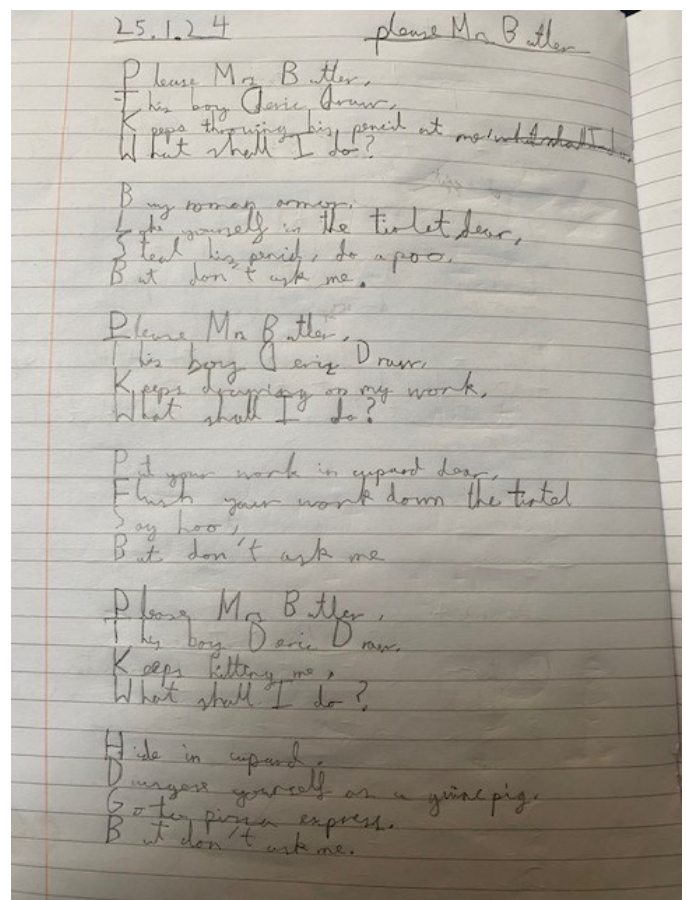
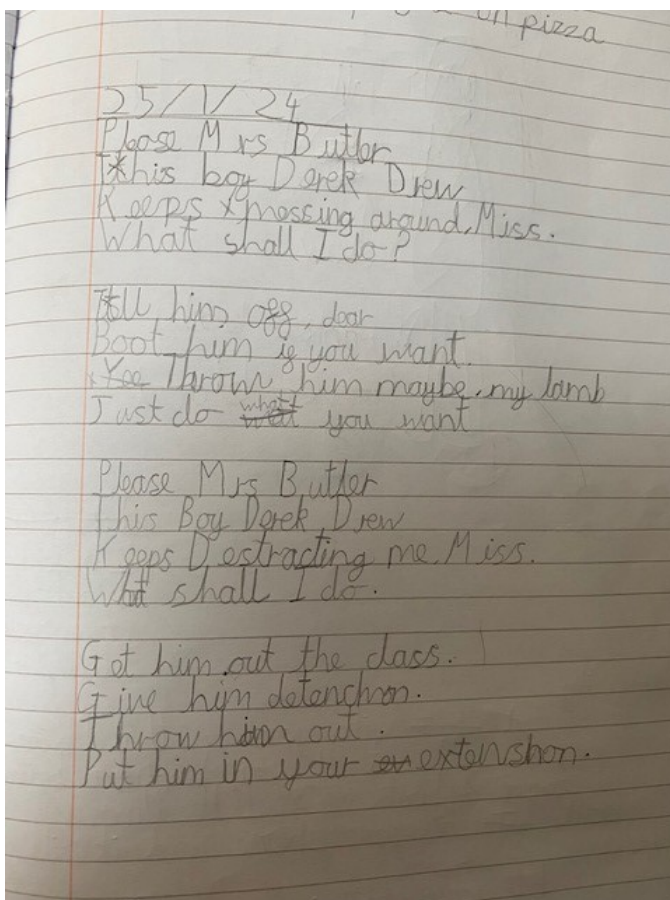
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Year 3 News...

ENGLISH

In English, the children have been enjoying exploring poetry. We have been learning about the features of poems and how we can apply these as authors to create our own. Some of our favourite poems that we have explored we by Allan Ahlberg such as 'Please Mrs Butler' and 'Excuses'. We had a go at creating some of our own verses, recreating his style.



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Year 3 News...

Art Week

The children has a fantastic time during Art week. There was lots of team work and collaboration happening to create beautiful pieces of art for our school and our community. The highlight of the wee for the children was creating their stone for the kindness garden. The children has so many creative, wonderful ideas about how they wanted their stones to look and these ideas came to life beautifully.



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Year 4 News...

Year 4 have been hugely enjoying exploring different communities this term under our Big Idea of 'Creating a Community'.

It has also been a pleasure to get out into the community visit the Ar-gyles Care Home. The children have talked to the residents about their experiences, shared their learning and all have enjoyed taking time to read together.

In geography, we have been learning about how different communities adapt to living in specific biomes and imagined living in the arctic tundra through role play. We have also explored the history of our own community of Newbury, mapping developments that have shaped the town and learning how Donnington Castle hosted battles in the English Civil War.



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Year 4 News...

We are also delighted to be working with the English National Opera this term to create our own libretto. The children have been immersed into the operatic world and have been set the challenge of finishing a piece of music begun by a composer that has now vanished! We will continue work on this over next term and keep you updated on how our creation progresses!

Art Week was a big favourite for our Year 4 children this term and their beautiful creations will soon be on display in our kindness rock garden.



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Year 4 News...

Huge congratulations to Edith in Chestnut Class who has been published in The Guardian! Following our Year 4 trip to Farleigh Wallop, Edith entered the Young Country Diary competition and her piece was chosen to be published. Well done Edith!



A farm sign in Northumberland, England. Photograph: DWImages England/Alamy

We were told you should never take anything from nature or leave your rubbish behind, and only leave footprints. Also, you should always watch where you walk because you could step on something like a bird's egg, and if you have your dog, you should keep them on a lead so they don't eat things or chase animals.

It was an exciting day, and I am now part of the school eco-committee to help with saving the countryside. The first thing we are looking at in the eco-committee is planting more trees in our school so we can encourage more wildlife in our environment and learn from them. We will also look to start teaching everyone about the importance of putting their rubbish in the bins.

Edith, nine

Young country diary: Always follow the countryside code

Berkshire: I thought the school trip was going to be boring but then I learned about the code, and now I'm on the eco-committee



'You should always watch where you walk because you could step on something like a bird's egg.' Photograph: Family handout

Recently I went on a school trip and learned about my favourite thing, which is the countryside code. First, we were taken to a big field, which I thought was going to be boring, but I listened for a bit and then started to really enjoy finding out all about it. Here are the things I learned.

First, we were told about how old and young people walk in the countryside. Old people wear oversized coats all the time and pay no attention to what is going on, while young people play on their phones and miss lots of fun things. So they both miss all the nature on the walk.

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Year 5 News...

Year 5 have had a wonderful term exploring our big idea of 'Creating a Community' and we explored 'Imagine if we were an Anglo-Saxon or Viking'. We started the new term off with an immersive day, where children dressed as Anglo-Saxons. Upon arrival at school they were put straight to work, preparing vegetables for our soup. Children enjoyed singing Anglo-Saxon songs around the camp fire, where they enjoyed the soup they had made. Children also enjoyed designing their own shields, and using clay to create their own bosses. We ended the day practicing our battle cries 'Ut! Ut! Skoll!' and re-enacted battle scenes outside—a lot of fun was had by all!



Our Anglo-Saxon learning didn't stop there, because we went on to learn about law enforcement, the building of communities, and King Alfred in our History lessons.

We even explored Bayeux tapestry, what information we could collect from these sources, and created our own!

We were then able to show case all of our learning by creating a non-chronological report on Anglo-Saxons, in our English lessons.

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Year 5 News...

Year 5 have been busy in the Make It, Bake It room this term. We were lucky enough to experience working with James and Lewis from FINK Food to create flatbread pizzas with loaded potato skins. The children worked in pairs to create their own meal and demonstrated all our school values during the task—we were very impressed! The feedback from children was ‘it was the best day ever!’ and ‘that was the tastiest food I’ve had!’.



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Year 6 News...

Year Six had a brilliant time at Rhos-y-Gwaliau at the start of spring term. The children tackled mighty mountains; explored marvelous mines; tested out their map-reading skills and embraced their sense of adventure!

Courage, determination and resilience were demonstrated in vast quantities as they tackled each and every new challenge that came their way.

All of the children showed amazing team-work and supported each other; many children pushed themselves out of their comfort zones and each and every one of them had a great time.



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Year 6 News...

Some of their Rhos highlights include:

- Using the charcoal created from their own fires to create face paint
- Birthday cake on two occasions (plus breakfast pancakes on the final morning)
- Helping their group run to the top of the matrix rock and sliding back down
- Climbing rocks at the beach (whilst enjoying the stunning scenery)
- Scrambling up an underground waterfall in the mine
- Getting drenched in the gorge
- Racing each other across Bala Lake
- Learning all about the topographical features from their knowledgeable instructors
- The night walk, on the first night, where it suddenly started snowing
- End-of-day bus raves to music



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Sports News...

It has been another super busy term for all our sports stars at John Rankin.

Our 3 & 4 boys football team have competed in numerous events including the Berkshire schools county cup, the West Berkshire sports network football festival at Park House, Newbury district indoor qualifiers and Finals at Trinity and the Adnams Cup.

All our teams represented the school fantastically with one team making the finals at the WBSN football festival, scheduled to be played after half term. They also performed brilliantly in the indoor finals finishing 3rd and narrowly losing to Falkland in the county cup knockout stages 1-0. The Adnams cup team comfortably beat Winchcombe (unlucky Mr Percy 🤔) 8-1 to add points to our league total.



The Year 3 & 4 girls also competed in the girls Adnams cup match against Hermitage and while the result didn't go our way, it was a great experience for girls who have yet to represent the school or even play an organised football match. They all went home with beaming smiles and asking the question of 'when is the next match!'

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Sports News...



A new set of year 5 & 6 boys also got an opportunity to play in an Adnams cup game against Francis Bailey. This game could have truly went either way but we went down 4-2 in an absolute thriller.

The year 5 & 6 girls have also been busy. They competed in the first round of the county cup knockout stages in which we beat Kintbury 10-0 to help keep us on course to try and retain what we won last year. Francis Bailey or Winchcombe await in the next



Another group of players played against Basildon in the Adnams Cup and despite losing the fixture, it was another thoroughly enjoyable game, which allowed more children the opportunity to represent the school and play a game of football.

Our archers have also been busy this term, we took a group of children up to Park House to compete in the West Berkshire Sports Network Archery Festival and the feedback from the organisers was how well our children grew into the event and progressed as the evening went on. No medals but a great time was had by all.

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Sports News...

We also hosted our second archery event of the year in the infant hall with Kintbury, Basildon and Robert Sandilands coming to compete in a host of activities. The visiting school couldn't be more complimentary of the event with everyone having a great time.

We will be hosting an archery extravaganza event inviting in up to 12 schools when the weather improves - watch this space!

Next up was the netballers turn to shine. They took the trip down to St Barts to compete in a league event against Falkland, St Nics, Kintbury and Hermitage and despite a slow start they improved massively winning two matches, drawing one and losing one to finish second in the league!