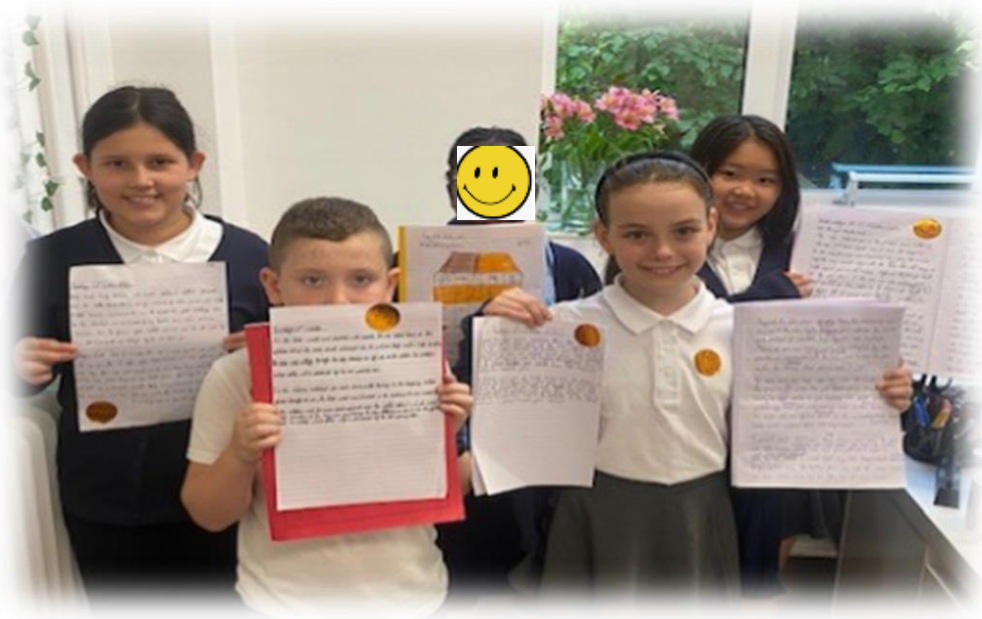


THE ELMS EXPRESS



Dear Parents and Carers,

Term 1 seemed to fly by and what a term it has been! Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for making me and Ms Smith feel so welcome. I have loved meeting and getting to know the children and parents/carers of The Elms community. Each term, we will produce a longer newsletter to keep you all updated.

This term saw our children settle well into their new classes (more information inside). As well as teaching and learning, we have also been thrilled by a range of various events; Erin in Year 5, performed a brilliant dance routine in front of the whole school – it was fantastic 😊 and Year 2 kick started our assemblies all about Harvest. In this Jam-packed edition of The Elms Express you will hear more about what's been going on, as well as an update on our school development priorities and our book recommendations.

Enjoy!

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON?

Cross Country Competition



On Friday 6th October, cross country runners from years 3 to 6 competed against seven other schools in the Faringdon Trust Cross Country Festival at Buscot Park. The children did us proud, giving everything and representing our school magnificently. All our teams performed brilliantly, with our year 3/4 boys and year 5/6 girls qualifying for the county finals! A huge well done to all who took part.

Year 2 Harvest assembly

On Thursday 5th October, The Elms Primary School celebrated Harvest.

Our Year 2 children showcased their understanding of harvest and the importance it holds for both the environment and the community in an assembly to their parents and carers. They spoke so clearly about how harvest is not only a time to reap the fruits of labour

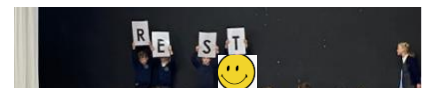


but also an occasion to show our love and care for the Earth. The children also explained how harvest provides farmers with a well-deserved break after a busy year of hard work.



In their heartwarming performance, the children shared their thoughts on gratitude and the things they are thankful for. They reminded us all to appreciate all we have in our lives.

During the assembly, the Year 2 children presented a beautiful poem with actions and sang the classic song "Cauliflowers Fluffy," which brought back fond memories for many parents and carers.



The celebration did not stop there. We were extremely proud that our school community came together to make generous food donations during the assembly. These donations will be delivered to a local food bank, helping those in need within our community. We would like to thank parents, carers and children who contributed.

Science day at Millbrook Primary School

Miss Booton took a group of budding scientists to take part in a special day to celebrate the opening of a new science space at Millbrook school with other children from across our academy.



Callum - I loved the different activities available for us. We were making a bridge by connecting some plastic pieces together.



Elijah - It was really fun because we made slime, and I liked the boat race. We were also exploring space.



Billy - We had a nice day out. I really enjoyed the boat race. We made it out of felt and put a soap under the boat. This made the boat move. It was fun.



CLASSES UPDATE

Blossom



Blossom class are really enjoying our Toast Tuesdays. During this session, children are developing their knowledge and understanding of irreversible change, electricity and how to keep safe, their fine motor skills when spreading their toppings and cutting the toast in half, as well as their communication skills. The conversations around the toast table have been wonderful to hear.



Laurel

Y1 have had a very busy start to the year! We enjoyed learning about the seaside and have compared living there to living in Faringdon. Recently, we have spent time thinking about autumn and performed some wonderful autumn poetry! We have enjoyed reading The Storm Whale in English and used the book to write some brilliant sentences. We're looking forward to learning all about Lord Berners next term.



Sycamore

Sycamore Class have had an excellent start to the term. They performed confidently in their Harvest Assembly to parents and even performed their Harvest Moon poem to the rest of the school in our Friday Celebration Assembly.



In PE, Sycamore Class have been focusing on fantastic footwork and brilliant balances. The children have been working on galloping, side steps and hopscotch footwork skills with increasing control. Balances have included one leg balance with a squat, with eyes closed, up on our toes and mirroring a partner's balances.

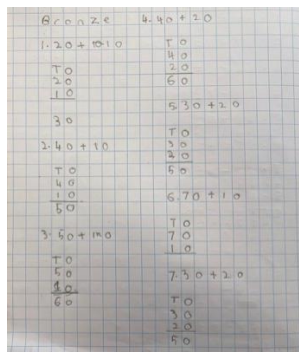


Year 2 have had a focus on Kindness in RE this term. We explored different Bible stories about kindness, including 'The Good Samaritan'. We talked about what kindness is and thought about kind things that we can do or say. The children made kindness cards to show our appreciation to people who are kind to us.

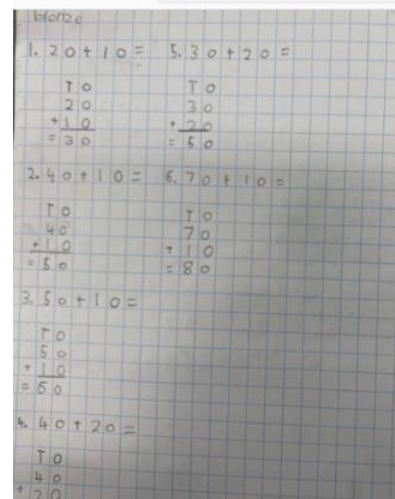


Cedar

Cedar Class have had a fantastic start to the new academic year. We have enjoyed learning about the Stone Age in History. We have used our history knowledge to help us with our writing where we have just



finished writing a setting description based on a picture of the Stone Age. In science, we have also explored how shadows are formed and the difference between opaque, translucent and transparent. Every Thursday the children are taught how to play the Ukelele. They are all really enjoying this.



Ash

Ash class have had a great start to the new academic year. We look forward to our music lessons where we are learning how to play the ukulele. We have especially enjoyed how to play Happy Birthday. In history, we have been learning about chronological order of time and the three periods of the Stone Age (Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic). In French, we have been learning numbers to 10, colours, greetings and how we feel. In science, we have been exploring sources of light and how shadows are formed. In PE, we have enjoyed our outdoor lessons (cross country) with Cedar class.



Birch



Year 4 have had a great start to the year. We have enjoyed immersing ourselves in our Romans topic, digging back into the past to find out 'what the Romans did for us!' We can't wait for our Roman day on the final day of term, including our Roman feast. We have also completed some exciting experiments in science, including

recreating the water cycle and finding the melting point of chocolate. The children have also enjoyed learning Mamma Mia on the glockenspiel – we certainly have a lot of budding musical talent in the class and some fantastic singers too. Good luck for next term, Year 4!



Alder

Alder Class have been answering the question 'Who Were The Ancient Maya?' We have deciphered Maya numbers, analysed artefacts the Maya left behind and tried the maize and cacao nibs which formed the majority of the Maya diet! We developed our charcoal skills using shading and smudging to create images of Maya masks - the inner mask represents youth; the middle mask represents old age, and the outside mask is a death mask. Their work is now proudly displayed outside of the classroom for all to admire! Cross curricular activities such as these



deepen understanding of the curriculum and offer the children the opportunity to practise new skills in a range of contexts.



Hornbeam

Monday 26 September

How long does it take different planets to orbit the sun?

I think Neptune will take the longest time to go around the sun because it's the largest planet out of all and furthest from the sun. I think Mercury will take the shortest time because it's the smallest planet and closest to the sun.

I think Venus will take the shortest time to go around the sun because it's very close to the sun and it's the second smallest planet.

Planet	Distance from Sun (km)	Orbit Time (days)
Mercury	57,909,175	88
Venus	108,208,463	225
Earth	149,597,870	365

Our teacher says the planets orbit the sun and it takes a long time to go around the sun.

This term Hornbeam have had a fabulous time exploring space in science. We have been looking at why we have day and night and why we have seasons. During one of our lessons, we designed and carried out an experiment to understand how long it takes different planets to move around the sun. We used a ball to represent the planets and used a bit of string at different lengths to show the distance from the sun. We then timed how long it took each planet to orbit the sun 10 times.

Monday 26 September 2023

How long does it take different planets to orbit the sun?

I think Mercury will take the most time because it's furthest from the sun.

I think Neptune will take the shortest time because it's closest to the sun.

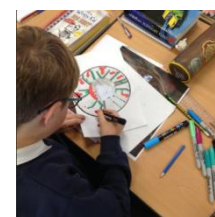
Planet	Distance from Sun (km)	Orbit Time (days)	My prediction (days)
Mercury	57,909,175	88	88
Venus	108,208,463	225	225
Earth	149,597,870	365	365

I think Neptune will take the longest time to go around the sun because it's the furthest from the sun.

Our prediction was the planets orbit the sun and it takes a long time to go around the sun.

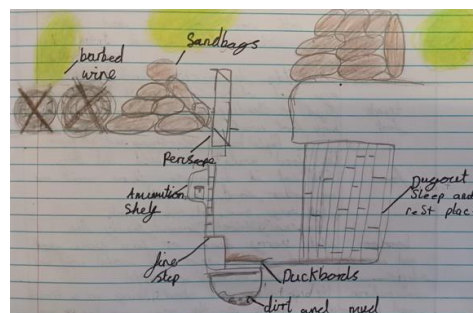
Hawthorn

We have had a wonderful start to the year, with a real bang! Investigating the moon and the stars and asking all sorts of questions about the nature of the universe, and beyond. We are really enjoying delving into the world of treasure hunting with the sumptuous "Viewer," and have been thrilled to listen to and read many stories during our story time. Rounders seems to be the game of choice, although Yoga has thoroughly been appreciated as well. All in all, a really great start for all Hawthorn Class.

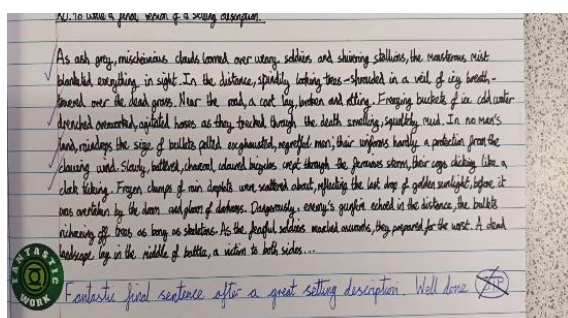


Beech

Beech class have made a fantastic start to their World War One topic, discovering the reasons why the war started, investigating some propaganda posters and exploring trenches; we will be continuing this investigation after half term with a trip to the trenches at Hill End. The history theme has also continued into our English; we

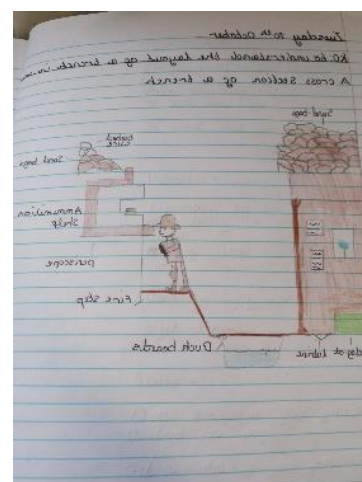


have been reading War horse by Michael Morpurgo, a fantastic book which views the war through the eyes of a horse. Our first piece of writing has been a setting description, based on one of the illustrations from the book. Some of the writing was amazing; we may well have some future authors in class.



Poplar

We've had a wonderful term, exploring the history topic of WW1 by looking at how the war started, what provoked men to join the army and what trench life was like. This has been linked strongly to our reading, where we have been linked strongly to our reading, where we have been reading 'War Horse' by Michael Morpurgo, understanding the characters using inference and deduction. This has inspired some brilliant descriptive setting writing as well as diaries from the trenches. In Science, we have been investigating circuits and electricity and in maths we have made a strong start with place value and arithmetic. We have also been keeping fit running cross country! The children have settled well into becoming responsible role models for the school, and we look forward to continuing the WW1 topic next term!



Oak

Oak class have had a wonderful start to Year 6. We have enjoyed learning all about World War 1 and how it began in History and reading our class book - War Horse. We are looking forward to writing diary entries from the perspective of a soldier in the trenches after half term. We have also done some exciting work in Science where we have been investigating circuits and how to draw them as scientific diagrams. The children have also enjoyed presenting their work on online safety to the whole class, after they worked extremely hard to prepare speeches and PowerPoint presentations to help them. We have some very confident speakers (and some who are naturals at speaking with comedic effect) in Oak class!



STARS OF THE TERM



Grayson
Saplings



Josie
Blossom



Esme
Laurel



Emma
Sycamore



Adi Ana
Ash



Cooper
Cedar



Evie
Birch



Liv
Hornbeam



Billy
Hawthorn



Felix
Alder



Joanne
Poplar



Alberta
Beech



Isaac Bo
Oak

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

At the start of every academic year, the Senior Leadership Team sets out a school development plan (SDP). This is the school's action plan and focuses on the areas they would like to improve further. It is important to add, all schools are on a journey to improve the education for their children.

Our 3 main priorities this year are: High quality of teaching and learning, reading/early reading and the Curriculum. In our The Elms Express Newsletters, I will keep you updated of what progress has been made towards improving these priorities.

Key priority 1: High quality teaching and learning every day

- ✓ Whole school learning walks completed by SLT and subject leaders.
- ✓ Our INSET day focused upon on 'The 5 a day Approach' which promotes high quality teaching for all learners.
- ✓ A joint staff meeting with Folly View on how to scaffold for all children.
- ✓ A new teaching and learning policy was developed by Senior Leaders and staff and is now on our school website.

Key priority 2: Early reading/reading

- ✓ Children in Year 1 and 2 were placed into their new phonics groups.
- ✓ All staff were trained at the INSET day on our phonics approach – Read, Write Inc
- ✓ Reception parents were invited to an open evening and Mrs Howell put on workshops where parents could see 'phonics in action' with their children.
- ✓ A reading book spine is being developed so we can see a clear progression of the range of books used across our curriculum.

Key priority 3: Curriculum development: ensuring the effective implementation of a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum

- ✓ An audit of the curriculum was completed by Senior Leaders with a focus on how to improve the equality, diversity and inclusivity – actions are being put in place.
- ✓ A pupil voice was completed by our Governing body to hear their thoughts and feelings about our curriculum- they enjoy learning here!
- ✓ Members of the Faringdon Learning Trust 'deep dived' different subjects in the curriculum and presented positives and areas for improvement.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Reviewed by Mr Saunders.

Age: 9+ Genre: Fantasy fiction.

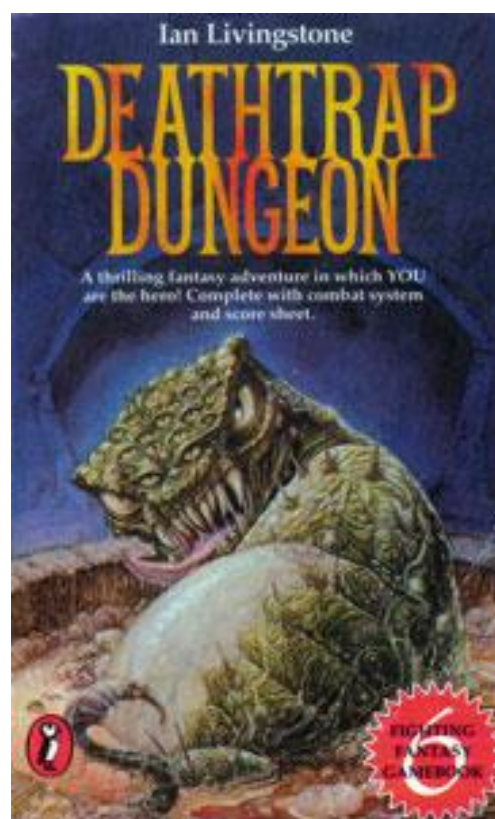
Book review: Deathtrap Dungeon,
by Ian Livingstone

Will you venture down into the dark, twisting labyrinth, where unknown horrors await you? Devised by the devilish mind of Baron Sukumvit, the dungeon is riddled with fiendish traps and bloodthirsty monsters, which will test your skills almost beyond the limit of endurance. Countless adventurers before you have taken up the challenge of the Trial of Champions and walked through the entrance of the labyrinth, never to be seen again. Should you come out alive, you will be wealthy beyond your dreams. Do YOU dare enter?

Deathtrap Dungeon is a Fighting Fantasy Gamebook; a book where you decide what happens and your decisions either lead your character to heroic success or dreadful failure. Written in second person and featuring multiple choices on each page, DEATHTRAP DUNGEON provides a "Dungeons & Dragons" atmosphere in a book; the various foes you fight in the dungeon are creatively inspired, ranging from bog-standard goblins and orcs to hideous ethereal creatures and the dreadful Bloodbeast (which is on the cover.) There are deadly traps all over the place, along with situations which will end your adventure instantly! However, if it all goes wrong, you can always start again at the beginning; you'll probably need to make multiple attempts to get through the labyrinth, as it's not easy.

What I particularly liked about this adventure book is that there are other contestants taking the same test, at the same time. As you read through the book, you occasionally find evidence of them as you pass through the dungeon. You even get to team up with one of them briefly, which adds some moral complexity to the story.

This was a childhood favourite for me, and for good reason; it's a great little book. If you enjoy sword and sorcery fantasy adventures and want to try something a little different from normal books, then Deathtrap Dungeon could be for you.



SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

One of our most significant responsibilities at school is to safeguard the children in our care. We have a strong culture of promoting the wellbeing of all our children and part of this is to have designated staff who support and manage safeguarding for our school. These are:

**Keeping
children safe
is everyone's
responsibility**



Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mr Calum Jacques. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads – Mrs Shelley McIntosh, Mrs Emma Aspel and Mrs Amanda Bird. Our school Safeguarding Policy can be found on our website under Key Information > Safeguarding or via this link:

<https://www.theelmsprimary.co.uk/safeguarding/> Please note that if you have a concern about any child or family, you can make a referral directly to the Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). They can be contacted on 0345 050 76.

REMINDERS

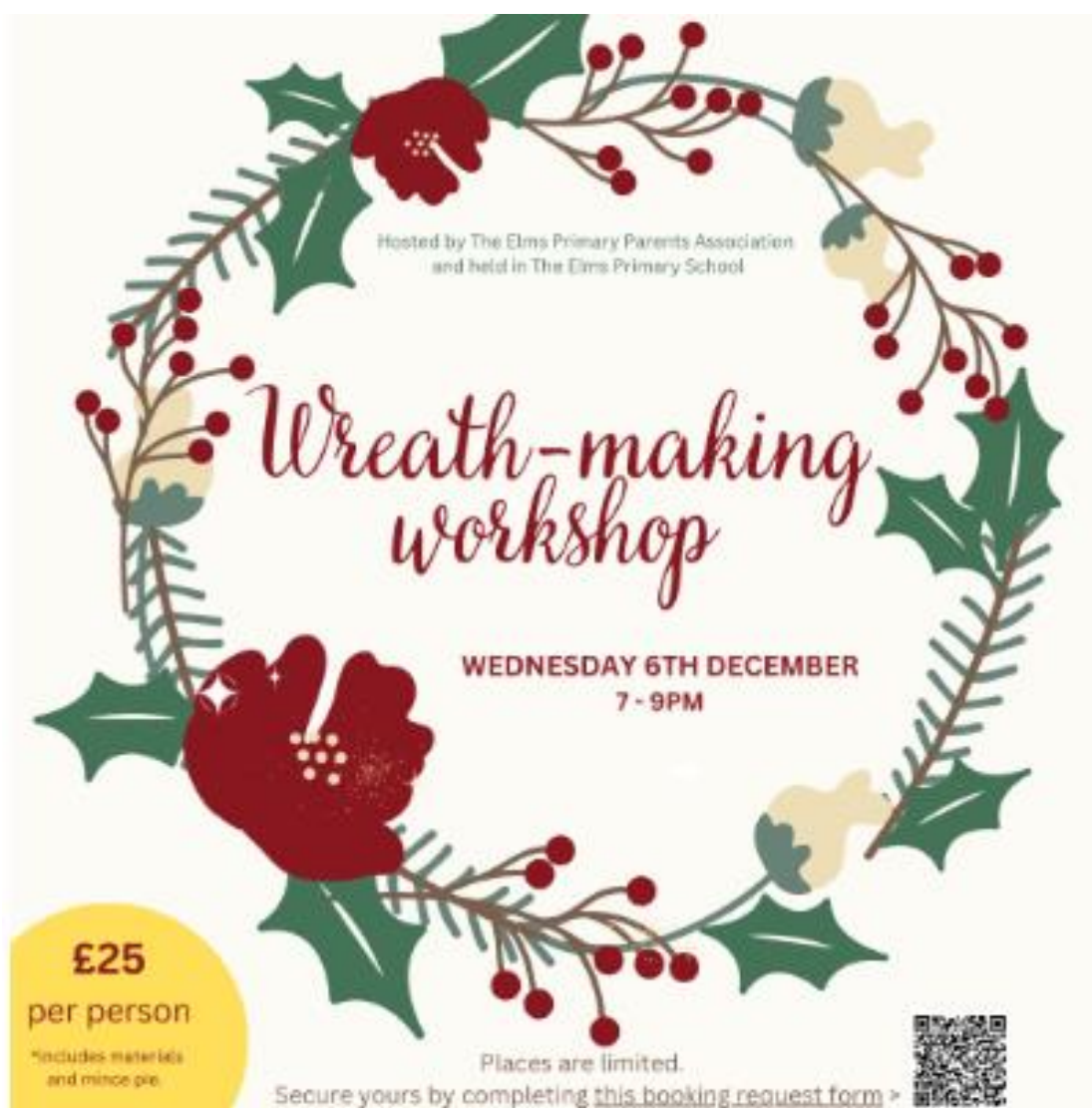
Our office staff have been working hard over the term to obtain updated child information. We are hoping to set up The Elms on social media and need to know if you give consent for your child's pictures to be used. Please keep an eye out for consent forms coming to you via ParentPay.



At the start and end of the school day in the Library Gardens, it has come to our attention that some adults have been smoking and vaping. We are aware that this may not be parents and carers of our school community. However, we ask kindly that you refrain from smoking or vaping during these times as there are many children who are waiting to enter/leave the school.

Furthermore, we ask that no balls games are played at the start and of the school day as this can cause injury and upset to other children and parents/carers.

The Elms Parent Association upcoming event. The perfect start to the festive period:



You Move is an Oxfordshire initiative which provides low cost and free activities to families. Benefits include 50% of membership and pay as you play activities for the whole family.



"YouMove is here to provide free or low-cost activities for families living in Oxfordshire. If your child or children are in receipt of benefits related free school meals, then we have a fantastic range of activities to enjoy together, including during weekends and school holidays. In addition, YouMove is here for children in need of support; this includes refugee children, young carers and children in or on the edge of care." - YouMove: Vale of White Horse | GO Active (getoxfordshireactive.org)

Wishing you all a wonderful half term break and we look forward to welcoming all the children back on Monday 30th October