



Executive Headteacher: Miss R. Sandell

Headteacher: Guy Fairbairn

31 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We just wanted to send a quick letter, before the holiday, with some updates and information for you.

Impact of lockdown and Catch-Up

It is still early, but now that we have had the children back on site for a few weeks, we are beginning to see the impact the lockdown has had. As we have already said, the vast majority of children have come back to school happy and keen to learn, and have settled well into their routines.

It is becoming clear that the majority of the children who engaged well with the remote learning during lockdown are still broadly in line with, or at least not too far behind, where we would normally expect them to be with their learning. So well done to all of you parents, carers and families - you have done a great job with your home learning.

Unfortunately, there are some children who have made very little progress, or have gone backwards in their learning; these tend to be the children who did not engage consistently with the remote learning.

As part of our COVID-19 Catch-Up programme, we have already started using the Lexia reading programme with some children; and will be rolling this out to more children as the year goes on. The NELI Programme, developing language and communication skills, has now started with some children in Reception. We are also working with Connex Partnership, one of the government's approved providers for the National Tutoring Programme, and are hopeful that some of our older children will start small group, catch-up tutoring directly after the Easter holiday.

We have also noticed that children have lost some of the resilience and tolerance they had before lockdown. We have seen more arguments over 'little things,' and children losing their patience and temper more quickly than we would normally expect. Teachers have spent a lot of time working with the children to re-establish these skills and this will continue to be a focus in the summer term.

Mrs Gardiner's Whacky Easter Competition

Mrs Gardiner has put a video, launching her Whacky Easter Competition, on Google Classroom. Your task is to decorate a hard-boiled egg, in the most imaginative and creative way you can.

Prizes will be given on the first day back after the holiday to the best eggs in each of these categories:

- Year Groups
- Parents/Siblings/other family members
- Staff

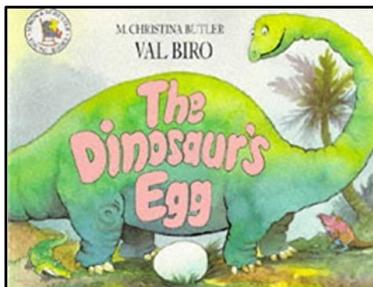
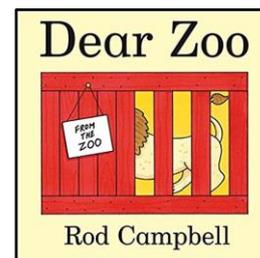
Just take a photo of your decorated egg and upload it to Google Classroom, or e-mail it to competitions@monksorchard.co.uk

Goodbye and Welcome back

As is sometimes the case, the end of term can mean we have to say goodbye to members staff. This term we are saying goodbye to Mrs Burcombe. Mrs Burcombe has worked with us since 2016 as our music teacher, and most recently as one of our Year 4 teachers. She has been a great asset for the school. As well as teaching music to all of our children she has organised many concerts and events, managed the after school clubs and organised all of our peripatetic instrumental tuition (don't worry the instrumental tuition will carry on...). She will be greatly missed by everybody at Monks Orchard and we wish her all the best for the future. We welcome Miss Georgiou back from her maternity leave, after the Easter holiday. Miss Georgiou will be taking over Rosen Class, from Mrs Burcombe, and I know she is very excited to be coming back to work.

What we have been reading

In the **Nursery** we have been reading Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell and completing lots of activities about zoos and animals in class. We even built a pretend Zoo for our animals!

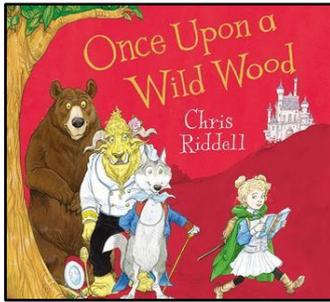


In **Reception** we have been reading books about eggs. We have found out about all the different creatures which hatch from an egg and how they grow. Then we read some stories about eggs. Our favourite was The Dinosaur's Egg because it hatches and out comes the fiercest dinosaur of them all, Tyrannosaurus Rex!

Year 1 have been reading 'The Pirates Next Door' by Jonny Duddle. We have read the book lots of times, noticing the rhyming words and the rhythm of the story. We used the story to help us write a diary entry from the main character (Matilda) focusing on the conjunctions - and, because and but.

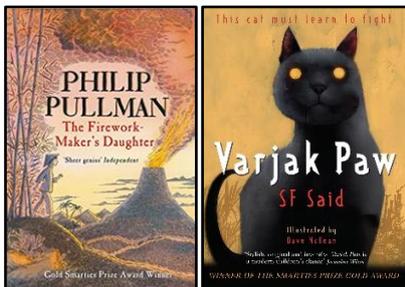
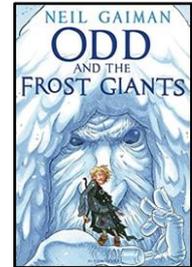


We even dressed up as pirates for our special Pirate Day!



Year 2 have been reading 'Once Upon a Wild Wood' by Chris Riddell. We have written two extended pieces of writing based on the book. We have written a letter from one character to another and our own story, based on the book. We've had fun identifying the characters from other traditional tales that the main character meets along the way.

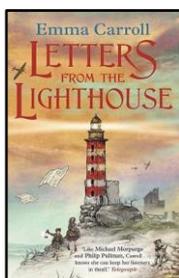
Year 3 have been reading 'Odd and The Frost Giants,' by Neil Gaiman. We are really enjoying this Viking adventure story. It is about how Odd, a 12-year-old boy, tries to beat the Frost Giants and save Asgard, the city of the gods. The Frost Giants are our favourite characters. We have written a diary entry based on the story, and our own descriptions of some the characters.



This half term in **Year 4** we have enjoyed reading the Firework-Maker's Daughter, following Lila in her quest to find the Royal Sulphur to make fireworks, and the story of Varjak Paw, a Mesopotamian Blue cat who discovers "Jalal's Way" as he goes in search of a dog to save his family. The children created their own play scripts featuring Varjak and now they are eager to discover how the story ends!

Year 5 have thoroughly enjoyed reading Jeremy Strong's Romans on the Rampage, linked to our topic. It is hilariously funny and is a great 'read out loud' book. We particularly enjoyed making links with each characters' name and their personality traits. For example, one character is called Hysteria... well you can guess why!

We have several 'Becoming,' Michelle Obama biographies – and many of us in Year 5 are reading her biography during our 'reading for pleasure' sessions. Next on our list is to try 'The Boy who made Everyone Laugh' by Helen Rutter.



In **Year 6** we have been reading *Letters from the Lighthouse*. Letters from the Lighthouse is an historical mystery set during World War II. When Olive's sister, Sukie, goes missing during an air raid, Olive is determined to find out what happened. Then, she finds a strange coded note: a note that changes everything and seems to link Sukie to Devon - the place where Olive has just been evacuated to.

COVID-19 Update

Though some lockdown restrictions are due to be eased during the Easter holiday, we are not planning to make any changes to our school COVID-19 protocols at the moment. When you come back to school after the holiday, all of the current routines and procedures will remain in place. We are not expecting to make any significant changes to arrangements until at least mid-May, but we will keep you up to date.

All staff will continue to carry out (LFD) COVID-19 testing, twice weekly during the Easter holiday.

Even though we are not at school, if your child develops COVID-19 symptoms during the holiday you must still follow the normal procedure:

- Parents/carers must check children for symptoms of COVID-19 every morning.
- If your child displays symptoms they must stay at home and you must tell the school immediately. This is still important as we may need to contact other parents, and staff, to let them know they need to isolate.

Please e-mail Mrs Shilling using: dshilling@monksorchard.co.uk

- A symptomatic person must self-isolate for 10 days and arrange to have a test. Their household must also self-isolate for 10 days, from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

Breakfast Club and After School Club

After the holiday, Breakfast Club and After School Club will return to the dining hall.

- When dropping your child off at Breakfast Club, please press the buzzer by the main gate. When the staff buzz you in, walk your child all the way to the dining hall to sign them in.
- When collecting your child from After School Club, please press the buzzer by the main gate. When the staff buzz you in, walk directly to the dining hall to collect your child.

After you have dropped off or collected your child, please leave the school site directly.

Apparently our new COVID-19 slogan is “Hands, Space, Face and Fresh Air.” So, within the restrictions, have a lovely holiday and we wish a happy Easter to those of you who will be celebrating it.

Please stay safe and take care, and we will see you again on **Tuesday 20 April**, for the start of the summer term.

Thank you for your continuing support,

Guy Fairbairn
Headteacher