



# NOTRE DAME PREP SCHOOL



**“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

**MATT 6:21**

Dear Parents

As we approach Lent, it occurs to me that vagaries around the length of school terms, or when half term is, are often blamed on the liturgical calendar. This is often true and what a short second half term looms. I sense a certain restlessness and the need for a break among the children, especially after such a busy and long first half.

Lent, the period of forty days leading up to Easter, holds great significance for us and is a time for self-discipline. Throughout history, many notable figures have exemplified the virtues of Lent through their actions, inspiring us to follow in their footsteps. One such figure is Pope Francis who on occasion gives up the papal limousine during Lent and travels by public transport instead. This shows a commitment to simplicity and solidarity with those less fortunate.

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi gave up a favourite food, salt, during this period. I think his actions were more a reaction against the Raj-enforced salt tax but his dedication to justice and equality was very clear.

Lent might be a time then, to save up the money from uneaten chocolate and invest in a charity that might make a real difference?

Wishing you all a peaceful rest over half term.



# MINIBEASTS

Our Caterpillars and Butterflies started the New Year with our Winter theme, where we learnt many facts about this season's weather patterns. We answered the most asked question "Why does it rain?" with a Science experiment using shaving cream as clouds and food colouring as rain droplets. Our little Scientists engaged in a discussion about the Water Cycle and why we need to save water. We also learned new words such as 'evaporation', 'condensation' and 'precipitation'

Our second and equally exciting topic was Space; the Minibeasts have donned on their apron once more to look at our motorised Solar System where they concluded that the Sun was in the middle and all the planets spin around the sun at different paces. We made 'Fizzy Moon Rocks' and watched them bubble when in contact with vinegar- this made our little Caterpillars cheer and asked for more of the special liquid!

The last days of this half term have been all about Celebration: we made dragons and paraded them around the playground to celebrate Chinese New Year! We learned about the origin of Shrove Tuesday and decorated pancakes that we gobbled up! For St Valentine's Day we made sparkly beautiful cards for our Mummies and Daddies!

Have a wonderful half term, the nursery team is looking forward to celebrating Spring and Easter when we return!





## PRE PREP

Pre Prep have studied the Polar Regions, focussing on the Arctic. The children made some beautiful collages, using chalk to create a cool coloured background before painting their own polar bear. Everyone wrote a fact to accompany their artwork – Did you know a polar bear's skin is black? These have made a lovely display for the school library. The children have also had fun taking part in some winter themed yoga, building igloos using sugar cubes (much harder than you think!) and listening to Vivaldi's winter from The Four Seasons.

Recently, Pre Prep enjoyed listening to the story, Mr Wolf's Pancakes by Jan Fearnley. As wolves are not very good at writing shopping lists, the children kindly helped Mr Wolf record the items he would need to make pancakes on a shopping list. On Shrove Tuesday itself, Pre Prep took part in a pancake race, along with their friends in Prep 1 and Prep 2. They also made chef hats before putting their mixing skills to the test, using flour, eggs and milk to make the perfect pancake batter. All the hard work the children have put into their phonic lessons was evident when writing instructions about how to make a pancake, lots of independent 'sounding out'. Fantastic work Pre Prep!

This busy half term has also included work on Chinese New Year with dragon dancing and chopstick challenges, having a 'wild rumpus' with Prep 1 as part of National Storytelling Week after reading Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak, taking part in Internet Safety day and learning about Lent and why this is important. Have a wonderful half term break everyone!





# PREP 1

January started with our topic of Toys. Using the story 'Paper Dolls', the children were able to imagine interesting journeys for their own dolls, working together to create a fantastic display showing an exciting environment for paper dolls to enjoy. A highlight was our visit to the Bridewell museum where the children had the opportunity to explore and test a range of toys from different times, discovering what they were made out of and how toys had changed and developed over the years. The children had lots of fun testing and playing with a range of interactive exhibits (the shoes were a huge hit) and ultimately had the opportunity to make their own spinning toy.

We have continued to discover more about how the seasons change, looking particularly at how different animals survive the winter and made some fantastic dens for bears to hibernate in. February brings a multitude of important dates to mark. Prep 1 thoroughly enjoyed National Storytelling week, joining with Pre Prep to listen to stories making a wild rumpus around the school after hearing the classic story 'Where The Wild Things Are'.

For Children's Mental Health Week, we thought about our emotions, recognising it is both healthy and important to have and to talk about different feelings and with the help of Snoop Dogg – learnt some fabulous affirmations celebrating ourselves and promoting self-worth. We finished by learning about Lent and decorating (and of course eating) some rather delicious pancakes.





## PREP 2

In Maths Prep 2 have been learning about money and counting and comparing values in pounds and pence. Children have also been investigating groups, learning times tables and beginning division.

In English, 'The Bear under the Stairs' gave us the opportunity to remember what we were scared of when we were little. Children have written letters in role as different characters and stories about scary creatures under the stairs. Prep 2 had a super time sharing their favourite stories with Prep 4 for National Storytelling Week and learning about friendships and online safety in PSHRE.

For RE pupils have been learning about the miracles that Jesus performed, told the story of His sacrifices in the desert and how he resisted temptation by the devil as part of our Lent focus. For Art, we have drawn our own versions of the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and created animal pictures using different media.

In Science we have been learning about life cycles and comparing frogs, humans and butterflies, for which pupils each made a model. For our History topic of Kings and Queens children created our own rules as monarch for the day and have compared British monarchs from King William I to King Charles III.

Wishing you restful Half Term!





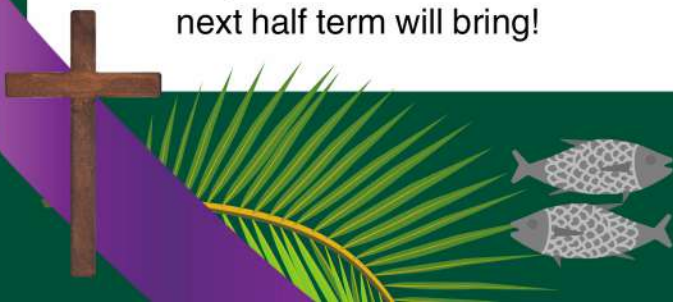
## PREP 3

This half term, Prep 3 have been travelling back in time thousands of years to the fascinating world of ancient Egypt. The children have delighted in learning about everything from the building of the pyramids to mummification and the many Egyptian gods and goddesses. Making replica Tutankhamun masks has been a real lesson in patience and the art of papier-mache- the amazing results speak for themselves! The children enjoyed visiting Norwich Castle for a day of dressing up, jewellery designing and examining real artefacts from 3000 years ago!

Prep 3 have also enjoyed reading the wordless book, 'Flotsam' which provided so many opportunities for creative writing and sharing of ideas, and for National Storytelling Week, Prep 3 joined a zoom call with author Swapna Haddow to learn about how to create story characters. She challenged the children to describe their Headmaster as an animal for a new character. Prep 3 found this to be a highlight for the term, and Mr T was described as everything from 'a well dressed hippo in a bow tie' to 'a giraffe wearing a tuxedo'! Thankfully, he took this in good spirits! Maths has been full of times table fun and games - with a particular favourite being 'Funky Mummy', a great link with our Egyptians topic!

In RE, Prep 3 have been learning about the Kingdom of God, parables and the miracles of Jesus. They have also spent time learning about St Therese de Lisieux, and of course celebrating Shrove Tuesday with some obligatory pancakes!

It's been a half term full of hard work and a good break has been well earned by all, but we are very excited to see what the next half term will bring!





## PREP 4

Prep 4 have had a lovely half term. The children have really got into their history topic of WW2 and can recall so many facts, I hope they have been sharing them with you at home too!

We have also had great fun using our problem solving and engineering skills to build and code Lego models to make them move.

The children have also shown amazing progress in English and wrote touching stories from the perspective of an evacuee as well as engaging newspaper articles about the blitz. We have loved building Anderson shelters and WW2 planes that look spectacular hanging from the ceiling in our classroom.

Overall, it has been a half term packed with lots of learning as well as a healthy sprinkle of fun and laughter. I am super proud of all of their hard work and all that they have achieved.





## PREP 5

Prep 5 have been embracing all things Ancient Greek this half term, from their history work to their writing. Greek myths have been very popular and the children have had such fun writing their own to share with other classes.

Linked to this was a day trip to the Sainsbury Centre at UEA. Here, the children explored the outdoor sculptures (they did get a little soggy!) and then met with artist Ian Brownlie who spoke to them about the goddess Gaia, who is often seen as 'Mother Earth'. Their workshop involved singing, dancing, music and some amazing collaborative sculpture building. Their creations were quite spectacular!

In class, the children have explored the new Lego coding kits which provided an excellent cross-curricular STEM learning experience. Additionally, Prep 5 have been learning about Lunar New Year, creating their own Chinese Dragons using sprayed paint and ink dip pens, and for Children's Mental Health Week, the children learned the importance of saying 'Thank You' to friends for small actions which make us feel like we matter.





## PREP 6

Prep 6's learning has taken them on a number of fascinating journeys of discovery. Starting with an enquiry about the Ancient Maya, the children considered questions such as "Why are the Maya worthy of study?", "Which historic sites are worth investing in?" and "What was life like in a Mayan city?" Armed with evidence from artefacts, research and some impressive reasoning, they wrote persuasive letters and time traveller's guides to cities. They rounded up the topic, trying their hand at Mayan syllabograms and Maths, making some stunning Mayan battle and celebration masks as well as some vibrant South American paper molas.

Our Science journey has involved investigations into how light travels, reflects, refracts and casts shadows. We have made periscopes and rainbows along with posters on the spectrum phenomenon. Meanwhile, a Sacred Science Day at Norwich Cathedral enabled the children to explore the architecture of a cathedral, the role of light and stained glass windows.

This linked perfectly with our RE. Prep 6 study St John's Gospel and, in learning about the seven miracles of Jesus and the "I am.." statements, they each chose one and designed their own stunning stained glass windows.

Coinciding with Safer Internet Day, our E-Safety topic in Computing led to the children considering positive and negative influences online and designing their own influencer pages for a worthwhile cause. Meanwhile, they had the chance to express what matters most to them in our Mental Health Week. Alongside all of this, Prep 6 can be congratulated for beavering away in Maths – and making great progress - in division, measures, ratio, proportion and percentage.

Well done, Prep 6, you deserve a break!





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## NOTRE DAME PREP SCHOOL



This term, Mini Vinnies have been busy starting to make items they would like to sell for their chosen charity at the Summer fete. So far, they have made brightly coloured wooden crosses and inspirational book marks, but they have more ideas of things to make, so watch this space!

Earlier in the half term, Mini Vinnies also prepared an assembly on Prayer for the whole school. This Year has been named a Year of Prayer by Pope Francis as we prepare for the Church's Jubilee in 2025. They created role plays and wrote simple prayers of praise, thanks, petition and sorrow to help teach their fellow pupils the types of prayer. Meanwhile, they showed everyone the Pope's "Five Finger Prayer" to help the children to remember who they can pray for when they are praying. They were surprised to find out that we should prayer for ourselves LAST!

Keep up the great work, Mini Vinnies – you may be "mini" but you are a HUGE inspiration!

