

In this issue:

- Christmas
- Goodbye to Karen
- Literacy
- Our Artsmark work
- Weekends
- Themed curriculum
- Partnerships

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Our Christmas Celebrations

During the run up to Christmas we had a wonderful variety of events to celebrate this very special time. Eagle Radio presenters visited the school for an official switching on of our lights both in the car park and in the entrance hall. A few students, staff and parents visited the Sensory Santa site and joined in all the activities and met Santa. Our own Christmas party had a wonderful visit from Santa and his elf. The children worked hard to produce a variety of decorations and edible items for our Christmas 'German style' market. As usual our Live nativity at the stables was a delight and brought the story to life in a very wonderful way. My thanks to the many visitors who joined us at the stable and celebrated with us. A special 'shout-out' for all the staff working on Christmas Day was made on Eagle radio on Christmas Day.



Celebrating Christmas with a host of events for our children to enjoy.

Goodbye to Karen

After being with the school for 27 years and 7 months Karen Rookes who started as a teacher with the school shortly after its creation has served as a teacher and more recently as Headteacher working with the previous Principal. Having made an amazing recovery from cancer, Karen returned to school and stepped down as Headteacher and worked as the SENCo in the last year and a half. Karen has now retired and moved to Devon. She said that the major decisions she wished to make now would be whether to walk the dogs on the beach or the moors. We wish her well.



Literacy

Every term we have a literacy target and it has been great to see the children engaging well with reading. The focus this past term was 'pointing' while reading, so that we can check the story is being followed and some level of comprehension, responding to questions asked.

We have also introduced reading cafes and this has taken place twice this term once as part of the literacy society Tea and Tales event and the second with a fruit focus, Healthy Reading together.

Our Artsmark Work

As a school working towards the very highest Artsmark we become a hub of excellence for the arts. This has benefited the children here at Loddon as many schools partner with us and join in our programme of teaching and learning for the arts. In November a group of pupils from Sherfield School the local Independent Secondary school brought their school 'pop' band to perform in front of an audience. Our children had a lovely time, listening and dancing to the group.

It was lovely to see many of you at one of our two performances of James and the Giant Peach at the start of December. No longer a novice to this wonderful experience I did feel the excitement mounting within me as the day arrived. The children were amazing and told the story so well through the wide variety of activities performed. Costumes moved to a higher plain this year as the Ugly Bug ball demonstrated. Our dancing skills were lovely. The music skills that the children have learnt through their weekly sessions with David were extremely well demonstrated in the drumming display.

The added dimension this year to our concert was the amazing Dream Film that the children had produced working with Katy (Drama teacher) and The Point (Arts Council Project at Eastleigh). Using our Green screen the children had performed some lovely drama scenes which were then superimposed with some fantastic back and fore screens, transforming completing their work. What has been lovely is seeing the children enjoy watching the film, this has occurred at least twice now as their choice film for Cinema club.

This year a number of our pupils joined with other local schools to take part in the Schools Shakespeare Festival. Performing on the main stage at The Anvil Theatre in Basingstoke, our school did a 20 minute version of Macbeth. ["It's a significant achievement to do something as difficult and aspirational as perform one of Shakespeare's play on a professional stage...Loddon School wowed the audience and made this Schools Shakespeare Festival night, an evening to remember."](#) Ruth Brock SSF CEO

We also have had present in school three further drama events. The first just after the school concert drawing together the theme of Roald Dahl actors from The Point ran a continual drama workshop which allowed all children to access the session and experience a wealth of props and sensory materials. The Christmastide Pantomime is of course a must and this year we selected to have the specialist touring Panto company perform on a Saturday making it more of a family event. We also attended the special Autistic friendly showing of the local Pantomime at The Anvil Theatre.

Coming up this year we have a special sensory production called 'Paint' we will be involved in with The Arts Council. It all sounds very messy.





Partnerships

Over the year the school has sort to develop new partnerships with a wide variety of external bodies. We have now a very strong relationship with the Arts Council and our local schools network created around our Platinum artsmark work. We also have sporting partnerships with the Special Schools sports council that arranges a number of competitions which we have been entering over the year. We have recently developed a partnership with Basingstoke Town Football club who ran a workshop for us just before Christmas and will be visiting us once a month. Gremlin Dance and Jet Tennis have continued to run sessions for our students weekly.

“There are much stronger and a far wider range of partnership links” SIP January 2017



Themed weekends and curriculum

Our weekend themes have continued into 2017 having now run for the whole of 2016. These weekend themes add to the richness of the overall curriculum and allow the children to explore a wide variety of topics in a fun way.

“The whole school curriculum themed activities are being used to develop more opportunities to learn and share. Curriculum planning and assessments are clear and joint working is promoting community cohesion and collaboration.” School Improvement Partner January 2017.



This term we explore the theme of Australia hopefully that the warmth of the theme helps us through the cold winter months.

“The school is being strongly led towards outstanding.” SIP January 2017



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