

# St Nicholas School Weekly Newsletter

*Shining Together-  
Embracing our Differences*

Autumn 1 Newsletter



## School News

Dear all,

What a fantastic start to the year it has been. The children have all settled well back into school and our new children are thriving. It's hard to believe we have completed our first half term already.

**School Council:** Our school council have been voted in for this year. This is where each child represents the views of their peers on school decisions. This term, the school council have met to discuss the new school rules by bringing along their class charter. As a school we have produced a class charter for children and for adults. School council share the minutes from the meeting with their class. The next stage will be to create a mural for the Whole School Charter.

School Council also worked closely with Croydon Superstars (pupil voice for the Croydon SEND strategy). They discussed the importance of children's voice within the Local Authority. The school council members voted for their preferred logo for Croydon Superstar's.



### Important Dates

**Monday 21<sup>st</sup>-Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October:** Half Term Break

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October:** Children return

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> October:** Parents Coffee Morning 'How we learn in the Adventure Pathway'

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> October:** Parent Evening for Grasshopper, Pine and Ocean Class

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October:** Parents Evening for all school (apart from those 3 classes above)

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November:** SaLT Coffee Morning People Games

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November:** Parent Coffee Morning 'How we Learn in the Investigate Pathway'

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November:** Whole School Photos

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November:** Children in Need (mufti)

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November:** Winter Craft Key Stage 1

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November:** Winter Craft Key Stage 2

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November:** School Closed for INSET

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December:** Parent Coffee Morning 'How we learn in the Challenge Pathway'

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December:** SaLT Coffee Morning – Symbols and PECS

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Shows

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Lunch

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December:** Last Day of Term – 1:30 finish



**World Mental Health Day:** On Thursday 10th October staff wore yellow to highlight World Mental Health Day.

**LPPA:** Last year we began working on the Leading Parent Partnership Award - an award designed to help develop positive relationships with parents and stakeholders of the school. As part of this we have a working party who are looking at different aspects of the partnership with parents. We would like to add 2 more parents to this group - specifically a parent of a child in reception, and also a parent of a year 6 student preparing to transition on from St. Nicks - if you would be interested in finding out more about this, please send a Weduc to Sarah Holliday who will be able to give further information.



**Learning Disability and Behaviour Support Service Evening Parent Workshops 2024**

The Learning Disability and Behaviour Support Service are delivering their parent workshops in the evenings to offer parents the opportunity to access these workshops. Please use the QR code to book onto the workshops and select the sessions relevant to you and your family.

- Sleep and Behaviour** - 11th December 2024
- Communication and it's role in behaviour** - 12th December 2024
- Positive Behaviour Support** - 8th December 2024
- Robbery and Behaviour** - 17th December 2024
- Continence and Behaviour** - 18th December 2024

All sessions will be held via Microsoft Teams between 7pm-9pm. Please attend those which are relevant to you. Please note workshops will be cancelled if there are less than 5 people booked on.

Contact: [paedneurodisability@nhs.net](mailto:paedneurodisability@nhs.net), 020 8860 4630, @TulipPaediatric, tulipneurodisabilityteam, Tulip Paediatric Nursing Service

**Harvest:** On Monday, we celebrated our Harvest Assembly. The children sang some harvest songs with lots of enthusiasm. Gaynor also played 'What's in the bag game'. The children were able to name and sign the food that was brought in. Thank you for all of your donations. Some of these will go into our Community Cupboard to support our families who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. Please do get in touch with us if you need support with food parcels. Some of the donations will also go to Purley Food Hub who support the local community.

**Crystal Palace Women's Football Team:** As Crystal Palace Women continue to make history in the Barclays Women's Super League, we wanted to let you know about another amazing opportunity for your school to be part of this exciting occasion. Palace Women are facing Manchester City on Sunday, 3rd November, with a 14:00 kick-off at Selhurst Park — and it's set to be an exciting game with the world's best players coming to south London, including Lionesses Chloe Kelly and Lauren Hemp. Don't miss out on a great day out for the whole family, the fanzone will be open with plenty of activities and entertainment beyond the 90 minutes of action. Once again, we are offering an exclusive 25% discount on tickets for local schools, meaning pupils, parents/guardians, and staff can watch top flight women's football from just £3! Simply use the promo code CPCWVSCHOOLS at checkout via the link below: [\[Get Tickets Here\]](#)

# Discovery

We are so proud of our new Reception starters who have only been at school for a month and have already settled into the routine of the school day. We have 3 Reception Classes this year.

**Bumblebee Class:** We have all settled well into Bumblebee Class and its routines and expectations. We have enjoyed our introductory lessons in Phonics learning about the sound 'S' and have enjoyed making MATMAN in our Handwriting Without Tears lesson. We are enjoying the story of the Colour Monster and have produced work around the story and our emotions.

**Dragonfly Class:** Dragonfly Class have been settling in this half term and learning all of the class routines. They have really enjoyed visiting the different rooms in the school such as the Sensory Room and Soft Play Room.

**Ladybird Class:** Ladybirds have settled well into their new class. We have had lots of time to learn our new routines and become familiar with the classroom and the Ladybird team. We have started learning about the colour monster and our feelings as part of emotional regulation. We have also begun to look at MATMAN and learning about ourselves and our bodies. We have also been to our outdoor learning classroom on numerous occasions looking at the seasons and the weather. We have enjoyed being creative and are enjoying lots of creative activities based around our learning.



# Explore



Our Explore Pathway learn through play or engage in practical experiences in their learning to generalise and transfer skills. Children also work on their social and communication skills through these experiences.

**Spider Class:** Spider class have settled in well into their new routines and they have started to build new friendships. Our Topic has been "Fighting Fit" during which we read "The Very Hungry Caterpillar". We designed our own caterpillars and butterflies using various materials. We focused on ordering the days of the week and counted the different foods eaten by the hungry caterpillar. In science, we named and labelled the different parts of our bodies. We discussed healthy eating, our favourite foods and how we can take care of ourselves. We rounded off our topic by creating sensory self-portraits.

**Giraffe Class:** The children in Giraffe class have all settled in well this half term, they are following the routines well and understand the structure of the day. We have worked hard on our sharing and play skills and have been enjoying taking turns in structured learning sessions. We have been exploring the topic of fighting fit and enjoyed naming the animals and making all of the different positions in the book 'From Head to Toe'. We have also had great fun exploring the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' where we have ordered the events in the story and made some beautiful symmetrical butterflies. We have been working hard on our targets and are all making great progress with the Little Wandle phonics reading books which are a new format for most of us.

**Zebra Class:** We have been learning to be good friends, sit nicely during activities, play with and look after our toys. We have explored 'Fighting Fit' through the stories, 'The very Hungry Caterpillar', 'The Shopping Basket' and 'From Head to Toe'. In Science, we have learnt to name our body parts and make good food choices. Thank you to all our parents who have also sent in baby photos. We will wrap up our lessons on "Growing and Changing" with lovely memories of ourselves as babies! Also, we have been learning to say and sign "thank you" in RE and we have been reinforcing this through our daily routines. Lastly, we have been matching everyday objects to 2D shapes and using 2D shapes to make pictures. We started numbers by counting and matching to numerals and we are now working on number bonds to 5.

**Elephant Class:** We have done a fantastic job of settling in with our new classmates and teachers. Our topic "Fighting Fit" has had the class explore all the ways we can grow up to be healthy and happy. This includes Science Lessons about our bodies and body parts, history lessons about the human life cycle, and PHSE about kindness and friendship. We have focused on stories about growing and healthy eating including The Very Hungry Caterpillar as well as Oliver's Fruit Salad. In maths, we have been revising counting and adding as well as understanding 2D Shapes.

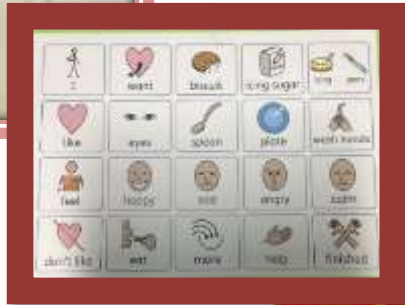


**Badger Class:** Badger Class have really enjoyed settling into the new academic year, familiarising ourselves with our new friends, adults and routine. Our Rainforest theme has allowed us to explore some exotic jungle animals, we prowled the classroom like a panther, swung like an Orangutang and soared like a Toucan. In Geography, we learnt about the tree formation in the jungle and in Maths we worked hard to learn the number bonds to 5 and 10 using numicon. Our class display reflects our ongoing learning we're doing in class.

**Beech Class:** In Beech class we have been learning about Rainforests. We have enjoyed identifying all the colours we can see and the animals that live there. We have made our own dioramas of rainforest and have enjoyed decorating our topic board (please see below). Our focus story for this term has been Monkey Puzzle by Julia Donaldson. We have been able to recall the story and the characters with the use of Makaton. We have also been working hard in our individual/group handwriting, reading and phonics sessions. In Maths, we have been learning about number formations, ordering, 2D shapes and their properties and additions. In Science, we have been exploring different habitats. We were able to sort which plants and animals belong to four different habitats.

We love to eat and sit around the table in Beech class, we have especially enjoyed Magic Breakfast and our cooking sessions. We have explored eating a range of cereals, bagels and toast topped with our favourite spread of butter or jam. In our cooking classes, we have made fruit kebabs and sandwiches. We are working hard in our class to be kind to our friends, use our communication tools and demonstrate good listening.

**Orchard Class:** In Orchard class, we have been doing a lot of work on establishing rules and routines in class. Our topic is Marvelous Mexico where we have been making flags and learning the differences between Mexico and the UK. In Science we have been looking at habitats and comparing which animals live in either ocean, woodland, desert, and rainforest habitats. We also have started to look at hedgehogs and learning some facts about them through sensory exploration. In PSHE we have been learning about the zones of regulation and feelings through the story "The Colour Monster." The children really enjoyed making iced biscuits choosing how they feel with a communication grid.



# Investigate

Our Investigate Pathway is for our Sensory Learners. Here the children are supported to regulate through sensory integration so that they can access learning. They work on their communication skills using their preferred method of communication, social skills and tolerating spaces with other children. They explore their learning through a range of sensory activities.

**Caterpillar Class:** We have been studying the Topic Fighting Fit in Caterpillar Class. This has allowed us to explore the Hungry Caterpillar Story while sampling and examining both healthy and unhealthy food choices. Along with learning about body awareness, we have enjoyed working out to 'heads, shoulders, knees, and toes' and Mat Man has also taught us where our hearts, stomachs, and lungs are. In Math's we are looking at number recognition, 2D and 3D shapes through paint printing and our sensory trays.

In addition, we have had fun learning about Autumn through games of "I Spy" in our sensory garden, which has allowed us to produce many vibrant works of art. We are all looking forward to Term 2 and have enjoyed getting to know our new classmates and forming friendships.

**Butterfly Class:** In Butterfly class, we have been settling into our new class, learning routines and making new friendships. We have been learning to play with each other and engage in activities together. We have been participating in Attention Autism and sensory play. In phonics, the children have been assessed and we are beginning to learn sounds and letters by exploring them in sensory trays and through phonics activities. In Maths, we have been exploring shapes in sensory trays and matching them. We have also been counting and ordering numbers.





**Lion Class:** Lion Class are really enjoying learning about our Topic of 'Rainforest.' We have explored our topic through lots of sensory trays including different textures such as leaves, water, mud, logs and lots more. We have been learning the song 'Down in the rainforest' and have been learning the Makaton signs for animals we can find in the rainforest. We have even been doing some washing of our own clothes.

In phonics, the children have been assessed and have been learning new letters and sounds by exploring them in sensory trays.

In Maths we have been working through our Pupil passport targets and have been exploring 2D shapes. We have done some 2d shape printing and even got to explore some magic appearing shapes which was extremely exciting.

**Forest Class:** In Forest class we have been learning about the Rainforest and the animals that live there. We have been enjoying the story Monkey Puzzle. We are learning the animals in the story and using our Grid to say the names. We have enjoyed making leaf prints and making rainforest animals using printing and string painting. We have been working on using our communication grids to answer questions and ask for what we want. We have spent time enjoying our outside area and had lots of fun in cooking making sandwiches and rice krispie cakes.



# Adventure

In our Adventure Pathway, the children learn through structure and routine. They are supported with their sensory integration and regulation by completing sensory diets throughout the day. The children also work on their social and play skills through a range of modelled activities. All of this is done by engaging the children using their preferred method of communication.

**Grasshopper:** Grasshopper class have settled well into their new routines and have been building relationships with the adults and peers within their class. The topic this half term is 'Me, Myself and I' and we have been thinking about what links each of us but also what makes each of us special. We have created self-portraits, sorted our favourite things and these have been used to create class communication tools. We have linked learning across the curriculum to attention autism activities and developed our ability to share attention and take turns. In Maths, we have been exploring shapes in sensory trays and matching them. We have also been counting and ordering numbers linked to our individual targets.

**Beetle:** Beetle class have been busy creating their class display based on their topic 'This is Me'. They had lots of fun looking in the mirror and talking about their features, before painting their self-portraits.

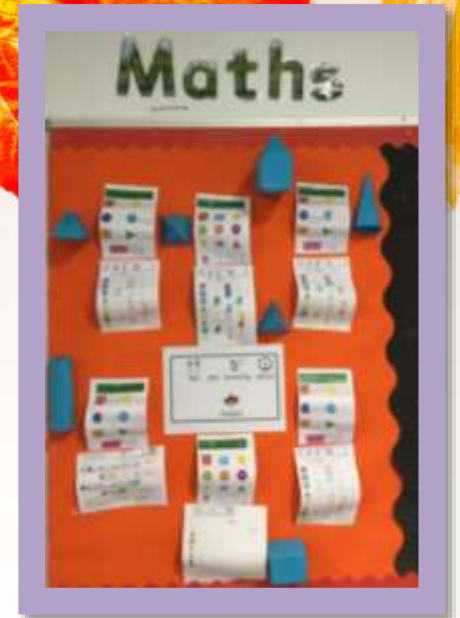
**Elm:** In Elm class we have reading the book 'Monkey Puzzle' and have enjoyed describing characters from the story and writing sentences about what we can see from illustrations in the book.

In topic we have been looking at animals that live in the Rainforest and matched them to the correct habitat as well as decorating their own animal face. In maths we have been learning about 2D shapes and have recognised and matched 2D shapes. We have also sorted different objects into the correct 2D shape.

**Pine:** Pine class has been enjoying the Monkey Puzzle story in light of our rainforest theme. We've been identifying characters and describing them using colourful semantics. We have also been exploring 2D shapes and their properties; playing games such as 'We're going on a Square hunt' around the classroom to see which 2D shapes we can discover.







**Fox:** Fox class have been learning about the rainforest, the children have explored and shared books about the rainforest. We have spent time looking at some of the animals you may see in the rainforest. We Have created a class display on what the rainforest looks like, and we will continue to add to our display as we learn more.

**Willow:** Willow Class have been learning about Marvellous Mexico, we created the flag of Mexico using jigsaw puzzle pieces. We have explored place value in numbers, shapes and used colourful semantics to write about pictures from our story book 'Off we go to Mexico.' In Science we have learnt about animals and their habitats, we created sensory habitats. This term, we have worked hard on settling in the new routine, staying in class, working at our workstations and embracing each other.

**Ocean:** Ocean Class have been having a great time exploring the rainforest! They have been learning about the colourful sights and sounds of the rainforest, along with learning about some of the amazing animals that live there. The children used different shades of green and brown to paint the rainforest, and then used collage techniques to stick animals and plants onto their pictures. The children have also been working hard on shape, number, and handwriting activities at their workstations.





# Challenge

Our challenge Pathway is our Formal Pathway. Here the children have more independent methods of communication. Children work in small groups, paired work or independently. They continue to work on social and independent skills.

**Squirrel:** In Squirrel class, we learned all about the rainforest. We explored the different layers of the rainforest, the various plants and animals that live there, and how deforestation affects rainforest animals. We also wrote facts about rainforest animals. In Maths, we explored the properties of 2D and 3D shapes and developed our understanding of place value.

**Hedgehog:** In Hedgehog class this half term we have been learning about the Rainforest; we have explored the different layers and identified which animals can be found in each. We have also touched on the impact of deforestation on the animals, in particular the Orangutans. The children have also been learning about Habitats and discussing animals that camouflage in their environment. We have made some amazing collage pictures inspired by *The Surprise* by Henri Rousseau. We have hidden our tigers within the many shades of jungle leaves. But our favourite session has to be our weekly Yoga lesson; the children have been practicing mindfulness, calming breathing techniques, stillness and stretching. It's all very Zen!

**Oak:** In Oak class, we have been learning about Rainforests. We have looked at the various locations of rainforest around the world and explored reasons we do not have the temperate rainforest in and around UK. We also learned about the four layers of the rainforest, the plants and animals specific to the different layers. We have also looked at some of the tribes that live in the rainforest as well as compare their way of life with ours. We also learned about some facts and how particularly important the rainforests are to us. We focused on the story 'Buddy's Rainforest Rescue' for our literacy sessions and did quite a bit of learning about the place value of numbers, 2D and 3D shapes as well as the use of some positional language in numeracy. We had a DT Day when we made our rainforest diorama to display on our board in class and we are proud of our work and happy to share this with you.



**Meadow:** In Meadow class we have been very busy learning about Mexico and found it incredibly fascinating. Through books, we have discovered its rich culture of food, dance and music. We have explored Mexico's varied landscapes and were amazed to meet its exotic fauna. Being inspired by the traditional use of colour, we have created vibrant artwork. In RE we focused on how people change through life's journey; we have looked at and explored how people from different religions make their moments special. Our focus this half term has been religious ceremonies and practices around birth and early childhood. We have also worked very hard on practising our writing skills, ensuring our sentences are well structured and organised, as well as making sure we follow basic punctuation rules. We have found it particularly amusing sharing our weekend photos with the class.

**River:** River class have been particularly busy travelling (virtually) to Mexico. We have enjoyed exploring many landmarks and comparing these to landmarks in the UK. We are busy preparing for our Mexico Day coming up in November. The children have also been showing off their writing skills during our weekly journal writing, many of the children like to write about events from the weekend, we are always wowed by their illustrations that support their writing. The class are socialising well together and enjoy having class discussions about our work.

**Valley:** In Valley class we have been busy learning about Mexico, comparing it to the UK: their climate, landmarks and languages. In Maths we have been working hard on advancing our number bonds stills to 10, addition and subtraction using a number line. In Art, we have been exploring the colourful world of Catalan painter and sculptor Joan Miró.

**Lake:** Lake Class have been enjoying learning about Mexico and have written some postcards to friends and staff in school telling them about their "holiday" in Mexico. They have also made some fantastic travel brochures with amazing pictures to help entice people to visit Mexico. They have been learning about hedgehogs and their habitats and made some brilliant hedgehogs out of clay and pasta. Lake class have also been thinking about what they are good at and made picture cards about this, as well as making a video which we shared with their friends at St. Nicks. Lake class have been revisiting 2D and 3D shapes and their properties as well as completing repeating patterns.



# Sensory Week

In school this week, we have been enjoying sensory week. The children have exploring different sensory activities such as flour, foam, paint and foam bags, bubble wrap printing and lots more. Willow class were learning about habitats and made a sensory display!



# Black History Month

In celebration of Black History month, we learned about Martin Luther King Jr and his dream. We learned that people should not be treated differently based on the colour of their skin. We used smarties to help us understand that when you look beyond the colour on the surface, the inside is the same ... we are all the same!





# Behaviour and Communication

## Support plans at St Nicholas School.

This year we are changing the way we use Support Plans at St Nicholas School. We have introduced three levels of plans to support all of our children across the school. This will enable any member of the class team or a staff member going in to class to be able to know how they can best meet the individual needs of each of our children.

**Support Considerations:** This Support Plan is a purely proactive document where we will be able to list the proactive strategies which best support your child. These may include their preferred communication method, for example PECS or Communication boards. It will also highlight the environmental strategies that we can implement as well as direct interventions and skills that can be taught and developed. These would be specific to the individual, things that they enjoy or need during the day to keep them regulated and engaged.

**Support Needs:** This document includes the information listed above but with the added section of active interventions; these are strategies that we will use to support children when they are becoming upset or dysregulated. It may be that they are finding something a little difficult or overwhelming or they are unable to communicate a want or need. It will have a section on it where it states the message or the function of the behaviour that the children are displaying. It will also give staff the tools needed to help meet the child's wants or needs and support them to reduce any distress.

**Support Plan:** The support plan contains all of the previous stated information with an added section for if a child becomes increasingly distressed and they are unable to cope with the situation. As above this will have the message or function of the behaviour and how we can support the children to regulate. It will detail how we can provide them with an environment that is calm and can better meet their needs. The Support Plan however, will also include reactive strategies that can be utilised if proactive and active strategies have not been able to support a child back to a calm state. These may include adapting the environment further, ensuring physical comfort, giving them exclusive engagement or a change of the adult who is supporting them. For their own safety and the safety of those around them some children may have physical interventions on this plan. These interventions will only be used as a last resort and will not be used routinely until they have been approved by parents or carers. Parents or carers will also be informed if any physical intervention has needed to be used with a child.

Support plans are a working document utilised within our school to best support our pupils. These can be adapted as appropriate and we always welcome carers' and parents' input with them as we know you know your child better than anyone else. We hope to work together with parents and carers to ensure we deliver a holistic approach to supporting the needs of all of our pupils at St Nicholas School.

Please feel free to contact the Behaviour Support Team if you have any questions relating to the Support Plans and physical interventions. We are also available if there are any other questions or you feel we may be able to support you or your child in any other way.

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# NEW: JUNIOR ACCESS MUSIC MAKERS!



**9-10am Saturday Mornings**

**A new class for disabled and neuro-  
divergent children in years 3-6**

Oasis Academy Shirley Park

Children will make and create music using their voices, percussion instruments, and technology. They will develop musical skills and confidence, work in a team, make new friends, and have fun!

The first half term will be free!

We ask that a parent/carer also attends the sessions initially

Sign up by scanning the QR code

or email [MusicandArtsEducation@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:MusicandArtsEducation@croydon.gov.uk)

**End of Day Arrangements:** Thank you to the parents who collect their children at the end of the day for your understanding to the change in end of day pick up arrangements. The decision was made due to the Safeguarding of our children and the Health and Safety of the whole school. Asking parents to come 10 minutes later and allowing you to use the car park has definitely improved the safety of the children outside of school. There have been a few parents where I have agreed separate parking arrangements moving forward and these will continue after half term. All other parents must ensure they do not arrive at school until 2:55pm at the earliest.

Thank you for reading our half term newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed reading all of the different news from the different classes and events we have had going on. Have a safe half term break. Looking forward to seeing all of our children on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October.

Many Thanks

Katie