

# Houghton Regis

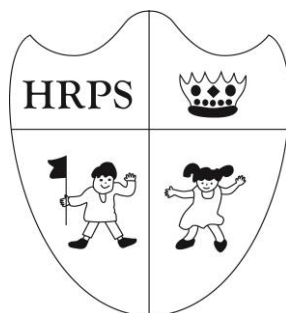
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# Primary School

St Michaels Avenue  
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**20<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

The second half of the Autumn term has been as busy as ever in school, despite the new restrictions brought about by the second lockdown. Firstly, we would like to really thank everyone for your patience, kindness and consideration. We feel confident that procedures in school are minimising the risk to children and staff. We know that home-life is different and appreciate your continued support in adapting to our new regulations so amenably.

Many of you will be aware that we had a positive case in Nursery, we followed our Risk Assessment and the procedures given to us by Public Health England and any transmission was halted. The children are now back in the setting, excited to be learning again.

## Our Learning

We would just like to share with you a little flavour of what the children have been exploring in their learning since they returned from the half term break.

In Early Years, Silver and Gold Class have been looking at all the Autumn 'Celebrations'. Beginning with Bonfire night, finding out about the Hindu festival of 'Diwali' and moving onto the Jewish festival of 'Hanukkah'. Next week they are very excited to begin 'Gingerbread Week', learning the story of the Gingerbread Man, including making and tasting their own gingerbread treats.

In Key Stage One, Years 1 and 2 have been learning about the 'Great Fire of London' through History, English and Art lessons. The children have enjoyed finding out about this real life event and have learned new vocabulary to use in their writing. In Art and Design lessons the children have been using paint and mixed media to create fiery pictures. They are looking forward to using the boxes they have bought in to design and make a Fire of London house.

In Lower Key Stage Two, Years 3 and 4 have been fascinated by their Science Topic of the Human Body. They have been focusing on 'Digestion' and have been investigating teeth. Next they are moving onto learning about digestion itself and the teachers have planned an exciting practical investigation to show what happens as food moves through the digestive system.

In Upper Key Stage Two, Years 5 and 6 have been totally absorbed by the new text which they are studying in their English lessons. 'The Spiderwick Chronicles' has opened opportunities to explore mythological creatures using many different writing genres. The children have been enthused by the quality of the writing in the text and really developed their own vocabulary and creative writing as a result. It is rewarding to see all our children so engaged with their lessons and learning across the school.



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### Home learning

If your child is not able to attend school as a result of a Covid related issue (shielding or self-isolating) we have a statutory duty to provide work for them to complete at home. Our current arrangements are to provide work to every child not in school either electronically or hardcopy. Teachers are about to receive training on the delivery of Google Classroom so we can improve our offer to families. This is an on-line portal which allows teachers to post lessons and tasks; so pupils can complete the work daily on-line and then submit it back to their teacher. From the start of December we will have this facility available and every child will be issued with an email address we can communicate through. At the end of this month, every family will receive instructions on how to access Google classroom at home. In the meantime, it is important for us to be aware of those families who do not have access to the internet at home. We appreciate that not every child has a laptop or tablet and know that families are going to have to share devices. However, if on-line learning is going to be very challenging in your household, please could you advise us as soon as possible so we can produce hard copies of work where possible. One of our parents very kindly donated a small number of devices for us to lend out to families, so if you feel that you require this, please let us know (sadly we cannot guarantee you will get one!)

### On-line Safety

We have been made aware that a number of our pupils are playing games and accessing social media that is not appropriate for their age. We really appreciate that this is a challenging thing for parents to monitor and are supporting internet safety with conversations in school. We are also aware, through discussions with children, that there is an element of social pressure involved with our older children. As parents and carers, we urge you to talk to your children about what they access on-line and monitor their screen usage. A number of websites offer really strong advice on this: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

### Remembrance Day

We were delighted to be able to send representatives from our school to the local remembrance service on 11<sup>th</sup> November. The overall turnout was lovely to see and everyone was able to socially distance whilst showing their respect and thanks to those who have lost their lives.

### Financial Hardship

The Covid pandemic has impacted on families in different ways and we know that many people are suddenly finding their income and circumstances far more challenging. Through our contacts at Central Bedfordshire, we are able to offer significant support to many families through the Tithe Farm Children's Centre. These contacts have nothing to do with social services and are designed purely to help families with children up to the age of 12 years. There is a great deal of additional support tailored specifically for families during the pandemic.

The phone number for the centre is 0300 300 8115, if you wish to contact them directly. If your income has dropped, your child may be eligible for free school meals. This not only means a free hot meal at lunchtime, but the government is also

planning to offer supermarket vouchers over the holidays. If you want to find out if you are eligible, please call 0300 300 8306.

### Helping our community

Through our Executive Headteacher, we are getting involved in the local foodbank supporting families, the isolated and the elderly over the Christmas break. If you would like to make a donation, we know that they are looking for Christmas produce, squash, toiletries, cleaning products, breakfast cereal and small gifts for the elderly.

As you will be aware, local care homes have been really hard hit by the pandemic and many of the residents have not been able to have visitors or leave their home. If your child is looking for something to do during these wet, wintery weekends, we know that the residents would love a card or picture to cheer them up. Children can bring them into school and we will forward everything on.

### Children in Needs - Together, we can change young lives?

The whole school really enjoyed dressing up for Pudsey day, and we thank you all for your generosity. We raised an impressive £267 and can be proud that we are *'supporting vital charities and projects which change the lives of children and young people all over the UK.'*

### Christmas Events

Unfortunately due to Covid restrictions, Christmas is going to look a bit different in school this year. We are afraid that for this year we will not be able to put on a Christmas show or Nativity. However we are, as far as we can, endeavouring to give the children many memorable and festive experiences as always. Alongside the usual Christmas arts and crafts activities, we plan to use Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December as our special celebration day. Staff and children will be welcome to come to school in Christmas or Wintery themed non-uniform. The kitchen will be preparing a Christmas dinner for this day, if your child would like to join in with this, please ensure you fill out the slips provided separately and return them by Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December, so Mrs Cook knows how many potatoes to peel!

After lunch the Christmas raffle, organised by our fabulous and committed PTA will be held. By now your child should have received their free ticket. The prizes are building up at school and look amazing so if you would like to increase your chances of winning and to support the school in the meantime, please send payment for further tickets in a named envelope. If you have any further questions regarding this, please feel free to contact Mrs Malik or Mrs Brooke, in the School Office who will be happy to help.

Kidzone are running a 'Winter Wonderland Multi-Activity Holiday Club', a flyer is available on our website under 'Before and Afterschool club'.

We would like to thank you for your continued support and mention how proud we are of how well the children are coping with the changing situations. As always we wish you good health and hope you have a great weekend.

