

The Diamond Times

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January 2015

Issue 64

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<i>Page No.</i>
Mrs Henry	1-2
Grandparents' Day	2
Mrs Dundee	3-4
Textiles Club	4
Mrs Scott/Mrs Houston	5-6
Spanish Club	6
Ballymena Foodbank	7
Harvest	7
Scripture Union	7
Accelerated Reader	8-9
Mrs McKibbin/Mrs Stewart	10-11
Eco-Committee	12
Cookery Club	12
Mrs Gillespie	13-15
Extra-Curricular Activities	16-17
Christmas Events	18

Editor's Note

*"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply
our hearts unto wisdom." Psalm 90:12*

The Christmas celebrations have passed for another year and we find ourselves ready to begin a brand new year of learning at The Diamond. There are always lots of exciting things taking place in school and the new World Around Us themes will no doubt add to the buzz in this new term.

You will notice that we have a new magazine format and we do hope you will enjoy catching up with what has been happening in school. Our aim is to give you a succinct insight into the daily life within our classrooms and keep you up to date with developments in how the curriculum is being taught. You will also find details of what's been happening in the Friday Clubs and with the After-School Activities.

Parents of Key Stage 2 children will already be aware that we have recently introduced the pupils to the Accelerated Reader programme and more details about that are included in this issue. The children have definitely taken to this new reading system and are very enthusiastic about taking quizzes to earn points to spend at the prize cabinet.

As a staff we thank you for your continued support and send to you our best wishes for the year ahead.

Mr Beattie

Take Note

SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

Week beginning - 12th January 2015

WINTER HALF-TERM BREAK

**Monday 16th - Wednesday 18th
February 2015 incl.**

It's "Rhyme Time" with P1 and P2

by Mrs Henry



What a busy first term we have had in Primary 1 and 2. In September we welcomed the following pupils: Alfie Greer, Tamzin McNeilly, Bobby Backus, Duncan Risk, Ellen Todd, Lillia Gordon, Haylee Kirkpatrick, Connie McFadden, Lara Logan, Adam Steele, Rory Wylie, William Wall, Reuben Saunderson, Amy Lowry, Holly Kyle, Madison-Lilly Harrison and Kyle Stewart. All have settled in well and are enjoying school life.

In our Numeracy lessons Primary 1 have been learning to recognise and write the numbers to 5, while Primary 2 have been learning to add and take away. We have also been completing lots of practical activities related to shape and pattern.

During Literacy time Primary 1 have been developing their book handling skills and have started to learn their sounds. We are working hard to put sounds together to read and make words. Primary 2 have been revising their sounds and have been trying hard with their



independent writing.



In the World Around Us our first topic was called 'A time to rhyme'. We looked at lots of different rhymes. We discovered that the class favourite was Baa Baa Black Sheep. Primary 2 even made up new endings to the Humpty Dumpty rhyme.

One of the highlights of this term was making our very own Dingle Dangle Scarecrow.

We have recently started our new topic, Weather Watchers, and have been enjoying finding out more about all the different types of weather. We have been learning about the wind and rain and are really hoping for some snow to play in!!



P2s and P3s give a Helping Hand

by Mrs Dundee



We have been very busy in the P2/3 room this term. In Literacy lessons we have continued to learn our phonics and reading and have really enjoyed sharing stories together. One of the favourites was called 'When Mum Turned into a Monster', with 'Funnybones' coming a close second. We have also been working hard at writing independently and have been learning how to write an explanation.

In Numeracy the P2s have been counting, adding and subtracting, using rods, cubes, teddies, counters and children! They had fun playing games to practise these skills. The P3 children have become more familiar with the 100 number square and have been practising their addition and subtraction skills.

The children have also enjoyed PE lessons with Mo from The Irish Football Association. This term they have been working on balancing skills and co-ordination, playing fun games like

'Extreme Pac-man' and 'Shake the Pirate'.

Our themes in World Around Us have been Helping Hands and From Me To You. The children discovered that they are helped by lots of people at home. There are many people in our school and in our community who help us too. They heard about nurses, fire-fighters, refuse collectors, police, dentists, opticians, doctors and many others.





The boys and girls also thought about how they can help other people in school and at home, and they took assembly to show everyone in school what they had learned.

More recently in our theme From Me to You the children have been learning about how letters we write get from us to the place we send them.

The children wrote to pupils in a school in Hungary. They sent them drawings of their homes and of themselves and some photos of our school. They were very excited to receive a package from Northern Ireland and now we are waiting for their replies.



We were very pleased to welcome Dr Harper from Ballymena Health Centre to our classroom. She brought some patients with her and needed help to treat them all. Luckily there were plenty of volunteers from our class! They used special instruments to look in throats, eyes and ears. They checked temperatures and felt sore tummies. They even stitched up cut heads and gave vaccinations to babies!

TEXTILES CLUB



Textiles club gives children the opportunity to experience working with various yarns and threads.

The children have plaited wool and made friendship bracelets, experimented with finger-crochet (more friendship bracelets!) and tried yarn wrapping to make a selection of colourful snakes. They also sewed their names on to bookmarks.

This session they have been sewing colourful 'minimalist' Christmas trees and hope to make candy cane decorations from yarn.

P4/5 learn that “there’s no place like home”

by Mrs Scott and Mrs Houston



We have been having lots of fun in Primary 4 and 5 this term and have been learning lots of new and exciting things.

Our theme this term has been ‘**Home Sweet Home**’ so we have been learning all about different homes around the world and animal homes. We have enjoyed making our own houses out of shoe boxes and decorated them with different pieces of furniture. We have also been learning about different animal homes and had great fun making a pond, barn, tree and animals to go into each for our wall display.

In Literacy we have been learning about lots of different things. We have been taking turns at adopting the different roles in Reciprocal Reading. We enjoyed reading *The Twits* as a class novel. We have also been learning about Instructional writing and writing our own instructions on how to build a house.

Primary 4 and 5 have enjoyed Numeracy

activities this term. We have been outside to work on numeracy activities such as co-ordinates and directions. In other activities we



have played games on the Interactive White Board and computers to help us with our learning. Our numeracy is as practical as possible to help the children enjoy their lessons.

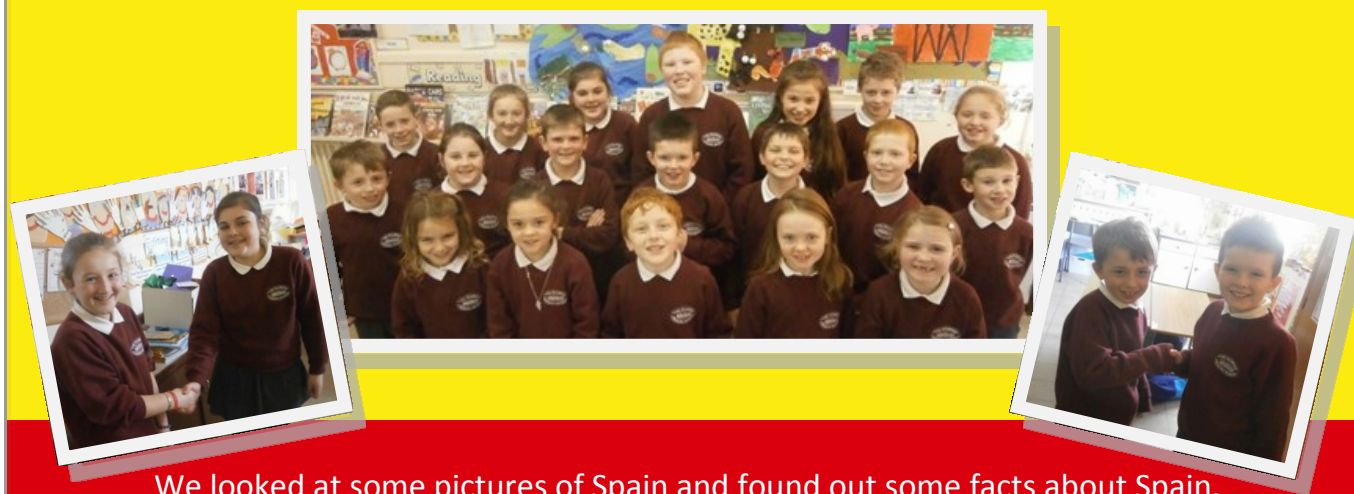
In other classes Primary 4 and 5 have enjoyed learning new skills in P.E. We have been learning about Creation and Abraham in R.E. In PDMU we have been looking at how we are all special and we had a chance to interview a person who is special to us in our family.

Primary 4 and 5 have been working hard to learn lots of new things and are looking forward to all the learning and fun the rest of the year will bring.



Spanish Club!

We have been enjoying learning all about Spain and Spanish in our Friday club. We really enjoyed learning to say hello and goodbye to each other in Spanish



We looked at some pictures of Spain and found out some facts about Spain. We have been learning the colours, numbers, greetings, animals and relatives. Then we started to learn how to say some Spanish phrases!



Emergency food for local people in crisis

A project seeded by The Trussell Trust

DONATE
to your local foodbank.

We have been collecting food for Ballymena Foodbank. Every half term the food is taken to the Foodbank and weighed in. To date we have donated approximately 150Kg. This food is distributed to local people who are in crisis and all your donations are very much appreciated.

Thanks to everyone who has helped to collect so much food - please keep sending so that we can send it to those who are living in poverty or crisis, especially as Christmas approaches.



We've been enjoying learning simple Bible truths through the story of David this term. We compete in 'sword drill'. We are given a scripture to look up as quickly as we can. This gives us our focus for the week.



We learned how to look beyond the outside in this fun fashion show. When Samuel was sent to anoint David as King, he learned that God is more concerned with what is in our hearts.



"The Lord is my rock" (Psalm 18v2)
We painted rocks to help us remember that God can help us with big problems just like He helped David to defeat Goliath.



We looked at David's Psalms of praise. We made sheep cup cakes to remind us of the Bible truth in Psalm 23v1 - "The Lord is my shepherd."

***And do not forget to do good
and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices
God is pleased.***

Heb. 13:16



harvest services

Accelerated Reader...



As you no doubt will have heard by now, we have just begun a new programme in school for P4 – P7 called Accelerated Reader. We've been looking forward to getting this started, and now that it's all kicked off, there is major excitement in our Key Stage 2 classes!

Basically, Accelerated Reader motivates children to read by awarding points which, at a given time, can be exchanged for prizes. The programme carefully charts the progress of the children as they undertake comprehension 'quizzes' and alters the levels of difficulty, challenging each child to improve.

Our library has been totally re-organised and catalogued to tie in with this scheme and our exciting prize cabinet is proving to be very motivational.

Hopefully these pages will give you some further information on this programme. Thank you so much to all who have helped in our fundraising this year - as we hope to add to our resources for this scheme.

Accelerated Reader (AR) is the practice component of a comprehensive reading programme. It allows personalised practice and provides the data needed to manage that practice.

With over 25,000 books available for AR, every child can select books of an appropriate difficulty that also interest them. Students take fun motivational quizzes to test their comprehension of the books they have read, aiming for benchmarks and targets set by their teachers through AR's extensive reporting capabilities.



Our new Accelerated Reader Prize Cabinet

Motivate students for learning.

Self-selected reading at the optimal level results in success, which spurs enthusiasm. Students are motivated to read constantly in class, at break times and at home.

Receive reliable, objective information.

The data generated by AR covers reading comprehension, vocabulary development, literacy skills development, and more. AR provides teachers with immediate information, helping them monitor the reading level and comprehension skills of each student and inform further instruction or intervention.

Involve parents with reading.

Students and parents get instant feedback to help motivate success with the use of TOPS reports and Renaissance Home Connect™, which allows parents to view their children's progress from home.

“The biggest buzz is listening to the students recommending and talking about books to one another – AR has really opened up a new horizon for many of them”.

Keep all students challenged.

Students are guided to books where the difficulty is neither too hard nor too easy – the level at which optimal learning takes place.



Accelerated Reader encourages substantial differentiated reading practice to create strong readers.

AR can be used with all students, including struggling and reluctant readers, gifted and talented and those with special educational needs. Based on each student's independent reading level, which is determined by a STAR Reading assessment, AR helps teachers set personalised goals for each student.

Remember...



The more that you read - The more things you will know.

The more that you learn - The more places you'll go. - Dr Seuss



P5/6 go on a 'Power Trip'

by Mrs McKibbin and Mrs Stewart



This has been a very exciting term in our Primary 5 and 6 classroom. We have all been very busy learning about our World Around Us theme

"We've got the Power!"

We started out by finding out what people in our class knew about 'Power.' Our first activity was a carousel type activity where we moved around various stations completing tasks such as looking at powerful people, investigating what causes lightning, electrical circuits and appliances which use different power sources.

We then spent a few weeks learning about electricity and making electrical circuits which

we could turn on and off with a switch. We really enjoyed this and we are looking forward to making Christmas Trees which have lights on them in the next few weeks! We talked about how people can have power and we wrote a wish list of some powerful people who we would like to have a Skype session with. This list included Mary Berry, David Beckham and One Direction! **The highlight of this activity was when our class received a letter from the Queen and then a week later we received a letter from the Prime Minister!!**

On 21st October our class took assembly. We acted out scenarios and explained to the other classes what we had learnt as part of our theme.



We sang the new song 'Shine' which we have learned this year to finish off our assembly.

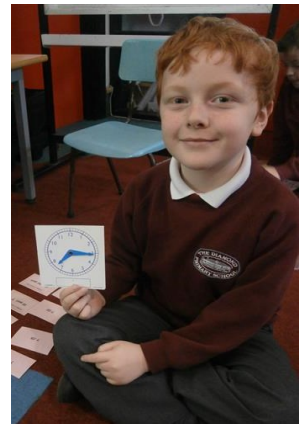
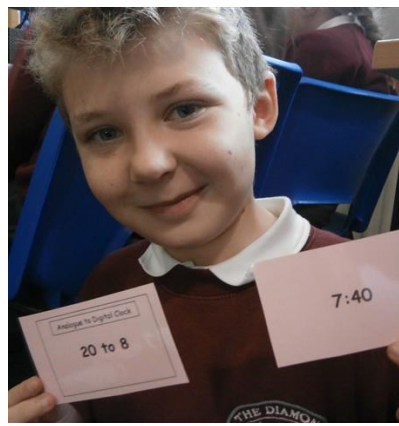
We had a visit from Ashley, the Education Officer of The Northern Ireland Assembly, on 13th November. She came to tell us all about how new laws are made in Northern Ireland and what happens in Stormont each day. It was great fun and the children had an opportunity to make up their own laws and then vote using individual keypads!



challenged to use the processes which they have learned in Numeracy to investigate 'real life' problems.



The class have also been learning to tell the time in analogue and digital. Primary 6 are starting to use 24 hour times too. They are all going to be looking at how long their favourite TV programmes and films are on for over Christmas! We will be converting these times into hours, minutes and even seconds!



On 20th November we had a visit from a representative of Bryson House. Laurence came to tell us all about renewable sources of energy. He told us how we could save energy by insulating areas of our homes. Parents would be interested to hear about the vast amount of money which could be saved each year by just insulating our attics!

In Numeracy we have been focussing on Problem solving involving addition, subtraction and money. The children really enjoy being

Just another fun packed term in P5/6!!!



Eco-Committee



Meet our school ECO Committee comprised of children from P4-7, all of whom were elected to be class representatives by their peers. Since the beginning of term, they have been working hard to ensure that 'The Diamond Shines'.

One of our first tasks involved tidying up the



school grounds and preparing the raised beds and window boxes for winter. This was hard work but we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!

Here we are asking the rest of the school for some help to implement an important change in relation to the way we dispose of our rubbish.

We delivered new colour coded bins to each classroom and P6/7 held a competition to design new bin labels. Our 3 winners are pictured below with the P6/7 ECO reps.



We have had another exciting term in Cookery Club making treats such as Malty Choc Chip Cookies, Wheaten Bread and not forgetting delicious Orange Cheesecake!

The children have mastered such skills as creaming butter and sugar, rubbing butter into flour and even cracking an egg - a first for many pupils!!



most P6/7 are ~~not~~ amused with The Victorians

by Mrs Gillespie

Our WAU theme has been 'Vicky's Age'. We enjoyed investigating the lives of children who lived during the Victorian Era and looked at the changes implemented by Dr Thomas John Barnardo whose vision paved the way for the development of Barnardo's as one of the UK's leading charities. We completed personal projects on this topic and presented our hard work to the rest of the school in assembly. Our amazing posters cover a whole wall in our classroom!



On 26th November we enjoyed a visit from Mark Cunningham, a representative from Barnardo's and were given the opportunity to ask him some questions about the work of this charity in today's society. We used the film 'Oliver' to help us draw comparisons between the social classes in Victorian times and really enjoyed exploring the work of the famous artist William Morris. In art, we also created our own silhouettes. The results were extremely effective! We are currently exploring Victorian school life and will touch on some of the important inventions of

this era before the Christmas holidays.



P6/7 also had the opportunity to participate in a special assembly and workshop led by Childline which taught them about ways to stay happy and safe. We received a special certificate for all our hard work.



In literacy we have been working hard on developing our reciprocal reading skills and are becoming increasingly confident in adopting the various roles. The most popular is still 'Big Boss'.

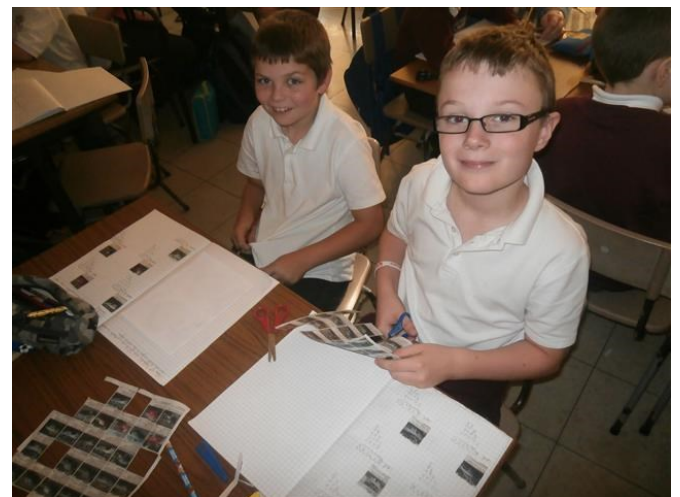


We have also been exploring the features of recount writing and are ready to begin writing our own Victorian Diary entries describing a typical school day. Recently the class also engaged in writing Autumn haiku. We learned how to include personification to make our imagery more vivid.

In numeracy we have covered a range of topics and have particularly enjoyed problem solving in real life contexts. The P6 boys were extremely



enthusiastic about using the Autotrader to explore place value concepts. They also enjoyed using Smyths catalogues to learn more about shopping on a budget.



On the 7th November we held a 'Duvet Day' to reward P6/7 for all of their hard work in Term 1. It gave them the opportunity to unwind and encouraged a positive mind-set for those P7 children who were sitting their first entrance examination the following day. The children were



invited to bring in their duvets and had great fun playing games. They also enjoyed their own special Pancake and Hot Chocolate Bar. The day culminated with a Shloer Reception with Mr Beattie who reminded the pupils that they have been wonderfully made by God and that he has a special plan for each of their lives. A fab day was had by all.

A great big 'well done' to all of the P7 pupils who recently completed examinations in our local grammar schools. We are all looking forward to a

'test free' Term 2!

As we head towards the holidays, Christmas play rehearsals are in full swing! P7 are also enjoying their Librarian duties, helping younger children to get to grips with our new 'Accelerated Reader' initiative. With a cupboard full of prizes waiting to be claimed, they are also excited at the prospect of building up their own, personal point banks! P6/7 have worked extremely hard this term and will no doubt tackle Term 2 with the same energy and enthusiasm!



The P7 pupils will be attending

IN-O-V8

at Cullybackey College on
Friday 9th January 2015



This event is attended by around 700 local primary school children and provides pupils with an insight into robotics, science and technology, with lots of fun demonstrations and hands-on activities.



The P6/7 class will attend the Ballymena North Business Centre on Thursday 29th January 2015 to learn about different aspects of personal and community safety.

Participating agencies include PSNI, Women's Aid, Health & Safety Executive, NIFRS, Council EHOs and Translink.



Congratulations to Chloe Martin [P6] who recently won 1st prize in a competition run by C-books.

Extra-Curricular Activities

FOOTBALL CLUB

The Football Club have already taken part in three tournaments this term. The skills gained in Thursday practices came to the fore as the boys' performance was superb in these matches.



HOCKEY CLUB

After school Hockey girls meet every other Tuesday and we enjoy learning different ball skills and stick handling. We are starting to learn about positions and how to work together in a match situation.



We practise dribbling the ball in and out of cones, passing and shooting. We love to get outside in the nice weather and recently we have played mini matches. We are really looking forward to our first tournament.

NETBALL CLUB

Netball club has been meeting after school on alternate Tuesdays this term. We have between 20 and 25 girls regularly attending. Usually we start off with ball skills, throwing and catching games and then we usually play a few matches or

a mini tournament. The girls' skills are improving every week and we have a lot of fun at netball.



We look forward to competing in some 'friendly' matches with other schools and the netball tournament early in new year.



CHOIR

The choir have had an especially busy season practising to perfect pieces for Grandparents' Day, the Harvest Services and the Christmas Concerts.

There has been a great attendance on Monday afternoons and consequently over 30 pupils were transported to Montgomerys in Ballymena on Thursday 4th December to perform on Radio Cracker's school spot. This year we added some bell ringing to our repertoire and really enjoyed being interviewed on live radio. The choir then moved to The Tower Centre to entertain passing shoppers. A big thank you to all the parents and friends who stopped by to listen to us sing.



*This is
Christmas
2014*

