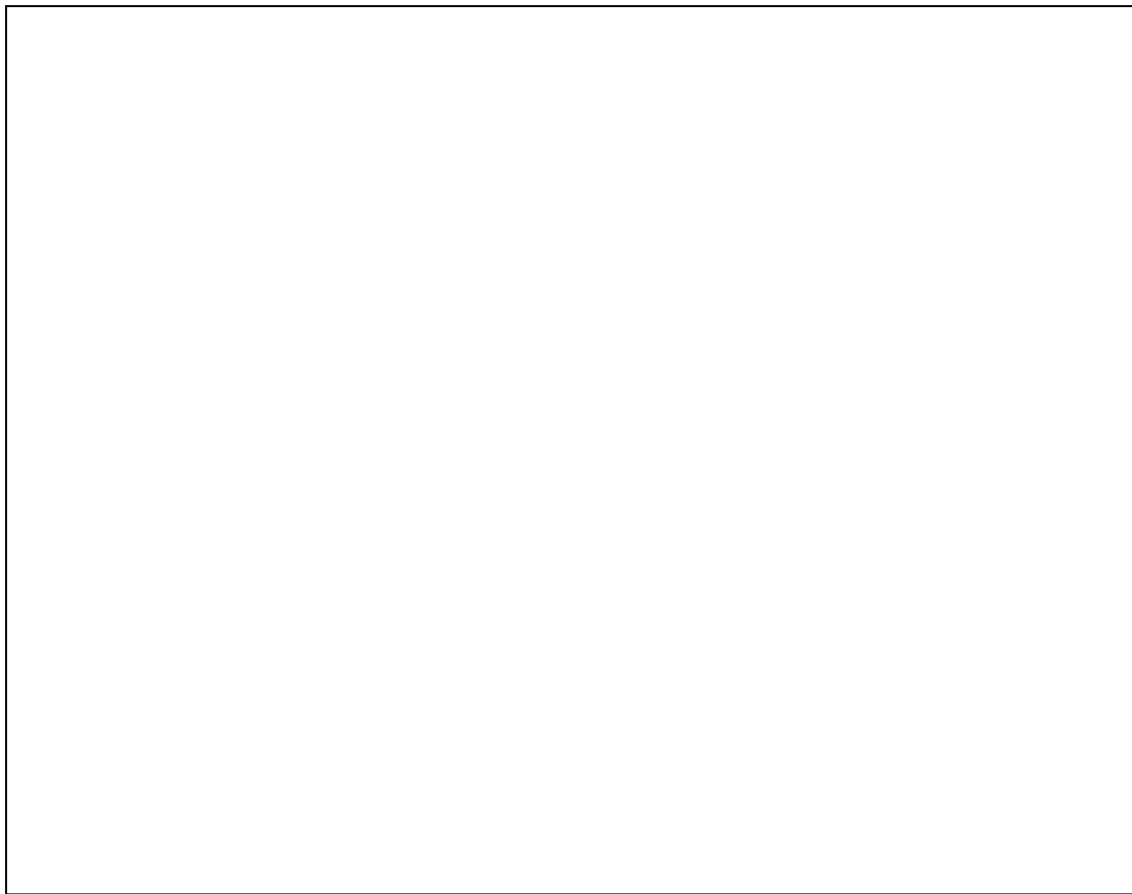


WESSEX WEEKLY

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Still Life by Anisah Hussain, Y5

This week:

Snow, school closures, ideas for half term activities,
and much more.....



From the Head's Chair



Its been a challenging and exciting week for parents, staff and children alike this week as we have all tried to cope with the inclement weather and travelling conditions. It is always a very difficult decision to make when closing a school and it is never made lightly. I am very aware of the implications of school closures on our parents and families, but this has to be weighed up against both the safety of the children and our ability to ensure this throughout the day. There has been lots of concern in the national press this week regarding school closures and the apparent 'lack of determination' to keep the country running. What we must remember is that both families and staff are more mobile and travel from further afield to get to school and work, and as you know, all forms of transport have had their own challenges in the snow. It's a difficult call, but our procedures for notification of school closure are in place, and improving, to ensure that you have the information you need as early as possible.

On that note, I have written to Cliff Turner, Director of Children's Services at the local authority, to express my concern about the time it took on Monday and Tuesday to get notification of our closure on the Borough and BBC Berkshire websites. I know I was not the only Headteacher to raise these concerns and as a result the strategy has been improved to ensure earlier notification. That said, I was really impressed by the children on Thursday who behaved extremely well in unfamiliar circumstances at the beginning of the day and the staff who really pulled together to make it happen (after my own journey from High Wycombe which took approaching 3 hours). Don't worry - I put myself in the late book! I would like to finish by thanking those of you, such as Kelly Cook, who were kind enough to phone round and help us by informing parents of the school closure at the beginning of the week. This is a real help as I know we received 200+ calls in the office! Please try the following links at the beginning of next week if the weather fails to improve.

http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/ed_schools_closed.htm

http://www.bbc.co.uk/berkshire/content/articles/2008/04/22/school_closures_feature.shtml

Other than the weather.....

Thank you to the 13 parents who returned the 'questionnaire' about what you want from our new school website. If nothing else, this week has reinforced the need to get our new look website up and running and we will continue to gather the views of children, staff and governors to make sure we get it right, and soon! Ironically, the installation of our Solar Panels on the lower school roof is underway, and I would like to remind parents of children in Green class to use the entrance to Red class until the works are completed. Furthermore, the furniture and resources for our 'Family Room' have been dispatched and I look forward to inviting parents for a look when we open. If you are a member of a group or association who might make use of this new facility, or just someone who might like to try something new, please let us know. We've had a request for an art class for grown ups already as a result of our Art Gallery last week, so we'll see what we can do.....

Nick Stevens

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ParentMail



We strongly encourage parents to sign up to our ParentMail facility which came in extremely useful this week as we were able to e-mail parents to let them know that the school was closed (and indeed open on Thursday!). Although Monday's e-mail was a bit slow getting to some parents due to the high

volume of traffic on the internet at that time, other e-mails that were sent got to parents in good time (before breakfast in some cases). ParentMail will also mean you can get all letters and newsletters by e-mail too (if you want to). To sign up to ParentMail, just let the ladies in the office have your e-mail address. More snow is forecast for early next week, so the sooner you can sign up, the better. If you are unsure about whether the school is open, we will endeavour to get the information to you by 8.00am. If you have not received it by then, please contact the school office, but try to give us until then to make an informed decision based on localised conditions.

B4T

The Church of the Good Shepherd is holding the second of its B4T events on **Sunday 8th February at 4pm**. This is a relaxed family time, with messy activities, lively worship and a shared tea. More information is on the website www.chogs.org.uk.

This Week's Requests

- Lots more boxes of tissues please!
- Anything for the school garden – bulbs, seeds, tools, offers of help, etc.
- “Cash for Schools” tokens from the Maidenhead Advertiser (Page 4 this week – no need to cut my head off thankfully!).

Funding News

We are in the process of seeking funding towards the development of our playground and school grounds. The Royal Bank of Scotland have a ‘Supergrounds’ scheme which awards grants of up to £4000 for this purpose. Last week I asked if any parents could help us in this way and I am really pleased to say that our application is now underway thanks to a parent who works for RBS. Many companies run similar schemes and want to support practical projects in the community, so if you or your company can help in any way, we want to hear from you. Please get in touch!

Pupil Support Services

Occasionally we are approached by companies to send out details of pupil home study or support services. Please be aware that we will be sending out details over the next couple of weeks and we ask you to return any slips to school the following day (whether interested in the provision or not). We do not endorse these services directly, but have been approached by a couple of parents wishing to find out more about how to support their children's education at home. We will do all we can to keep you informed and supply you with ideas and opportunities in this area and keep you posted about useful resources.



New Harrison's Menu

Along with this newsletter you should receive a copy of the new Harrison's menu which starts after the half term holiday. As usual, roast day is on Wednesdays and Friday is (of course) fish and chip day, although I can see that the new menu also contains some of the other favourites such as lasagne and pizza (twice!!). If your child doesn't currently have a school lunch, please encourage them to give it a try!

This week's....

TALKING HOMEWORK	THINKING SKILLS CHALLENGE
What are the pro's and con's of school being closed for a day if the snow is really deep?	How could you spend £5000 to improve the lives of other people? (continued from last week).

Half Term Activities

We have heard from the Magnet and Windsor Leisure Centres about a number of activities that they are running over the half term holiday, including arts and crafts, hockey, football, cinema trips and lots more. For more information contact the Leisure Centres direct - Windsor on 01753 850004 or the Magnet on 01628 639955.

We also have details of a number of other activities and holiday clubs taking place across the borough through the holiday. Details and ideas are in the letter rack outside the school office. Please help yourself!

Other Activities

Berkshire Maestros are running a Rock Band course for all electric guitarists, vocalists, bass and keyboard players with at least two terms of experience. The course will run on 7th, 8th, and 9th April. Further details are available from the Maestros on 0118 901 2351.

Some dates for your diary:

DATE	OCCASION	WHO?
Wednesday 11th February	Y3 Class assembly 9.10am	Parents and carers of children in Y3
Thursday 12 th February	Reception Class assembly	All parents and carers of Reception children
Thursday 12 th February	Dance Festival at the Magnet Leisure Centre	Children and parents of 30 and Purple class
Friday 13 th February	End of term 3 (3.20pm)	Everyone!
Friday 13 th March	Red Nose Day - various silly activities in school	All

The Family Information Service

Information, advice and support as your children grow up

01628 507587 http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/parental_support.htm