

February  
2012

# Aston House News



## Dear Parents,

School started with a bang this term, with a pantomime visit on the second day, and the first half term has continued in the same hectic way with trips out and visitors into school. The Valentine's Disco on Friday ensures that it ends with the same energy and excitement. Next half term will also be jam packed for there will be Book Week activities, including Poetry evening and Dressing Up Day, as well as a Mother's Day Assembly for the Junior School, along with two singing engagements for the choir and the school play to look forward to. Make sure you have a copy of the school calendar to keep up to date. Copies can be obtained from the school office and they are also available on the website. We hope to continue our successful parent Assemblies and will be in touch with those parents who have volunteered their services.



## Pantomime

On our second day back at Aston House this term, Reception, Class 1 and Class 2, were treated to a visit to see *Cinderella*, this year's pantomime at Richmond Theatre. After an early lunch, we left by coach and arrived in good time. When we entered the theatre, we met the Senior School who were also fortunate enough to attend. The inside of the theatre and the stage looked very impressive and the children were excited to be there. Many of the children were completely awe struck when the show started and were amazed at the scenery, costumes and lighting. The cast were fantastic and the two step-sisters were incredibly funny. The children especially loved the character of 'Buttons' and had the pleasure of having their photo taken with him at the end of the show. A few of our children were lucky to be chosen to go on stage and each received a free 'goody bag'. After an enjoyable and memorable afternoon, we returned to school by coach with many tired but happy children.

The children thought the ugly sisters were hilarious at the pantomime, and some of the children with 'Buttons' outside the theatre.

Mrs Hayes



## Reading Museum Trip

The whole of the Senior School visited Reading Museum on 27<sup>th</sup> January. This Museum has a variety of galleries and also has a copy of the Bayeux Tapestry made over 100 years ago. The Robins' class looked at the Roman Gallery and a wonderful exhibition of bird paintings which linked in with our bird watching theme. There was also a hands-on gallery where the children had the opportunity to handle various artefacts. The Blackbirds also visited the Roman Gallery and toured the Mammals' Gallery, where there was a woolly mammoth's tooth which had been found in the area. The main focus for Kestrels was the Bayeux Tapestry as they have been studying the Medieval period this term. In the afternoon all the children took part in a Medieval workshop linked to the tapestry. They enjoyed dressing up as Medieval characters and re-enacting scenes from the tapestry.

Iain looking very royal during the Reading Museum trip

Mrs Cummings

## LIFEGUARDS VISIT ASTON HOUSE!

Aston House warmly welcomed a volunteer from the RNLI last Wednesday, 25th January. Years 4, 5 and 6 all listened with interest to the presentation; which was accompanied by a vivid and colourful slide show. The children were intrigued to see slides of the life-like rescue operations and to learn that the institute relies on 40.000 volunteers; working on lifeboats, at stations on beaches and fundraising. They work tirelessly 24/7 to ensure comprehensive safety around the country. The RNLI is an independent charity with a board of volunteer trustees and we were amazed to learn that 140.000 lives have been saved since the institute's foundation in 1824. Life guards are highly trained to offer safety advice, give first aid and perform rescues and are a welcome sight at more than 160 beaches in England. Towards the end of the presentation, and in true Aston House spirit, boys and girls broke out into a round of applause. They seemed to really be very touched by the selflessness and bravery of the volunteers and certainly had a clearer idea of how to maintain their own beach-safety in the future. The institute requires 123 million a year and is funded by voluntary donations. Please visit their website if you wish to donate to this very worthwhile organisation.

Mrs C van Dinter

## Chinese New Year

In the Chinese calendar the year of the dragon is particularly special and the Junior School celebrated it in style. It all started off in spectacular fashion when Iris in Year 2 bought in her own pet 'dragon' lizard during 'Pet week'. Luckily for us it wasn't the type that breathes fire but was big and dragony enough to fascinate the children (and staff). In Nursery, Miss Nicole set up a brilliant interactive display with paper dragons, Chinese newspapers, envelopes, lanterns and various other objects related to their new year festivities. The display proved very useful too for the Junior school assembly, when Mrs Hayes explained what the Chinese New Year festivities involve. The paper dragons also inspired Art Club to make their own.

Also in Nursery, we made a dragon mask out of a cardboard box that was big enough to put over your head. By using the colours red and yellow (gold) it looked very effective. We incorporated the dragon mask into P.E. by doing a group dragon 'dance'. The children took turns wearing the mask, with the rest of Nursery and Reception snaking behind under a red and gold sari. It really did look amazing! (see photos). We also made envelopes and cut out 'money' to put into them. Year 1 and 2 also used this opportunity to get creative making a variety of masks and dragons. Year 2 children found out what Chinese animal corresponded with the year they were born and made a mask to reflect it. I wonder if that was the year of the monkey?!

Miss Caroline

## Tuck Shop

During last term's student council meeting it was requested that they be allowed to start a tuck shop, which the Kestrel children would take responsibility to run. This term the idea is being trialed on the last Thursday of each month.

On the 23rd of January, the first Tuck shop took place. The year 5 and 6 students organised themselves (and their Mums) to bring a selection of cakes to sell to the Senior School children. Signs were created to advertise the price of the cakes and a duty rota allowed all the children to have a turn at serving the customers. The Kestrel children were challenged to arrange the shop in a sensible fashion and make sure the correct change was given. After the shop closed, they then reflected on what type of cakes sold more quickly and what they would do differently next time. They raised about £20 which they have decided to put into a fund. With the money they raise, they intend to give some to charity and spend some on play resources for the class.

Miss de Garnham



**The RNLI presentation**



**Khiana and Rohan having fun during the Chinese New Year celebrations, and yes that's Noah under the dragon mask!**



## Queens College Netball Match

On the afternoon of Monday 16th January the year 4, 5 and 6 girls travelled to Regents Park to play a game against Queen's College. . We were fortunate to have with us two parents, Mrs Mustafaev and Mrs McKinnon, who kindly gave up their afternoons to travel with us to the game. We walked down to Ealing Broadway station to travel to Regents Park by tube. This journey was more detailed, with a change of train at Oxford Circus. The girls were challenged to navigate themselves to the correct platform by following the signs that were displayed around the station. We were then greeted at the station by Queen's College girls, and directed to the Netball courts. The girls played to a good standard, demonstrating their improved sportsmanship skills. At half time the team responded to the encouragement from their coach and supporters and they began to play more defensively. After the game the girls had a small snack before travelling back to Ealing.

Miss de Garnham



## School Council Meeting

The School Council met this half term. Lots of issues were discussed, including the success of the Tuck Shop and the new cushions which are being purchased for the library. There were a few items from last term's meeting that still need to be followed up.

Mrs Cummings

**The netball team**

## Visit from Narconon

Kestrels received a visit from Gary who works for Narconon, a drugs' awareness charity. He conducted an interesting workshop for the children and gave them the chance to ask questions about the dangers of alcohol, drugs and smoking. The children enjoyed the session and felt they knew more about the subject after the visit.

Mrs Cummings

## Year 2 Pet Week

Our PSHE unit this term has been 'Animals and Us'. In these lessons the children have been introduced to the idea of rights and responsibilities through exploring issues of animal welfare. They also found out about voluntary/community organisations that campaign on animal welfare issues. A couple of children wanted to bring in their pets, and so 'Pet Week' was created! Didi started the week off by bringing in no less than three goldfish. On Wednesday we had two more visitors, Dash the bearded dragon (and his breakfast of live locusts and worms), kindly bought in by Iris's mum, and Anya's hamster, Hammy. On Thursday we had a very excitable Harry, Juliet's dog. The children learnt a lot from the visits and all produced impressive non-chronological reports about bearded dragons in English. It was such a successful week that Poppy from Year 1 was inspired to bring in her guinea pigs for Show and Tell on Friday.

Miss Rai

## Magician Magic!

At the beginning of the year, Nursery and Reception were lucky to have Richard Pinner the Magician, visit for the afternoon and do some magic. The magician arrived in his very colourful outfit and with a wonderful bag of magic. The children were told the secret magic words (Sizzling Sausages!) and were ready to do some magic! He started off by magically making long pieces of material disappear into thin air with the help of Namah and Noah from Reception. We were then lucky enough to meet the little bear that lived in the magic box. The children enjoyed meeting the bear and were in fits of laughter when he kept hiding away back in his box. Lastly, with his amazing balloon skills the magician made a colourful reindeer which Nursery and Reception decided to name 'Rudolph' The children loved having the magician there and it made a fantastic afternoon. By wiggling their fingers and shouting "Sizzling Sausages" Nursery and Reception all helped to make the magic happen!

Miss Sonal



**Juliet with Harry the dog and Iris with Dash the lizard**

## Stay and Play

In Reception class, parents were invited to come and spend time with their children playing together and working on activities. The children were very enthusiastic, showing their parents their favourite activities or sharing a story with them. It was hard to tell who was having the most enjoyment. Clearly going off to work was not as much fun as staying to play with his son for one Dad in particular. It was a special time for both parents and children and an enjoyable experience for Mrs Giles also. Thank you to all the parents who were able to come.

Mrs Giles

## Cycle Safety talk

Recently we had Mrs Aljibouri, who is Laith's granny, come to speak to us about her very interesting job. Working for the borough of Ealing, she coaches people of all ages on how to ride a bike and how to maintain it. The children were very helpful in identifying a puncture and learnt how to repair one. We had a chance to look at and feel the inner tube and some children even got to pump air into it! Mrs Aljibouri also does cycle road safety training and we may consider running one of these courses at the Junior School at the beginning of the summer holidays

Miss Zonneveld

## Buddy Reading

The children at the Senior School have begun 'buddy reading'. This is where the children, in pairs or in groups of three take turns to listen to one another read a chosen text. The children give one another support and encouragement. Everyone is enjoying participating in buddy reading and making new friendships across the year groups.

Miss Zonneveld

## Pupil's Voice: Kashmir Gill, Robins

This term we had lots of fun. We went on trips and had lots of activities in school. One Friday we went to Richmond Theatre and saw a Cinderella pantomime. I went up on the stage at the end and met Buttons. The school loved the pantomime!

We also went to Reading Museum. My favourite part was the tapestry. It shows an interesting story. The tapestry was called the Bayeux Tapestry.

The Kestrels ran a tuck shop at break time where the children could buy treats. It was to raise money for charity. I would definitely like to have a tuck shop again. It was fun and a nice thing to do

## Ballet

There will not be a ballet lesson during the first week back after the half-term break, (22<sup>nd</sup> February)

## Fund Raising

Thank you to everyone who donated money to the Marie Curie foundation. I hope all the daffodils are thriving.

You may have noticed the shoe boxes in both schools. As we fill them up, a local charity collects and weighs them and gives us a small remuneration. The shoes are either sent on to poorer countries or recycled. If you have any old, outgrown shoes please do bring them in, the more we provide, the more we can raise. This money will go into providing extras for the children, such as board games or playtime equipment.

I wonder what the weather will be like over half term? So far this year we have had warm, sunny weather, icy blasts, driving wind and rain and finally snow! Whatever you have planned to do and wherever you intend to go, may I wish you a happy time next week.

*Paula Seabrook*



**Manato and his dad,  
and Khiana and her  
mum, busy in  
Reception**



**The cycle safety talk**

