



HALTON LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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NEWSLETTER 10

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NEU INDUSTRIAL ACTION



You may be aware from media coverage that the National Education Union (NEU) have declared that industrial (strike) action will be taking place on:

- **Wednesday 1 February 2023** (for all eligible members in England and Wales).
- **Tuesday 28 February 2023** (for all eligible members in the Northern, North West, Yorkshire & The Humber regions).
- **Wednesday 15 March 2023** (for all eligible members in England and Wales).
- **Thursday 16 March 2023** (for all eligible members in England and Wales).

The strike is happening because of a **national** dispute between the unions and the government over pay and conditions and not because of any issues at our school.

The NEU said in a statement: "*The ballot is a result of failure by the secretary of state in England and the employers in Wales to ensure enough money is available to pay a fully-funded increase in pay for teachers which at least matches inflation, and which begins to restore lost pay.*"

Whilst not all of the teachers at our school are members of the NEU (as they are members of other teaching unions), the industrial action that is scheduled to take place is most likely to affect our school. This will mean that we will have to close to pupils in certain year groups – as, without the teaching staff to open and operate safely, it would not be safe or appropriate to remain open when we do not have the staff to operate as normal.

Whilst talks between the teaching unions and the government are scheduled to take place prior to the first of these proposed dates, **we strongly recommend that you start to make alternative childcare arrangements in the event that the school needs to partially close (and your child is unable to come into school on this day).**

We will inform you whether your child's class will be open or closed on these days as soon as we can. If a class is closed, we are not able to make specific arrangements for any of the pupils to attend school on the day any national or regional industrial action is taking place – even if this means that a sibling may be in school when they are not. *However, we do intend to make sure that all of those children who are entitled to a free school meal are able to be served a meal on this day (even if this is a cold, packed lunch style meal).*

The teaching profession is not alone in taking strike action to force the government into reconsidering its approach to pay and working conditions. Therefore, whilst we appreciate that any school closures will be greatly inconvenient for many families, these actions are only taken as a last resort.

We will share any key updates regarding necessary school closures with you via Studybugs – so please make sure you

are signed up to receive important information and details of any last minute changes.

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON IN SCHOOL THIS TERM, SO FAR?

There has been lots going on in school since we reopened after the Christmas Holiday period. Here is a flavour of some of things that have been going on this term:



In **Reception**, the children have started taking part in Forest School lessons – which have taken place in both of the wooded areas that we have at our school: (i) our environmental area on the grass bank where the pond is located, and (ii) the newly planted forest at the top of the school field. As well as exploring all of the different materials that they could find – and comparing these with the materials that the three little pigs used to build their houses – the children have had great fun jumping in muddy puddles too.

The children are also becoming great mathematicians and have been learning all about the number 13 this week. It is amazing what they can now do and tell you, using their knowledge of numbers. They have also been retelling and performing different traditional tales (such as Little Red Riding Hood, as well as The Three Little Pigs), using puppets in the puppet theatre and in their roll play area (which is currently set up to replicate grandma's cottage).

In **Year 1**, the children discovered an old suitcase with some interesting things inside, which turned out to belong to a detective mouse called Hermelin! The children have been learning how to use noun phrases, to write character descriptions and are now learning to retell the story of Hermelin, in their own words, using a story map. If you have a child in Year 1, please ask them to share this story with you.



In computing, the children are enjoying creating digital paintings inspired by a different artist in each lesson. These have included artists such as Wassily Kandinsky, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian and Georges Seurat. They then went on to create a real painting (and compared their final piece of artwork with the digital paintings that they had created). It won't surprise you to hear that we have some very talented artists who have produced some stunning pieces of artwork.

This week, in Geography, the children have revisited their learning about the United Kingdom and where they live. They also started to think about the weather we get here, in this part of England, and why this is. They have created a weather dance in PE and have started to log what the weather is like each week in their weather diaries.



In **The Fawns**, the children have been learning about Chinese New Year – making dragon puppets, listening to Chinese music

and tasting various Chinese foods and dishes. They have also been undertaking a variety of scientific investigations into freezing and melting; and have been discussing how the weather changes from one season to the next.

After reading 'Changes' by Anthony Browne, the children chose to make some crazy changes to their classroom. For example, the bin was changed into a gorilla! The children have also been forging some great friendships and took part in the Indoor Athletics Sporting Competition with Mr Reid (and the whole of Year 1) on Monday – during which every child had an amazing time.

There has been great excitement amongst the children in **Year 2**, as they discovered lots of strange creatures were living in our environmental area, as part of their English work on 'The Bog Baby'. They have been using all of this knowledge to write some wonderful stories – which have really impressed the teachers.



The children have also been doing lots of work on money – so please encourage them to add together different coins (and to calculate what change is needed if they buy one or more objects with a £1 (or £2) coin... or even a £5 or £10 note.

In some of their other lessons, the children have been learning about what Hindus believe (in RE) and have been looking at all of the different IT equipment that we have in school (and in our homes and the wider community, such as shops), in their Computing lessons.



A lot of the work that the children have undertaken in **Year 3** has centred around story of 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes. The children have been reading the book, as part of their Guided Reading and English lessons, during which they have been discussing the wonderful illustrations and learning how to write equally brilliant descriptions (using the most effective and appropriate words and phrases that they can think of).

The children have used their knowledge of this story to help them to create stop motion animations (in Computing) and have been exploring how magnets work – as well as testing the strengths of different magnets and finding out which materials are magnetic and which are not.

It is also clear that the children are working hard on remembering and being able to recall lots of multiplication facts – and are improving, week on week, on their times table test scores. If you have a child in Year 3, please continue to keep practising at home – to see how quickly and accurately they can recall the multiplication facts that they have been working on so far. (Knowing your tables well is a great way to improve your child's mathematical fluency and overall ability in this subject).

In **Year 4**, the children have been learning how to write descriptive settings – using fronted adverbials and using increasingly more sophisticated and adventurous vocabulary – based on the novel they are reading: Arthur and the Golden Rope.



They have also been utilising their knowledge of insulators and conductors to plan and carry out scientific investigations – using their results to find the answer to different scientific questions.

In PE, the children have been developing their netball skills and in RE they have been recapping everything they have already learnt during their time at our school about Sikhism, before they go on to deepen their knowledge of how Sikhs express their religion and beliefs in lots of different ways.



In **Year 5**, the children have been detectives - investigating a crime scene linked to their work on Sherlock Holmes's book, 'The Hound of the Baskervilles'. They searched the room for various clues to help them deduce who had committed the crime that had taken place in Baskerville Hall - using their knowledge of the characters to solve the mystery. As part of their English lessons, they have also been exploring Moon poetry, to discover how poets choose their words and phrases very carefully to help the reader to visualise (and create atmosphere). This work has also helped them to develop and build their vocabulary, which we hope they will start to use more and more in their own writing.

In Science the children have been working through a range of scientific investigations - learning to become more scientific and accurate in each one - by separating materials using a variety of methods. They have also started to learn how to play the recorder this term and we hope they will be ready to give a performance to the rest of the school in the not so distant future!

In **Year 6** the children have been working with members of Halton's Health Improvement Team to learn more about the effects that drinking alcohol and using tobacco products can have on their bodies and their development. Hopefully this work will help the majority of our pupils to avoid making poor life choices – and make better use of the money they earn - as they grow older.



The children have also been learning about what life was like during The Second World War and have been using this knowledge to write diary entries to capture what life was like during The Blitz. They have also been developing their knowledge of electrical circuits, learning how to create circuit diagrams (using the correct symbols) and explored the impact of making changes, such as adding extra batteries.

We have also seen some fantastic improvements in the Year 6 children's mental arithmetic scores – with children who were scoring less than 10/40 at the start of the school year now achieving scores in the high 20s! With this level of determination to succeed and do well, it will be fascinating to see how many children can get a score of over 30 (or even over 36) by the end of the year.

Hopefully any children that you have at our school will have shared some of these things with you already. However, we felt it would be nice for you to have an overview of what's been going on this term (whilst the snow has been covering the ground outside).