

Newsletter

News from Mr Edwards-Grundy

This past week it has been wonderful to welcome parents into school to watch our youngest children re-tell the Nativity story. There is something magical about small children, dressed as various farmyard animals, angels, stars and shepherds singing their hearts out, that cannot fail to bring a tear to the eye. Your children have been fantastic this week, they performed outstandingly and were a credit to you.

But for all the intrinsic magic of school Nativity Plays, the real joy is in the message they share with us. The simple tale of a baby born in poverty, surrounded by unlikely characters, hides the complexity of the truth, of God becoming man. Christmas morning is so much more than a story that inspires parents to dress their small children in tea-towels and halos, it is a world-changing, earth-shattering event that has brought light to our darkness and hope to our despair.

Over the past weeks, the school has echoed with your children singing and as our older children prepare for carol services next week the singing continues. At a time when our nation once again faces new restrictions and each of us has to make complex decisions about Christmas arrangements and events, we would do well to reflect on the words our children sing. Words speaking of peace, joy, love and celebration are a tonic amidst the business of our everyday lives. For Christians however they are not simply comforting words, or nice ideals for a few days in December each year, they are life changing, a rock on which to build.

I hope in the remaining weeks of Advent, you will have more opportunities to celebrate, to sing carols and to wonder at the overwhelming love that would cause God to send his Son from the glory of heaven to live as one of us.

I look forward to continuing our celebrations and reflections in school next week.

Covid-19 and staff illness

As you will be aware, in response to the Omicron variant, England is now operating under the Government's 'Plan B' arrangements. New guidance was yesterday issued to schools, outlining processes that should now be in place. For us at The Blake, the biggest change is that all visitors to the school are now being *strongly encouraged* to complete a Lateral Flow Test. Whilst our staff and regular volunteers are already part of the twice weekly testing programme, we have not previously asked parents coming into school for meetings to test before coming. We will be looking at what the implications might be for events in the New Year, but for the remaining week of term, if you do have a meeting in school, please can we ask that for the safety of our whole community, you undertake a Lateral Flow Test before you come in?

I am delighted to say that we currently have only three Covid-19 positive cases in school. We do however have a very significant number of other staff absences. It has been a challenging week in school moving staff to cover those who are off sick, especially as the supply agencies have been unable to provide us with any additional cover staff. With deep regret and when out of all other options, we have had to close two classes this week. I would like to thank all of you who have been so understanding, despite the additional burden this has placed on you. It is our full intention to have all classes open again on Monday, we look forward very much to welcoming all Year 5 children back to school.

The Friends

The Friends of The Blake School are very industrious and these past couple of weeks have demonstrated that well. This week The Friends organised our Christmas raffle. Thank you to everyone who bought and sold tickets, the money raised will make an enormous difference to the school and to your children.

This week the next draw of the 100 club also took place with ticket number 60 being the winning number. Richard Heast was the lucky winner, we hope he enjoys the little bit of extra money this Christmas!

We would also like to say thank you to our fantastic choir, led by Mrs Raven, who entertained everyone who was waiting for the raffle draw. Their singing and enthusiasm were incredible and helped everyone forget how cold it was!

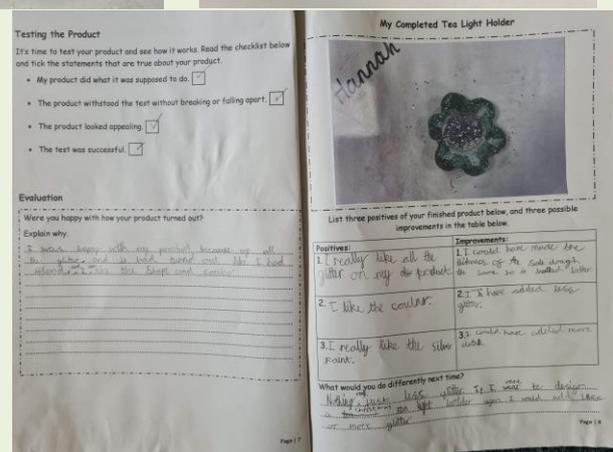
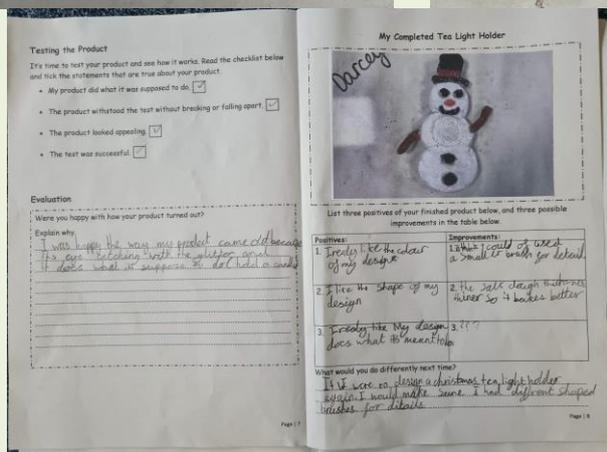
News from Around the School

For the last four weeks, the children in Year 4 have been busy in D&T designing, making and evaluating their Christmas salt-dough tea-light holders.

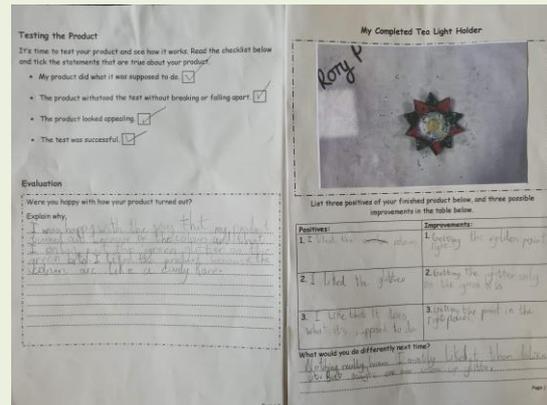
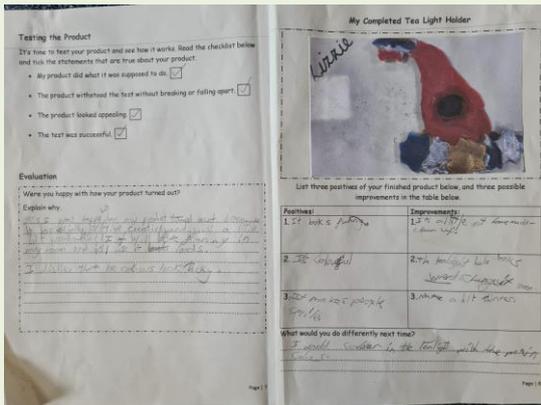
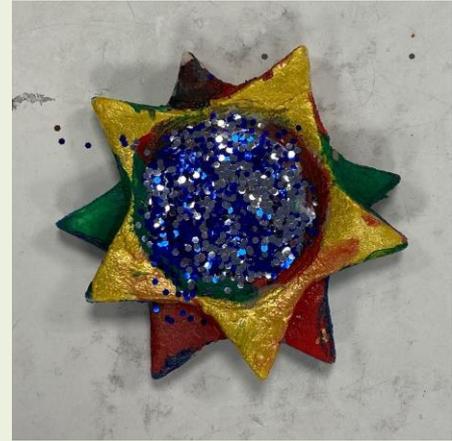
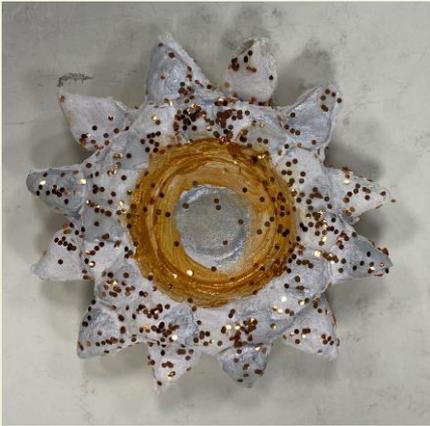
They initially looked at examples by others, discussing what they liked and disliked. The children then used these ideas to inspire their own design, which they made using salt-dough.

Acrylic paint was used to add colour to their designs, along with a touch of glitter for some Christmas sparkle.

Year 4 really enjoyed the whole process involved in this D&T project and demonstrated the skills of true designers throughout, especially when evaluating their product.



You can see more examples of the children's work on the Year 4 pages of our [school website](#).



Thank-you

Teams4u, who are distributing the shoeboxes that you filled back in November, have sent us this certificate to say thank-you. Those small boxes bring great joy and really will make Christmas a time to remember for many children.

