



February 2012

## A brilliant start to the year

I often say that the Spring term is my favourite time in school. That's not because I enjoy cold, wet or icy weather; I simply enjoy seeing the outstanding progress that the children make during these three relatively unbroken months of teaching and learning.

Last half term, my senior leadership team and I had the pleasure of observing many literacy lessons, guided reading sessions and phonics teaching across the school and we were very impressed with the quality of teaching and the children's huge commitment to their own learning. Behaviour was very good across every class and we were delighted by the quality of work that we saw in the literacy books and folders. A particular highlight was the quality of writing that we observed - from outstanding sentence building in Year 1 to complex punctuation in upper Juniors.

This half term we will principally focus on standards of teaching and learning in maths.

Mr Harris

## Extreme Reading Extreme Success



We have been absolutely delighted with the first month of the KS2 Extreme Reading campaign. The children's enthusiasm and commitment to the project has been exceptionally good - many thanks to parents for their support too!

Our oldest children have led the way: 6W were the most recent weekly winners and

5/6H were the half term winners with an average reading rate of 94%! All classes exceeded 75%, with many classes in the high 80s and low 90s. Each weekly winning class have enjoyed a relaxed reading session in the cafe. Let's keep it going...

Last half term also saw the start of our 'Reading Buddy' scheme whereby children from classes in the infants have been paired with children from classes in the juniors to regularly share books together.



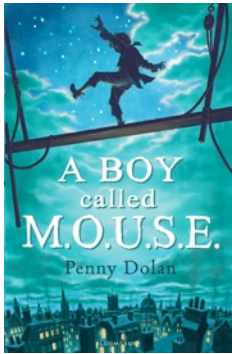
# Farfield Farm update

The school's Farm Managers have been instrumental in the starting of a Diamond Jubilee wood along the path between the two buildings. We had a very successful Saturday morning event in February to begin planting but we had to postpone the second event due to frozen conditions. We have rearranged the second phase of planting to the morning of Saturday 25th February - would your family like to come?

At the end of February we are going to meet with our suppliers Whitebarn Poultry to choose 4 replacement chickens to bring us back up to our full complement of 30 birds. The children whose birds were lost at Christmas will be able to visit our suppliers to select the birds to bring back.

Add photo

## 5/6H meet acclaimed local author



5/6H were rewarded for their great commitment to Extreme Reading with an impromptu trip to Armley Library to meet local author Penny Dolan. The class enjoyed hearing Penny tell anecdotes from her life as an author and she shared writing tips and inspirations. The class then got a tour of the library and we took out all the library's Penny Dolan books!

This visit was a great example of the wonderful opportunities that we now have given two school minibuses easily on hand.



## Reception Pyjama Party!

A highlight of last half term for Reception children was their Bedtime Story Evening. A huge turnout of children, staff and families ensured that the evening was a brilliant success. Lots of people came in their pyjamas and many stories were shared. The children had made biscuits for supper and posters to advertise the event. There was great excitement and a lovely atmosphere. This is rapidly becoming a very special Farfield tradition... Well done to everyone involved!



# Community Cafe

## Sports News

January/February is the quietest month for sports news but we still had our indoor athletics team performing very well at the city athletics finals at Boston Spa. Our cycle club have enjoyed indoor rollers borrowed from East Bradford Cycle Club and our cricketers and footballers have continued training throughout the winter.

## Friends of Farfield Plans

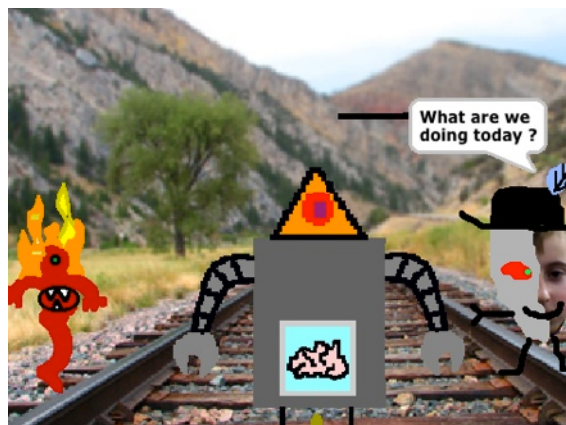
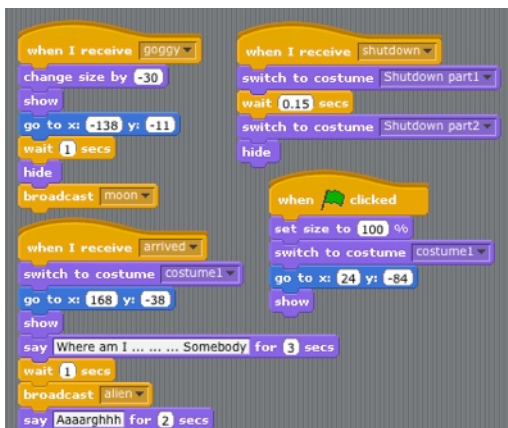
The work of 'Friends of Farfield' (Formerly Farfield PTA) has been a real highlight of the Autumn term. The discos, Christmas Card project and Christmas Fayre have all been great successes and wonderful community events; we have raised nearly £2000 for the school and charities. Many thanks to all those involved or supporting this.

## ICT boring? Not at Farfield we hope!

In January the Education Minister Michael Gove ruffled some feathers by saying: *"Imagine the dramatic change which could be possible in just a few years, once we remove the roadblock of the existing ICT curriculum. Instead of children bored out of their minds being taught how to use Word and Excel by bored teachers, we could have 11-year-olds able to write simple 2D computer animations using an MIT tool called Scratch."*

Farfield welcomes the proposed revision of the IT curriculum - as we have already done so! Scratch was introduced into the Y5/6 curriculum in the autumn term and many children absolutely thrived on the challenge. Some others, however, found it a real struggle. 'Programming' requires a particular tenacious approach to problem-solving. A good start is established in Years 3 and 4 with work on the programming language of LOGO.

Mrs Carney is building on the momentum generated by our work with Scratch and she has established an after-school Games Design Club with children in the upper juniors. Some children are deepening their understanding of Scratch, and others are learning another games design application called KUDO. In lessons, the children have moved onto video editing.



An extract of the scripting and creation of characters by Paul Asquith in Y6

# A rich history curriculum...



Key Stage 1 children enjoyed a visit to Abbey House Museum as part of their work on 'How we used to Live'

Years 5 and 6 walked along the historic Leeds/Liverpool canal before visiting Armley Mills Museum as part of their Mighty Leeds topic



Years 3 and 4 had fantastic days at Murton Park experiencing life as a saxon or a viking

## Parents' Evenings soon

Our second set of Parents' Evenings are to be held on 13th and 14th March - look out for a letter soon.

Before the Parent's Evening, there will be brief mid-year reports for each child with a snapshot of achievement and a short comment from teachers. We aim for these reports to be issued in the week beginning 5th March.

**We are looking forward to another exciting and successful half term - thank you for your support.**

Mr Harris on behalf of the governors

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