

# THE TREEHOUSE SCHOOL UPDATE

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The Treehouse School

## Three Cheers for our Craft Sale Coordinator!



### Christmas Craft Sale Success

Trustee Gilly writes: 'Thank you so much for involving me in the sale this afternoon. The quality and variety of the goods on sale at your functions never fails to amaze me. You must be so proud of the gang and their parents. During the afternoon I think I came into contact with all the Treehouse pupils at different times and was, again, so impressed with their good manners and the way they spoke to Kate and myself in the kitchen, our visitors and each other.'

**Bottoms Up!** Sally is in urgent need of empty drinks cans - coke, lemonade, beer, cider, any! They need to be whole, not flattened or crumpled. Please could you save them and send them into school by Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December.

### Dates for your Diary

Please note, we will be returning to Carterhatch School on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January (not the date previously circulated) to look at their amazing learning environment. Children, parents, Trustees and Friends of the School are most welcome to join us. Please let Lee know by Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December. **Also, please note, The Treehouse will be closed for an additional INSET day on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January.**

## Inspiring...

This week, Shaz, Eve and I visited an Infant School in Enfield, in a relatively deprived area of London. After watching a short clip of the school's work 'in action' on You Tube we wanted to find out more. In essence, the children at Carterhatch School spend most of their school day engaged in child initiated learning; the teachers write very little down; and whole class and group teaching are kept to a minimum: all areas of practice that almost entirely contradict what is happening in most of the schools in the UK.

During our visit we saw 250 highly focused children, making really good use of the fantastic range of resources, both inside and outside the classrooms.

The results...highly motivated, well behaved children, making very good progress in all areas of their learning. Even Ofsted have to agree that their approach is successful!

### Dates for Your Diaries

<b>Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	10 am Community Tree Planting in the Park
<b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	7.30 pm Wreath making at The Scout Hall with Vicky Beardall-Richards. Mulled wine and nibbles. Proceeds to The Baby Bar and The Treehouse.
<b>Mon 30<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	Willow wreath making at The Treehouse. Each family to make one. Bev Belcher from Langtree visiting. Tim Taylor – Fundraiser visiting. 2-3 pm Auditions for Concert of Thanks with Laura. The Scout Hall.
<b>Tues 1<sup>st</sup> Dec</b>	No Tuesday Trading Adam Baker visiting The Treehouse 8pm Alex and Lee collecting a donation from Wallingford 1155 Club.
<b>Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec</b>	Wear your slippers to school for the Homeless (Magnus co-ordinating)
<b>Fri 4<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	Ollie's 8 <sup>th</sup> birthday Friday Forest: Swyncombe Woods. Ciara joining us.
<b>Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	Wallingford Christmas Festival

**Thank you everyone who helped with the Christmas sale. We raised over £400 thanks to you and your hard work. The sale was a great success.  
Thank you again. Freyaxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**



# Going for Gold!

## Keeping You and Your Child in the Loop...Little and Often

It is a very exciting time to be an educationalist as we learn more and more from scientists about the brain, and how learning takes place. Learning is chiefly associated with the birth of neurons (brain cells) and the connections made between those neurons. When connections or pathways are made, permanent physiological changes take place in the brain. These pathways become stronger with repetition.

So when a child says that they are finding something tricky, I explain that this is because their brain is working hard to create a new route, which will start as a footpath, then with practise and over time, will become a track, then a road and then a motorway! If you apply this to something like reading, handwriting or mental maths, it really does make sense. The more practise, the more progress, until the skill is secure. That said, just like a road, the learning needs to be maintained - put simply, use it or lose it!

If we take handwriting as an example, currently The Trees are focusing on the development of their fine motor skills which will help with pencil control later on. Threading, sewing, woodwork, painting, cutting out and drawing are some of the activities that will help them to progress in this area, as well as regular handwriting practice using the resources sent home. Apprentices will also benefit from these activities, as well as regular (5 minutes a day) handwriting, linked to the spelling of common words. The Houses are developing their ability to write quickly (in preparation for secondary school) and some of them, learning to touch type. Little and often is the key.

So whilst we have always been opposed to homework, we recognize that it is crucial for The Gang to have opportunities for the constant reinforcement of skills, both at home and school, in order for repetition to forge secure pathways of learning in the brain.

## Looking for something to do at home....

### Learner Smarties:

**Apprentices:** Read and update your Learning Log. We have had a just over a sixth of the academic year, how do you feel about the progress that you have made since September? Do you think that you are ready to become a House after Christmas? Discuss it with a parent.

Teach your parents the difference between 'much' and 'many' by saying some correct and incorrect sentences. For example, "how much apples are there left in the fruit bowl?" "How many trees did you plant today?" Some of us are getting much and many mixed up.

### People Smarties:

Prepare a song, some music, a short poem or piece of prose to perform during our 'Evening of Thanks'. Bring it to school on Monday (30<sup>th</sup> November) to show Laura.

### Nature Smarties:

Come and plant a tree in the park. Vicky and her team will be planting trees from 10am on Saturday. You can even add your name to the tree afterwards.

### Word Smarties:

Can you find a word containing two or more of the sounds we have been focusing on (er, oo, ee, ay)? Keep an eye out during the weekend and let Lee know via e-mail if you find any!

This week, golden mentions to: Jo and Karen for providing cover; Freya for organising the Craft Sale; and to Jess and Harry for making cookies for us all to share at Friday Forest.