Dear Parents,

The Autumn Term ended with various celebrations of Christmas. The children enjoyed performing their Nativity Play, 'Hey Ewe' in the village hall and the audience seemed to enjoy it also. Then the children were rewarded for all their hard work by a fabulous Christmas party organised by a wonderful team of P.T.F.A. volunteers. The staff would particularly like to express their thanks to Abbie Fuell, who did a fantastic job of organising and resourcing a range of enjoyable and engaging craft activities and games for the afternoon. The afternoon ended with a visit from Santa and presents for all the children. The term ended, as is traditional at Branscombe, with the singing of Christmas carols.

We are delighted to welcome Miss Lye to the Branscombe team, as teacher in Class 1. A message from her is below.

*“I am very excited to be starting my new post as the Class 1 teacher at Branscombe Primary. I have previously worked as a Year 2 teacher at Sidbury Primary as well as teaching all year groups at many schools through supply over the last year. It has been delightful to get to know the Class 1 children over this last week and I look forward to the rest of the term. Our new topic for this term in Class 1 is “Moon Zoom”. We will be travelling through outer-space to learn about the Solar System. Books, photographs and videos will help us to learn about the International Space Station and the astronauts who have ventured into space. We will also be learning to describe the simple physical properties of a variety of everyday materials. The countdown has begun!”*

The children in Class 2 are enthused about their new class topic, 'Hola Mexico'. They have begun to use a range of sources, such as maps, photographs, websites and books, to find out more about this colourful country and all its diversity. The first text the children are studying in their English lessons this term is a story about a visit to the Chihuahuan Desert, which lies across the Mexican border with the U.S. state of Texas. In their Daily Dashboard sessions, the children have also been reviewing their knowledge about the features of a desert biome and learning about the location of some of the world's major deserts. Later in the term, they will focus more on one of the other key features of the biodiversity in Mexico, when they explore the rainforest biome in more detail. As they also explore the human geography of Mexico, the children have begun to investigate the culture and particularly the food of the Mexican people and look forward to preparing a Mexican feast later in the term, at which their parents will be invited to sample the children's cooking.

Class 2 have begun this term's Science work by reviewing what they know about how sound travels. The children enjoyed a carousel of noisy activities in their first lesson of the term, in which they experimented to explore how sound is produced by vibrations and explored how to alter the pitch and volume of the sounds made by a range of musical instruments. In their next lesson, the children learned more about how sound travels in waves through a medium such as air or water. They will go on to learn more about the inner workings of their ears, as well as designing and carrying out experiments to explore ways of muffling sound.

The children were also pleased to be able to return once again to the orchard to revive the school's traditional practice of wassailing in January, to encourage a good apple harvest. Led by their Wassail king and queen, the children processed down to the orchard and sang the traditional Wassailing song that was written by former members of the school community. They banged their instruments, pots and pans to ward off evil and encourage the trees to grow, before returning to school to partake of the Wassail cup. It is always fascinating to learn about and explore local traditions in such a hands-on and practical way.

Thank you for all your continued support.

God bless and have a lovely weekend. *Best wishes from Katie Gray and the staff at Branscombe CE School*

**Branscombe Waves**

**Class One:**

Ava – for demonstrating kindness to all the pupils at school

Ava – for persevering in her learning

**Class Two:** Rosie - for consistent concentration and perseverance

Rupert – for maintaining a positive attitude and growth mindset

Rosie – for enthusiasm and hard work in science

Sophia – for great effort and concentration in RE

**Question of the Month**

**Class One:** What is your New years Resolution

**Class Two:** What is culture and how is our British and Devon culture similar or different to the culture of the people of Mexico?

**Free School Meals**

If your circumstances have changed as a result of the Covid-19 crisis your child may have become eligible for free school meals. This will also bring extra funding to the school, which will be used to help your child. For an instant decision or to learn more please go online at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-meals>.

**Key Dates – Spring Term 2023**

13th Jan –Wassail.

20th Jan - Ready Steady Write.

24th Jan - Year 5 and 6 Girls Futsal.

13th – 19th February - Half term.

Friday 31st March- End of term.

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| **Wellbeing***There has been much press in recent months about children’s mental health. As part of our drive to support this we are going to include something each month in the newsletter about Health and Wellbeing. We hope you find this section useful. If you have any topics you would like us to find some helpful tips about, please let us know.* After the Christmas break it has been lovely to see the children return to school. However, for some children, returning to school can be a worrying time, full of uncertainty and anxiety.  As a parent, you always want to do the best to reassure your child and to ease their worries. Dr Barnardo's have developed some coping strategies to support children if this is a difficult time. [*https://www.barnardos.org.uk/support-hub/back-school-strategies-coping-feelings*](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/support-hub/back-school-strategies-coping-feelings) [*Back to school: Strategies for coping with feelings | Barnardo's*](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/support-hub/back-school-strategies-coping-feelings?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=always_on&utm_medium=organic&utm_content=back_to_school&utm_term=coping_strategies)  Grounding techniques. A grounding technique is a coping strategy for managing intense feelings and emotions. These techniques help to ‘ground’ us, which means they help us to notice the present moment we are in. www.barnardos.org.uk |

**Collective Worship Activity**

This term we will be focussing in school on the value of Perseverance. We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together. If the children bring back something that you have done at home linked to the Collective Worship activity, or can talk about a discussion they’ve had at home linked to it, then Mrs Gray will award them with a new special sticker.

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