

Bensham Manor Newsletter

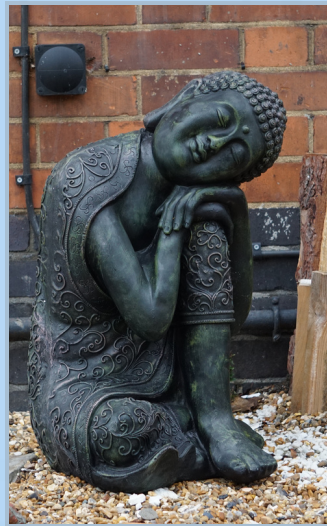
Autumn 2020



Headteacher's Welcome

Dear families,

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our newsletter. This term has been incredibly busy. Pupils have been working extremely hard in lessons and learning lots of new things. Post 16 students put together a Zen Garden in the front playground with the features below.



Year 8 and Year 9 pupils took part in our socially distant Shakespeare Schools Festival with a performance of *The Tempest*. Forest School has seen two Year 8 groups attend this half term. A number of pupils have learned how to ride a bike over the past few weeks as part of their PE lessons. It has been a joy to watch.

Pupils have adapted very well to all of the new school routines. I am very proud of all their achievements. I wish you all a safe, restful and very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

School reopens to all pupils on Tuesday January 5th.

Mrs Robinson (Headteacher)

Steel Pans

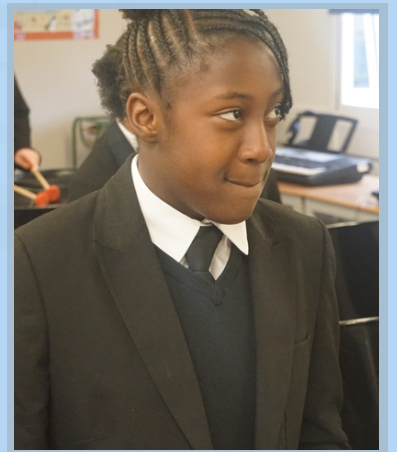
Melodies from the Music Room



7DC and 9KS have been working very hard in steel pan workshops every Tuesday morning. These workshops are run by Wade who is from Kinetika Bloco.

7DC have been learning 2 pieces, Dance Monkey and The Little Drummer Boy. 9KS have been working on Shotgun and Jingle Bells. The pieces are going to be recorded and played to the school.

These songs are enjoyed throughout the school and we wish they could be played everyday!



The Tempest

Bensham weathers the storm

It has been a delight to see our pupils triumph despite difficult circumstances. This year we had a brand new cast that rose to the challenge and created a funny, dynamic interpretation of Shakespeare's popular comedy The Tempest. The pupils added their own special Bensham twist filled with music, peppered with modern language and some highly comedic moments.

The pupils have worked incredibly hard and had an opportunity to submit their play as part of the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival's One Night of Shakespeare. Usually we perform in a professional space, the Obie Theatre at BRIT School, annually however this year we were on our own turf. The pupils really rose to the challenge and threw themselves into all aspects of the production. We are really proud and delighted with their achievements and look forward to creating another unique show next year.



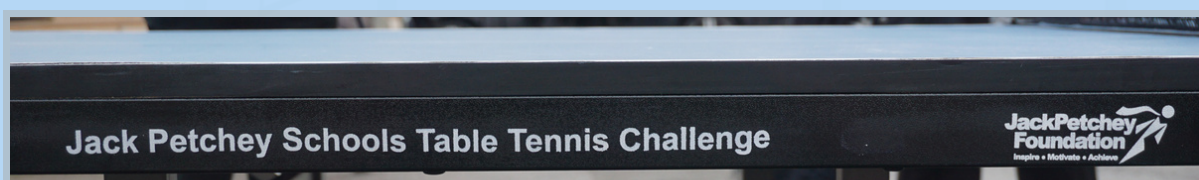
Table Tennis

Keep Calm and Ping Pong

A new craze has hit Bensham's playgrounds this term as they've echoed with the ping! and pong! of the sport that was originally known as "Whiff! Whaff!"



Nowadays, of course, it's more commonly referred to as "Table Tennis". Thanks to the generous support of the Jack Petchey Foundation we were granted 4 tables that have been placed in each playground so that the whole school is able to join the fun.



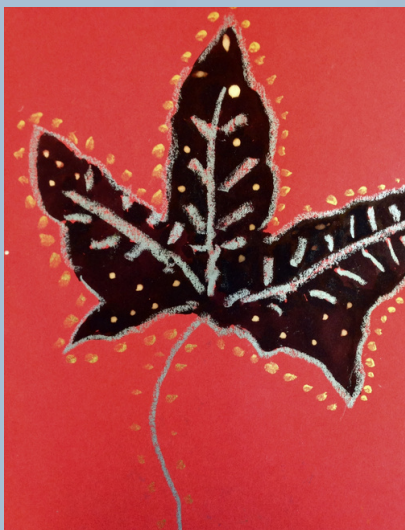
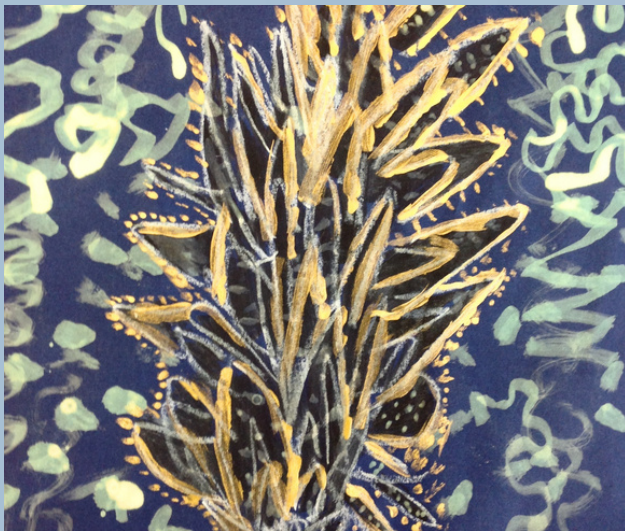
Staff have learned to challenge young players at their peril as it's already become apparent that throughout the school (especially in Year 9) there are some very talented young players!



Christmas Art

Fancy designs and sparkling glitter

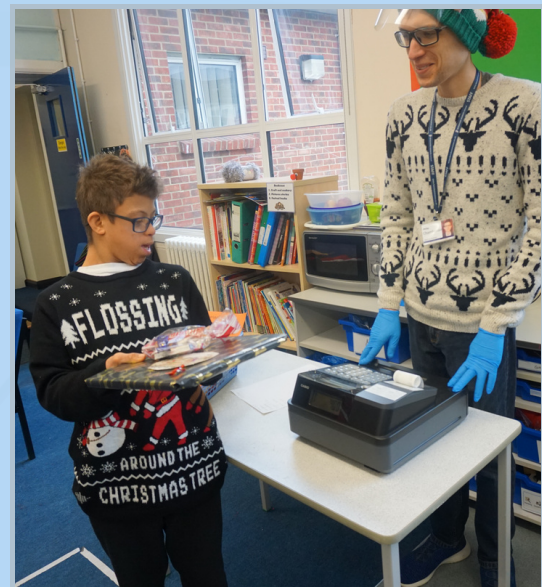
Take a look at the fantastic christmas tree artwork from our Year 7s and 8s!



Christmas Fayre

Post 16 providing the presents

The Post 16 department ran their annual fayre this year with great success. Staggered throughout the day, all classes in school got the opportunity to shop for any potential gifts ranging from delicious sweets to useful hand-made notepads. Take a look at some of the many transactions below!



Christmas Dinner

A feast for all

On our annual Christmas Jumper day comes our annual Christmas Dinner! Please enjoy some photos from the day...



Investing in Children

The school has held the Investing in Children Award for the past 6 years. This award recognises schools which give pupils a voice. A number of pupils had online interviews with the assessor and were asked to talk about the way in which the school is run and how it listens to and implements ideas from pupils. Pupils were very pleased that their recommendations had been implemented in a wide range of areas, including the following areas:

The School Council

- "The school council is made up of more students now"
- "You can email them now"
- "It's much better now because we have drop-ins"



The Eco-School Programme

- "We have more bins for recycling and people use their own water bottle instead of lots of school water being used"
- "We have meetings and talk about lots of things and ideas we have"

The New School Library

- "We have a reading pod and new books"

"The school has to be commended on the amount of opportunities and decisions students are involved in and can actively be a part of. Every single one of the young people from the school with whom I met were able to talk about ways in which they have been involved in decision making and describe all of the opportunities they have to be decision makers."

Forest School

Exploring nature (Plus roasting marshmallows!)

8DD have been visiting Forest School throughout this half-term - sounds like they've had a great time and learned lots of interesting skills. Here's what they had to say about the experience...



"I liked exploring in the woods, getting muddy and going down muddy hills. We collected wood for the campfire" -

Tommy



"I learned to start the camp fire with a flint and steel. I liked roasting sausages over the fire" - Alex

"My favourite part was roasting marshmallows" - Maryam

"It's best when it's dry there" - Anthony



"The best bit is where you can actually go out when it's raining outside because that's the real forest" - Xavier

"Forest school is an adventure and we love it" - Liam



Cycling

It's not a race!

Cycling activity continues to thrive at Bensham Manor helped by the acquisition of a new fleet of 6 Obea mountain bikes. These have been put to good use throughout this term - learning to use their super-effective disc brakes has been an important lesson for many of our expert riders!



We're confident that cycling will continue to be a major part of Bensham's future as Mencap have recently awarded us a grant that will enable us to buy 3 more trail scooters and 3 foldaway bikes that can be used as balance bikes to help even more children learn to ride!

The weather has been favourable so most classes have cycled nearly every week during one of their PE lessons. This has meant that with hard work, perseverance and a little bravery, an incredible 21 young people have learned to ride for the first time this term. Others continue to make progress on the adult trikes and scooters that help develop balance and coordination.



Mudzini School

Bensham's support of a Kenyan School

Bensham has continued to support the Mudzini orphanage and school in Kenya which was struck by the pandemic. Food was harder to find and more expensive. Staff had to be reduced. The school went on line. The girls at the home worked on line and were unable to go out.



However, the situation is now improving and the school is open for face to face teaching once again. The new academic year starts in January 2021 and hopefully the numbers attending the school will continue to grow.



Bensham Wellbeing

School Values (As written by the pupils)

Believing in ourselves and each other

Encouraging everyone to achieve as everyone is equal

No one is left behind

Super heroes are made here

Hard work challenges us for the best

Aiming high

Making dreams come true

Sensory Circuit and Fitness

Sensory Circuit

We have introduced sensory circuit sessions in the mornings for pupils. Pupils either take part in a big circuit in the front playground or in the outdoor gym. The sensory circuit helps pupils to energise and settle into the day.



Fitness with Tristan

Tristan, one of Bensham Manor's teaching assistants, runs a fitness session for pupils three times per week. These sessions are one to one sessions focusing on developing fitness levels and overall engagement in school activities.