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Issue 1

# Flying High

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## A Very, Merry Silkmore



### Message from the Executive Headteacher

This term has certainly flown by. It has been my first half term at Silkmore and I have been busy getting to know the staff, children and their families. I have been made to feel so welcome and look forward to meeting you all over the coming year.

There has been a lot in the media this year about the 50th anniversary of the moon landings. Though the most famous quote by far is Neil Armstrong's 'One small step for man...' I was touched by a recording I heard of JFK's speech to encourage support for NASA's Apollo program. "We choose to go to the moon," the president said. "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organise and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept..." This made me think of the teachers in school who constantly rise to the challenge to go above and beyond in the education and experiences they provide for our pupils - constantly shooting for the moon as it were. Our children deserve the best opportunities and should be encouraged to aim high in all that they do. I look forward to being a part of that journey with you.



I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry, safe and cheerful Christmas and a happy start to 2020.

Mrs Didier

### Banger Night

We would like to take this opportunity to say a HUGE thank you to all who attended Banger Night last month. This is a lovely event, organised by the PTFA and staff at school, to bring the community together as a family and celebrate together.

Special mention must go to go the PTFA who work extremely hard behind the scenes to make this event a reality. THANK YOU!!





## A Christmas Mission

In the lead up to our Christmas mini-mission, strange things kept appearing in school. Firstly, there were candy canes. After that, some sweets appeared and then some syrup bottles arrived. In the classrooms, a strange Christmas spirit gauge arrived and showed the Christmas spirit as being on 'empty'.

On the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, exactly one month before Christmas, something incredible happened! Silkmore was visited by Santa who came into all the classrooms ringing some bells exclaiming that he needed some more elves in the workshop. We all went to the North Pole, following a trail of snow, where there was Santa's sleigh, Rudolph's stables, the workshop and Santa's home. Santa told us that he had some magic to turn us all into elves in order to help him. We were all given elf names by Santa such as 'Candy Delight, Sugarplum Cupcake and Sparking McJingles'. Santa told us that if we wanted to increase the Christmas Spirit, that powered his sleigh, we needed to decorate the classrooms, Christmas trees and celebrate Christmas together.



## Silkmore Mystery...

This half term, we have been joined by a cheeky and mischievous elf! He was trapped in a balloon before he escaped and started to wreak havoc around the school! He has been drawing on bananas, eating lots of chocolate as well as wrapping himself up in toilet roll trying to be a snowman! He has also bought with him some friends who have been around the classrooms watching over us and reporting back to Santa.



Don't forget:  
See you back Tuesday 7th January!

## Year 5's Shugborough Adventure

Shugborough is an outdoor education centre around 10 minutes from school. It is a place where we can overcome our fears, learn about the world around us and appreciate nature. This half term, Year 5 travelled to Shugborough for the week in November and completed many fun and challenging activities.

Here is their recount of their trip:

We arrived on the Monday morning and unpacked our stuff in our dormitories. We found out about our jobs for the week and had to make our beds. After lunch, we explored the forest around the Shugborough estate and tested the age of trees by looking at how big the trunks were. In the evening, we did some indoor climbing where we had to try to get across the climbing walls without touching the floor. This got more difficult as you went across but with determination, almost everyone got all the way across!

On Tuesday morning, we all got dressed and went to the dinner hall where we had our breakfast (cereal and hot food). After that, we went down to the classroom where we were split into 2 groups for the day. One group did BMXing and the other group completed the blindfold trail. In the BMXing, we learnt how to ride a BMX bike and rode around a track. The blindfold trail was a fun activity where we had to follow a rope while blindfolded over, under and through a series of obstacles. In the afternoon, we stayed in the same 2 groups and did fire lighting and shelter building. The fire lighting was exciting and scary where we had to use cotton wool, flint and steel to light the fire by making sparks. Meanwhile, the other group were shelter building where they were given a bag of materials and objects to help them create a shelter between the trees. Our evening activity was called 'eggescape' where we completed mini-challenges to get codes which unlocked safes containing eggs which gave us more team points (which we collected over the week).

On Wednesday morning, we completed the crystal maze challenge and did some orienteering. In the crystal maze, we worked in teams to collect crystals by completing challenges which earned us some more team points. During orienteering, we worked in pairs and followed a map which led us to posts with letters and numbers on. We brought back the letters and numbers to our teams and won team points. In the afternoon, we did climbing, archery and woodland crafts. When we were climbing, we were in harnesses and we had to try to get to the top of the climbing wall. At the top, there were boxes with challenges in that we had to complete. We learnt how to abseil and we helped each other by holding each other's harness'. We also learnt all about wood crafts learning how to safely use saws, pyrography pens, hot glue guns and various craft items to make several different items such as mobiles and tree decorations. This continued into Thursday for those that hadn't yet completed the woodland crafts, the archery or the climbing. Finally, we went on a night walk where we were taught about how to classify trees based on their leaves. On Thursday night, we were joined by Mrs Addison and had a campfire where we sang songs together before bed.

Before coming home on the Friday, we completed an orienteering competition where we had to find our way using a map and compass directions around the Shugborough estate. Well done to Emelia who won this competition. The current year 4s will need to try and beat this next year!

Overall, we had a fantastic time together, working as a team, learning new life skills and trying to sleep on a night! We want to say a HUGE thank you to our teachers, Miss Dimmock, Mrs Exton and Miss Chase who gave up their time for us to have the opportunity to create a new experience that will stay with us forever!

## Communication



Good communication between school and parents is essential to school life and, as ever, we continue to work hard on improving our communication methods to make this easy for parents and ensure we keep you well informed about what is going on in school.

To help improve this we have taken the decision to only send out letters on **Thursdays** each week. The purpose of keeping this to one particular day each week is so parents know to expect and look out for letters and information at the same time each week. It means you have time to ask a question on a Friday should you need to or you can take the time to look at letters over the weekend before the new school week starts and feel confident you haven't missed anything. We plan to start this in the new year.

As many of you may know we have made huge moves forward in going paperless with our communication and we were delighted to see this beginning to work and embed across the school. There are many reasons to go paperless:

- Firstly, it helps us to become a more environmentally friendly and economical school. With over 200 children at Silkmore the amount of paper and ink we use on printing is astronomical. By going paperless we are cutting down on our environmental impact and refocusing some of these costs on resources that can directly improve learning.
- Secondly, it enables us to ensure this information is sent directly to parents. With the best will in the world children can often forget to hand over or lose important letters. This way we are able to ensure you receive our communication in a timely and direct manner.
- And thirdly, it cuts down hugely the amount of time teachers spend distributing information in class allowing them to focus on what is most important - teaching and learning.

**Email:** Every Thursday letters will be sent by email directly to your email address held on our database. A post will be shared on our Facebook page listing the letters that have been distributed that week and these letters will also be posted on our website and school app. Please ensure we have your email address and accurate contact details.



**School App:** If you are a new parent to Silkmore, or haven't yet downloaded our School App, please download 'Piota' from the App Store or Google Play to your phone and search for our school.

### What should you do now?

- Download Piota and select Silkmore. This will take less than a minute to do!
- Like our Facebook page (Silkmore Primary Academy, REAch2)



Whilst we are really excited to see how these changes will help improve our communication with you we do understand this may not suit everyone. Therefore a file with a small number of copies of each letter will be available in the school office for those parents who would prefer to collect a hard copy of our letters.