Etchingham C/E Primary School

Etchingham

East Sussex

07.01.15

Dear Friends

We were delighted that we were able to speak with you on the telephone today. The time has flown by since we left Thasa at the end of October.

The months of November and December were very busy for the school. Our learning journey theme was World War 1 and we explored all aspects of the topic linking it to English, History, Geography, Design Technology, IT and Dance.

The youngest children performed a nativity play in December which told the story of the birth of Christ. The elder children performed songs, poems and choral speaking in our church. It was a very special event because it was dark and the church was lit by candles. Some children acted out a short drama about the Christmas Day Truce in 1914 when the fighting stopped and the soldiers on opposing sides played football together.

We also had a Christmas dinner and some classes had a party when they were able to wear their own clothes and play games.

This term our theme is called ‘To Infinity and Beyond!’ It is a science based topic where we will be looking at the planets and space, materials and their properties and thinking about how if we make our minds up to do something then almost anything is possible.

We hear that you have had a reasonable amount of rain in Malawi for which we are thankful. We too have had heavy rains and the fields around the village have been flooded again. In the north of Britain there has been not only snow but winds of over 100 miles per hour which has caused a lot of structural damage and shut down communication systems.

Since our visit we have been thinking about the reciprocal visit. We think that on this occasion Mr Zulu will be our guest. You will be most welcome and will stay with Phillipa and her husband at their home in Etchingham, although Tracie may entertain at her home some days after school. We have also been considering if we should apply for funding for the following year, should it be available.

The children at Etchingham raised a small amount of money and would like it to be spent on plastic cups for the children to drink from during the school day. We saw that water was fetched from the borehole so it was always available. This is so helpful to the learners. Our children keep a plastic bottle with water in that they can drink throughout the day. Being well hydrated helps our brains to be more efficient. We will be talking to Starfish Malawi to find a way to implement this.

We are also looking at a way of using an irrigation system, perhaps for the piece of land between your teacher’s houses and your church. Do you think that this might be a good idea? These are relatively inexpensive and training is provided. It could not only enable crops to be grown outside of the rainy season but also acts as a learning aid for agriculture lessons throughout the year by promoting good farming techniques. We have been reading about soil being non-renewable and for that reason we need to care for our soil. This would complement our discussions about composting. Again we will talk to Starfish Malawi about the best way to take this idea forward if you think it would be useful to you.

Meanwhile we will try to telephone Mr Zulu or Mr Phillip in a few weeks time and look forward to hearing the news from Thasa School.

The new Etchingham school building is almost completed and we will be moving to the new site in February. It is an ultra-modern building and quite a contrast to our present building which is 150 years old.

Our head teacher Mrs Margaret Williams sends her best wishes

Phillipa Hinde, Tracie Wilson and all of Etchingham School

