



HARTLEY PRIMARY ACADEMY
NEWSLETTER 4 - DECEMBER

Academic Year – 2014 - 2015



Dear Parents and Carers,

No snow yet! Should I have said that, or have I now jinxed the end of term? According to one local newspaper a traditional weather forecaster who uses natural flora and fauna to support his predictions says we will be snow-free until February – then, it appears, watch out!



The Bug!

Goodness me, we have been hit by the most horrid bug – either that or the flu jab we all had in November has backfired on us! This nasty virus has laid the majority of staff low this term and it is very slow to leave its host! It mutates and redoubles its aggression. You can tell I have bitter personal experience of this! We have tried to minimise the disruption to children's learning and I can only apologise for high and more lengthy staff absence.

Can we also remind parents that should your child require a course of antibiotics it is the school's policy that we cannot administer medication to your child. With the high incidence of illness this term the School Office has been asked to supervise on a number of occasions, but unless your child is old enough to remember to come down to administer their own medicine, please arrange for an adult to come into school to administer. Thank you.

Please remember to leave a message on our Absence Line to notify the school of your child's absence. We ask that you do this on the first day of absence and provide your child's name, class and **you must tell us the reason for absence**. Messages left on our system are not always clear and provide sufficient information.

PTA Christmas Fair

What a fantastic start to the Festive Season! The PTA organised and ran another of their thoroughly enjoyable Christmas Fairs. Santa was kept very busy, stalls were inundated and a good time was had by all. How lovely to see so many of our former Hartley pupils and can I say just how nicely they have grown up - a real credit to their parents (and a bit to us!). It was such a pleasure to see so many Hartley friends and family, past and present.

Mr and Mrs Greenwood, with their very generous donation of an iPad Mini helped swell the takings for the raffle. Thank you for coming and supporting this event – and for spending so much money! A record £3,442.97 profit was raised!

The PTA worked incredibly hard, as they have all year, providing refreshments for prospective parents who have been touring the school and will be providing refreshments at the end of the

Year 1 and 2 Christmas productions this week. Whilst we have an amazing committee, they would value extra support in organising and running future events and there are a lot of projects on their calendar for 2015, the first being the **PTA Movie Night – on Friday 9th January 2015**.

However, we have one more event before the end of this year, the children's **Discos on Thursday 18th December**; the early disco for **Years 1 and 2 (5-6pm)** and the later disco for **Years 3 to 6 (6.15-7.30pm)**. It is felt that children in Foundation Stage will find this a little overwhelming and they are very tired at this point in the term - they will be most welcome to attend the Summer Disco. An email has been sent out via Home Connect this week, and is displayed in our noticeboards.

Please note there will be a one-way system in operation. Drop off and collection for Years 1 and 2 via main reception. Years 3 to 6 are to be dropped off via Redwood Class (canopy side). Once children are paired with an adult, exit will be via the hall's rear door. This year, we are going to try and keep the dropping-off queue for the older children separate from parents queuing to collect the younger ones and hopefully reduce congestion in the reception area.

Rockin' Rhythms and the School Choir

Congratulations to the school's many and varied musicians! On Thursday 13th November we had a splendid Musical Concert, building on the success of previous performances. Very many thanks to Mrs Collings and Mrs Greenwood, led by a now very experienced Mrs Fowler, who organised the event and who rehearsed the choir. We had soloists, duets, small groups of children playing the piano, guitar players (tutored by Mrs Greenwood), recorders (supported by Mrs Collings) and singing – with some children participating several times. They were enthusiastic and confident and it was a real pleasure to be in the audience. The choir then went on to learn completely different material, this time Christmas songs and Carols which they sang beautifully at Bluewater, charming shoppers on 27th November and then opening the Christmas Fair on Saturday 29th November.

Year 6 Community Carols

To continue the theme of singing, Year 6 children participated in the Service of Nine Carols and Lessons at Milestone Academy with their peers from Milestone, Fawkham and Steep Hill. This was a solemn but charming event which reminded us all of the true meaning of Christmas.

Elsewhere across the school, our Year 5's visited Greenwich Observatory, building on their work on planets and our Year 2 children visited 'Dickens' World' to support their learning of Charles Dickens. As always, our children behaved extremely well. Thank you to those parents who escorted the children on the trips.

Christmas Productions

There has been much in the media about 'Traditional Nativity Plays'. I do feel that the people who start such campaigns see such a limited piece of a more complicated jigsaw! Imagine by the end of Year 4 children have been performing a traditional Nativity for 5 years, 6 if they also participated in a pre-school production. We do ring the changes each year but we are mindful that at the heart of all of our productions the meaning and the values of Christmas are expressed. Our Foundation Stage and KS1 productions have been fantastic and the children thoroughly enjoyed performing to you all.

This year, in consultation with the School Council any donations received at the end of the productions will be sent to The Royal Brompton Hospital. Thank you. My thanks also goes to the PTA ladies for providing refreshments at the afternoon performances.

Our KS2 production of 'The Apprentice!' will be on Tuesday 16th December at 2.00pm and 6.30pm.

Our hall, although a good size, does have seating restrictions – **we request that families restrict the numbers of people attending to two per family**. For 'The Apprentice!' tickets have already been issued to you via the children. For the evening performance of 'The Apprentice!' we do ask that there are no children please. If you have a baby with you during the afternoon performances and your child begins to cry please leave the hall until they have settled again. It is unfair to the children who have worked so hard in rehearsals if their words cannot be heard. We have already had a number of parents this year complaining that they have not been able to see their child because of the adult in front blocking their view with an iPad or camera. Please be considerate if you are using one of these devices and be mindful of those behind you who also want to see their child.

Threadworm

We've had several cases of threadworms across classes in the last few weeks. Letters and guidance go home as a matter of course once the school knows of a case. Please remind your child to take extra care when washing their hands after visiting the toilet and keeping fingernails short and clean is also a preventative measure.

Open Mornings

We have had a very good response to our Open Mornings for prospective new parents and hope we have answered all of their questions to their satisfaction. Your children, on each occasion, did us proud. Their maturity, polite responses to visitors and exemplary behaviour were – yes – what one would expect, but still not taken for granted.

Christingles

Year 2 children have made Christingles and celebrated the tradition in assembly this morning, to which, this year, Reverend Jemmett is invited.

Christmas Lunch – Wednesday 17th December 2014

Just a reminder that the TCS School Christmas lunch will be served on **Wednesday 17th December** for those children who have school dinners (sorry, but we can't accommodate any ad-hoc school meal orders for the one day). Children with packed lunches are welcome to bring in more of a festive lunch box. All the children can bring in a Christmas cracker to get into the Christmas spirit!

Winter Approaches.....

Every winter brings the possibility of snow and ice. Extreme bad weather can cause widespread problems as we know from recent years! Our aim is to ensure the school remains open as far as possible. However, as you are aware, gritting Round Ash Way and other minor roads is not a Highways department priority – obviously main roads and emergency facilities must come first.

This year, parents can go online to check if the school is closed, obtain information about road gritting and other KCC closures (www.kent.gov.uk/winter). You can also tune in or visit the sites of KMFM, BBC Radio Kent and Heart FM for updates and closures. We will continue to use Home Connect as we did last year and many parents felt this worked well. If you have not yet signed up for Home Connect and you would like to, please let the School Office have your email address. KCC suggests parents might like to sign up for text message alerts on www.kentclosures.co.uk. Please be aware there is a charge of 20p plus the standard network

charge. KCC also recommends parents should visit the BBC or direct.gov.uk websites for home learning resources to support children's learning while the school is closed!

Parents Consultation Evenings

Dates for your diary: Tuesday 24th February 2015 (5.00 – 8.00pm) and Thursday 26th February 2015 (3.40pm – 6.30pm).

Maths Information Evening

We hope to hold a Maths Information Evening for parents on January 28th 2015. Because we like to involve children in this, the meeting will begin at 6.00pm. The information shared at this meeting will cover Maths teaching across the school and cater for all our age groups.

Staff Changes

Mrs Cashmore, in Year 5 will be beginning her maternity leave at the end of January. She will be replaced by Mrs Mead, an experienced teacher who has already met the children.

Monday' Pop-Ins'

The purpose of the Monday Pop-In session is to enable parents who are following up a concern with the teacher to have a **brief update – not longer than 5 minutes**. We have scheduled Staff Meetings on Mondays which begin at 3.50pm.

Last Day of Term

Will be **Friday 19th December 2014!** We've had a few queries from parents – there is no half-day! Please can you collect your child at the normal time. Thank you.

Start of Term

We are already looking forward to next year – teachers are involved in planning and creating resources with which to welcome your children back. Our Spring Term starts on **Monday 5th January 2015**.

The **Movie Night** organised by the PTA, will be on Friday 9th January 2015. Please can all ticket requests be received **before Friday 19th December** – this will assist the PTA in ordering sufficient refreshments for the evening. One of the films is a PG. If you are not sure whether or not this is suitable for your child, please opt for the film designated as 'U'. There are trailers which you can watch online which may help you in making up your mind.

So all that remains is to wish you and your families a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2015 from everyone at Hartley Primary Academy.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Hollingworth
Principal