



Head-lines

And just like that we find ourselves finishing for Christmas! This half term really does seem to have flown by. Working in a primary school in the run up to Christmas really is a magical time, as we get to share in the children's excitement and anticipation, however it is also an exceedingly busy one! In our weekly assembly, we have been making sure that we remember the themes of each of the weeks of Advent, so that when we talk about 'getting ready' for Christmas, as well as the decorations and presents and food and cards, we prepare our hearts and souls for the coming of Jesus and use the advent wreath to reflect on the weekly themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. These calm and peaceful moments have certainly been needed! So I hope that in amongst the busyness you have no doubt found yourselves in, you have also found some time for hope, peace, joy and love. From me, and all at St Joseph's, I wish you a very merry Christmas. Mr Turner

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas....

As mentioned, there has been so much happening this half term, so we just wanted to share a few highlights with you.



Our Key Stage One children put on an Outstanding performance of their Christmas production, 'A Boogie Boogie Nativity'. A huge well done to all the children and thank you to all the staff who worked hard behind the scenes on the show. It was a fantastic concert, and the children were amazing!



Our school choir were very busy with performances at the Oxton Village Christmas lights switch on, singing at the Liverpool Cathedral, and our Carols by Candlelight evening. The carols were beautiful, and put us all in the Christmas spirit.



On Wednesday 18th we all went on a visit to the M&S theatre in Liverpool to see a production of Peter Pan. It was a fabulous morning out and the children loved the experience. The trip was kindly funded by the PTA, and as well as the theatre trip, the PTA arranged our 'Elfridges' day, as well as meeting Father Christmas in the grotto, and a bingo night. A huge thank you to Janine and all the PTA who work so hard putting these events together.

There have also been several opportunities to think of others this half term with various fundraising events. Thank you to Oliver in Y6 for arranging a collection for Ronald McDonald House and Claire House and thank you to everyone who contributed. The staff at Claire House and Ronald McDonald House were extremely grateful and said it will make such a difference to the families there this Christmas.



We also had a toy sale to raise money for our mental health rooms in school, so thank you to everyone who donated and bought items - over £300 was raised for resources to support children with their mental health and emotions.



During Anti bullying and Inter Faith week, we wore odd socks to celebrate our differences and remind ourselves that we are all unique and valued.

We held our own 'Bake Off' to raise money for Claire House as part of Mrs Lester's London Marathon run in aid of Claire House.



Welcome

I'd like to share the good news with you that Natalie had her baby on 17th November. Baby Sophia arrived safe and sound and Nat, Sophia and her husband are all doing well. Hopefully Natalie will call in for a visit in the new year.



School Priority updates

In our last newsletter, I shared with you the details of our priority areas for this academic year. These included the introduction of a new scheme of work for RE, developing children's vocabulary and communication skills, and a focus on maths. There has been lots of work going on, and lots of staff training and events. In terms of supporting at home, we would encourage you to keep on reading and talking with the children - emphasising any ambitious or exciting vocabulary, and keeping a diary of any unusual or powerful words they find. To help with maths at home, try to spend some time each week accessing Times Tables Rock Stars, and practice their tables, number bonds and counting. On our website, we have published our calculation guide, so you can see by year group how we approach solving calculations.

<https://www.stjosephscatholicprimarybirkenhead.co.uk/maths-calculation-guides>

Scroll down to the bottom of the page and you will find our 'Calculation Guides for Parents.' These documents explain how we would teach problem solving and calculation methods for each of the operations, with a step by step guide. Please do have a look, and try making up your own problems to work through with the children at home.

Lunch debt

Please may we politely ask that if you have any outstanding debt from this term with lunches etc that you pay in total or call Angie to set up a payment plan. We currently have a substantial amount owing so do need to settle balances ahead of the new term. Thank you

Storm damage

I hope you and your property stayed safe during the recent storms. Unfortunately, our KS2 reading shed didn't fare so well, and we were alerted by the local community that the shed had blown half way across the playground, with its book contents circling in a whirlwind across the yard! We are looking to file a PTA claim with the insurance, but we would also be very grateful for any donations of new and unused books. The reading shed was a lovely addition to the playground and allowed children to sit and enjoy a book over the play and lunch periods. We hope to get it back up and running as soon as possible, so if you do have any donations of books, we would be extremely grateful. Thank you.

Attendance

Our attendance for the term is 94.8%, with Persistent Absence of 14%. We had been doing really well, and our attendance was above national average, and our Persistent Absence figure had been lower (better) than national. Unfortunately we have been hit with a run of illnesses and absences over the last couple of weeks. This is understandable and typical for this time of year. Thank you for your ongoing support with helping to ensure good attendance, and I am sure this figure will continue to improve in the next term

Prayer for the term

Away in a manger

*Be near me, Lord Jesus
I ask You to stay
Close by me forever
And love me I pray*

*Bless all the dear children
In Your tender care
And fit us for heaven
To live with You there*

Wishing all of our children, families and staff a blessed and joyful Christmas

