



# Newsletter



## Newsletter 7

8<sup>th</sup> December, 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are all looking forward to the forthcoming Christmas events – the children have been very busy learning lines and practising songs, ready for the plays next week. On Tuesday, Year 6 went to sing carols at Poynder's Meadow. We were made most welcome, as always, and it was a real pleasure to see the children chatting to the residents and guests, who were delighted by the children's singing as well as the opportunity to meet them. Mr Browne and I felt very proud!

As there is a lot happening over the next week and a half, I have included lots of details in the newsletter, which will hopefully give you the information you need. If you have any queries, however, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to seeing you!



### Mr Massey

After Christmas, we will be 'lending' Mr Massey to one of our schools in the Hitchin Partnership for two terms. This year, we are in the very fortunate position of having a high level of staffing, so were pleased to be able to help Oughton School who needed a Year 6 teacher for January. We are delighted that Mrs Laura Frost, who worked as part of the Year 1 team last year, will be covering some of his commitments, and grateful to the ever flexible Mrs Broad and Mrs Mason, who have adjusted their timetables to work with his other classes. This is great professional development for Mr Massey, as he will be taking on new responsibilities, and whilst he will be much missed, we wish him every happiness and success, and look forward to his return in September.



### Christmas Shopping evening

Thank you very much for your support for the Christmas Shopping evening – it was lovely to see so many families there. Thank you too, to everyone who helped to set up and clear away afterwards; it was much appreciated. The money raised will go towards paying for the Pantomime coaches.



### Christmas Tree Festival

The Choir will be singing at the Hitchin Christmas Tree Festival at Holy Saviour Church in Radcliffe Road, on Sunday – meeting at 11.45, ready to sing and turn the lights on at 12.00 p.m. Our tree is entitled 'A Christmas Visit to Forest Schools' with the children making decorations out of natural materials. Miss Grainger and I were very pleased with the final result when we had finished cramming everything on!

This is a lovely event, so if you are around in Hitchin over the weekend, do drop into the festival and vote for our tree!



### **School Plays**

We look forward to sharing the children's plays with you next week. Entry is free; the PTFA will be running a series of raffles for anyone wishing to take part.

- Nursery & Reception: Doors will open at 10.15a.m.
- Year 1: Doors will open at 2.15p.m.

Details for the KS 2 plays are shown below.

- 6.30p.m.: Main reception door opens – Years 3 and 4 go through the hall and out through the double doors to go to their classrooms to get changed. Year 5 and 6 children whose parents are watching the Year 3/4 play can go to their classrooms to wait. Audience members take their seats in the hall from 6.30.
- 7.00p.m.: Year 3 & 4 play starts.
- 7.30p.m.: Year 5 & 6 children need to arrive to get into their costumes. They can go through the double doors from the playground side to go across to their classrooms. Audience members for their play are welcome to wait in the Year 1 classroom.
- 7.45p.m. (approx.): Year 3 and 4 children will go back to their classrooms to get changed, and can meet their parents in the courtyard outside their classrooms if they are going home. If they are joining parents to watch older siblings, they will come back into the hall.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Raffle will be drawn.
- 7.50p.m.: Years 5 & 6 play starts.
- End of evening: 2<sup>nd</sup> raffle drawn. Year 5 & 6 children go to their classroom to get changed and then return to the hall to meet up with their parents.

We are happy for photographs and videos to be taken; we understand how lovely it is to look back at these over the years. I am sure that you can appreciate that these must not be shared on any social media sites. This is because there are a number of children who cannot appear on the internet or their safety could be compromised. Thank you for your understanding.



### **Carol Service**

The Carol Service takes place on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30 p.m. at St. Giles. Doors open at 6.15p.m..The children from Year 2 will be sharing their nativity play as part of the service, with Year 6 children giving readings and the choir performing two carols.



### **Bishops Harvest Appeal**

Thank you so much for your generous donations for the Bishops Harvest Appeal – we raised an amazing £485.07 for the charity, which will make a fantastic difference!



### **Trampettes**

We have some trampettes which we are no longer able to use in school, as the guidance for their inclusion in PE lessons has changed. However, they are great for fitness, so if you would like one, in return for a small donation to the PTFA, or for a local charity or organisation, please let us know and we will be happy for them to be re-cycled!



### **PTFA Christmas Disco**

The Children's Christmas Disco will be held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December, from 5.30 – 7p.m. You can pre-book and pay via School Gateway or pay for entry on the door, at a cost £3. Refreshments will be on sale on the night, so children may wish to bring a small amount of money with them if they wish to buy something. This event is always great fun – all children who attend the school are welcome!



### **Christmas Lunch**

If you have not yet booked your child's school meal, please could you add this to School Gateway before Tuesday.

After the children have had their Christmas lunch on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December, the staff will be joining together to have theirs. If there are any parents or grandparents who could come in to help supervise the children during this time, we would be really grateful. This will be from about 12.45 p.m. Thank you in advance!



### **Panto! 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

We are all looking forward to our forthcoming trip to see the Pantomime of **Sleeping Beauty** on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December. We will be leaving from school at 9.00 a.m. and will return for a late lunch at about 1.00 p.m. If your child has a school dinner, this will be provided, so please order on School Gateway as usual.

As lunch is later than the children are used to, we would like all of the children to bring a small snack with them. This could be a bag of crisps, some fruit, or a sandwich, and a drink. The children will need to come to school in school uniform (except for Nursery of course). This is so that they can be easily recognised whilst out and about. The staff team and regular parent helpers will be accompanying the children, so that a high ratio of adults to children is in place. I am sure we will have a fantastic time!



### School Applications

Just a reminder that applications for Primary School places for September 2024 need to be made by 15<sup>th</sup> January. If you need any assistance with your application, please do not hesitate to contact the School Office and Jen or I will be happy to help.



### Countdown to Christmas!

Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Wednesday 13 <sup>h</sup> Dec	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> Dec
	Christmas jumpers may be worn.  Christmas Lunch  Chocolate for foodbank	Play dress rehearsals	10.30 a.m.: Reception Play  2.30 p.m.: Year 1 Play  7p.m.: Year 3 & 4 Play  7.50 p.m.: Year 5 & 6 Play	10.30 a.m.: Nursery Play  p.m. Year 2 Party  7 p.m.: Years 3 & 4 Play  7.50p.m.: Year 5 & 6 Play
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> Dec		
9.30a.m.: School Carol Service – St. Giles  a.m. Reception Party  p.m. KS2 Parties  6.30p.m.: Year 2, 6 & parents Carol Service at St. Giles.	9.00 a.m. Whole School Pantomime Visit  p.m. Year 1 Party  5.30 – 7.00 p.m. PTFA children's disco	Christmas jumpers may be worn.  9.00 a.m.: Nursery Party  Term Finishes at 1.15p.m.		



### **Attendance**

There is a lot in the press at the moment about research showing the impact of low attendance on children's learning, social skills, mental health and general well-being. As a result, the local authority School Attendance Officers have increased expectations placed on them by the government to address low attendance and in many areas, there has been a sharp rise in the amount of fines issued, and even prosecutions which have gone to court.

We are very keen to work with families to ensure they are not in this position, and to overcome any barriers to attending school. Attendance is expected to be above 95%. If it falls below this, it is hard for children to catch up with their learning; a week missed means 5 phonics lessons, 5 hours of maths and 5 hours of literacy missed, as well as learning in the other subjects taught. It also means that children get out of the routine of school and learning, and can increase any feelings of anxiety and impact of friendships.

Children are expected to be in school every day, unless they are ill. If they have a temperature or an illness such as chicken pox, they need to be at home. For sickness and diarrhoea, they must be off school for 48 hours after the last episode to prevent the illness spreading to others. They are able to be in school with coughs and colds. If they need to take prescribed medicine, or other medication such as Calpol, during the school day, we are able to administer this, provided the appropriate form has been filled out with the school office. All medication should be in the original container, and prescription labels need to be on bottles/boxes. More details on when children can be in school can be found via this link: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

As part of my statutory duties, and keep families up to date, I will write to families where their child's attendance is below 95% at the start of next term. Whilst absences caused by illness may be unavoidable, this may help you decide if you are considering any events during term time. If there is anything we can support you with, regarding supporting attendance, please do not hesitate to contact either me, or the School Office.

Please remember that I am always happy to discuss any issues with you. Thank you for reading this newsletter.

Yours sincerely,  
Liz Pollard  
HEADTEACHER