



Head-lines

I think the first term of the academic year is always my favourite; as much as I like the Summer months, I think the change from Autumn to Winter is one of the most beautiful periods of the year. It is an especially exciting time to work in a Primary School as we get to see the growing anticipation and excitement of the children as Christmas approaches. This term has been a wonderful one - I was so proud of the KS1 children who acted and sang fantastically in their production, and we have also had fairs, carol concerts and parties. It hasn't all been good news though - unfortunately I had to take some rather drastic action and exclude the elf in Year 1 due to some highly inappropriate behaviour! However, the children put their thinking hats on and devised some rules and I agreed that as long as he followed them, he could be allowed back in. So far, he has been much better. Thanks Year 1!

As always, thank you all for your continued support, and I wish you all a very merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Mr Turner

Prefects

Earlier this year, I wrote to the pupils in Year 6 to explain that I was seeking to appoint some school prefects. Along with the letter was an M23 Personal Specification and Job Description, setting out Essential and Desirable criteria for potential candidates. Pupils applied for the post by writing a personal statement outlining why they felt they were suitable for the role. These applications were then short listed and some invited to interview. The interview was a gruelling 15 minutes of questions, scenarios and expectations. Following this process, I am pleased to inform you that Ollie, Darcie, Helen, Grace, Athena, Madison and Ava have been appointed as our school prefects. You will see them helping out at events, such as Parents Evenings, Open Evenings and concerts, as well as supporting all of the pupils in school. I look forward to working with them and am already on the look out for Year 5 pupils who may wish to be considered next year!



Recruitment for other roles within school are also underway - Play Leader interviews are scheduled for when we return in January, and the School Council Election campaign will begin shortly.

Saying Goodbye.....

This term we say a goodbye to a long standing member of the St Joseph's team. Mrs Scallion is leaving us on Friday due to family commitments. Many of you will always hold Mrs Scallion dear in your hearts as she was our F1 teacher for several years and so for many of our children was their first teacher! We will be sad to say goodbye, but Mrs Scallion may well still be with us from time to time as she will continue to work via a teaching agency. On behalf of all the children, parents and staff I would like to say a big thank you to Mrs Scallion for all of her work and care over the years and wish her all the best for the future.

Mini-Vinnies drop off at the Food Bank.

This year, we ran a "reverse" Advent calendar in school - so each day asked for any donations of food we could then send on to those in need. Thank you all so much for your generosity. Mrs Ward took our Mini Vinnies to drop the donations off at the Birkenhead Food Bank. The donations from St Joseph's equated to a quarter of a tonne! Your kindness will help people in need eat this Christmas, so a huge thank you from the Food Bank.



Back in September I met with Nicki and Liz, our PTA Chair and Vice Chair to start discussions regarding the Christmas Fair. My words were 'Let's go big!' And my goodness they didn't disappoint! We had mince pies, mulled wine, snow globes and more! It was absolutely incredible. And then I saw our Grotto! I was lost for words! I have been informed that the fair raised more than £2,500 which can now be used for the children of our school. Thank you so much to Nicki, Liz, all the PTA and volunteers, and a special thanks to all of the helpers who moved Father Christmas' Grotto all the way from Lapland to St Joseph's! It was an incredible afternoon and the children loved it!



We really do want to continue to grow our PTA - I know they have lots of plans and ideas for even more things outside of Christmas and Summer Fairs, but they can only do this with your support and time. If you think you can help out in any capacity, please do get in touch with Nicki and Liz via the PTA Facebook page and they will welcome all support and volunteers. Thank you.

An Inn-Spector Calls.....

A huge thank you to all the children and staff who put together a wonderful KS1 Christmas Concert. It had everything - song, dance, comedy, tragedy, donkeys(!) and also reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas - the arrival of a very special baby. Well done everybody!



Whole School Attendance

Our whole school attendance from September to date is 95%. **This is a drop from our usual average, and falls below the Government expectation of at least 96%.** We will continue to work on attendance and any underlying issues next term, but please support us and your child by ensuring regular and punctual attendance. Thank you.

Thought for the term....

Under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document, set out by the Department for Education, all teachers are to be provided with a 10% portion of their working week as 'non-contact' time i.e not teaching. This time is ring fenced for Planning, Preparation and Assessment, and is therefore known as PPA time. This PPA time was introduced in 2005 in a response to the increased workload and pressures placed on teaching staff. We are now in Advent - a time of preparation for the coming of our Lord. There is no doubt that the increased pressures and workload felt by teachers is mirrored in all walks of society, not least of all in the run up to Christmas with the presents and shopping and cooking and decorating. Perhaps we could all do with some PPA time! Maybe take 10% of our week and use it to Plan, Prepare and Assess. That way, the planning can still cover the necessary requirements pertaining to Christmas and the inevitable sprout peeling and turkey basting, but still leaves room for the Preparation - steadying our hearts and minds for this most wonderful experience, and the Assess - reflecting on what we are doing well and what we could do better when living our lives in keeping with the example set by this special baby.

