

Dear Parents and Carers,

Nativity Play

Last Tuesday and Wednesday the girls and boys of Foundation 2 and Years 1 and 2 performed their nativity play. It was FANTASTIC! I was filled with pride as I watched our brilliant young people perform with such confidence. Both performances were excellent, and every child, no matter what their role was, helped make both performances so special and memorable.

Events like this do not happen by accident. They take a lot of hard work, and I would like to thank my colleagues for all they did. I would like to recognise the great efforts of Mrs Buckley who coordinated everything; all the teachers and teaching assistants for preparing the children; an ex-parent; Mr Whelpton, for lending and setting up the lights; Mrs Cooper for her sterling efforts as our lighting engineer; Mrs Dewsnap and Mrs Balfour for preparing the costumes and Mrs McKay for playing the piano.



I would also like to thank Father Christmas for lending us some of his little (elf) helpers for the evening performance. They were (from left to right) Princess Musngi, Oscar Vickers, Abigail Gore and Callum Foster.

It was wonderful to welcome Mrs Jeffery, Mrs Downes and Mrs Humphries as well as all the governors who were able to come along and watch the children. Lastly I would like to thank all the parents, carers, families and friends who supported our children, it was wonderful to see so many of you.

Bad Weather

This morning it was necessary to change the usual routine because of the adverse weather conditions. The arrangements appear to have worked well and parents/carers seemed to have appreciated the staggered start. I would like to reassure you that when we delay the start of the day because of extreme weather, your child will not be marked as late if they arrive before the specified *delayed* start time.

As the weather becomes increasingly uncertain it is important that we prepare just in case we need to delay the start of the day again or even close the school. It is very important that we can contact you. We would normally share information in four ways:

1. via the local authority who then publish information on their website;
2. via the BBC Sheffield and Hallam FM radio stations who then make announcements live on air *and* put information on their website;
3. via a text; and
4. via an email which will include more details than can be included in a text.

It is therefore very important that our records are current. So, if you have changed your mobile telephone number or email address recently, I would be grateful if you would inform school immediately, so that our records can be updated. That way we can ensure that you will receive all necessary updates in the future.

Capital Funding

As you know I have been developing a new School Improvement Plan to address a range of key issues. In the future it is my intention to involve parents and carers in this process. A key focus has to be addressing the poor state of certain areas of our school. Earlier in the term I met with the Diocesan Property Manager and together we reviewed the site and identified a number of key areas which require attention. Following this meeting I applied for a significant capital grant to start redevelopments. Last week the governors were informed by the Diocese that our school has been awarded £150k to start the renewal process. Clearly it is important that we make this money work hard for us. To ensure that this happens, the Governors and I are looking at the possibility of working with a highly regarded firm of chartered surveyors and architects and to possibly develop a long-term partnership with them to redevelop and maintain our physical environment in a systematic way, just like many other schools across the diocese already do.

In identifying key areas for development I have listened carefully to the views of colleagues and our young people, and I appreciate that the state of our toilets is, for example, a big issue for many. Let me assure you that their redevelopment is on the Building Development Plan along with a number of other key things.

The Diocese has already agreed to project manage the reopening of the old pedestrian entrance in order to remove the need to use the parish car park. I will provide you with further information in due course.

PTFA

I would like to remind you that our next PTFA meeting will be on Wednesday 19th December 2012 straight after school in Mr Smith's classroom. If you would like to attend, your children will be supervised in Miss Kipling's classroom next door. The aim of the meeting is to elect a committee to begin the important process of registering our brand new PTFA as a charity. It would be great if we could get a really good turn out for this important meeting. Thank you.

New School Logo

A letter has been sent home to each family inviting you to vote on a new school logo. As a community we will be revisiting our vision and values in the coming months. This important process will involve my colleagues, the governors, parents and carers and of course our amazing children. The timing coincides with our plans to convert to voluntary academy status later in the academic year. Our identity as a school community, with a vision rooted in the Gospel values, is very important. Adopting a new logo which better reflects our Catholic identity and possibly our links to our patron saint, St John Fisher, would be a key part of this process. Attached to the letter are the fifteen designs and a brief explanation of each to help you make your decision.

Though the change of logo on the uniform will come into force from September 2013, your child(ren) can continue to wear the current uniform (with the existing logo) until you are ready to replace it. There will be no expectation that you will stop using perfectly good uniform simply because it has the previous logo on it.

Statement to Live By

Next week our statement to live by will be: **'I know Advent is a time for getting closer to God'**.

Time to talk: Together you could look at this statement and talk about why it is important to stay close to God everyday of our lives. What sorts of things can we do in order to stay close to our God? Why is it important to stay close to God when we prepare for Christmas?

Attendance

The classes with the best attendance for week ending 7 December were:

1. In first place was **Y5** - with a **98.4%** attendance
2. In second place was **Y3** with a **97.8%** attendance
3. In third place was **Y2** with **97%** attendance

This week Bobby will once again visit the girls and boys of Year 5 (their attendance is amazing this year – well done!); Bertie will visit the children of Year 3 and Elvis will have fun learning with children of Year 2. Congratulations to you all! For the week ending 7 December the average attendance was **96%** which meets our target of 96%.

Staff News

Mrs Humphries is hoping to return to work in the new year on what is called a *phased* return. This means that she will start on a part time basis and build up her hours gradually. Mrs Stuart-Harris will continue to work in Year 2 so that we can maintain as much continuity as possible during this transitional period. I am very grateful to both Mrs Jones and Mrs Stuart-Harris for all they have done to support our Year 2 children during this academic year whilst Mrs Humphries has been on long-term sick leave.

I would also like to thank, publicly, Miss Burt, who has worked in the school as a full time volunteer since September. During that time Miss Burt has supported colleagues and children brilliantly. No task has been too big or small for Miss Burt and she has been wonderful. She leaves us to pursue the next phase of her training to become a teacher and she goes with all our thanks and best wishes.

Have a great weekend!

F Barratt
Headteacher