



Headteacher's Christmas Message

Dear Children, Parents and Members of the Parish,

As the Autumn term draws to a close I would like to take this opportunity to reflect upon the term and how we move forward throughout the year and beyond.

Our Ofsted visit this term seems to have come and gone, however it has provided us with a sound basis in which to progress towards being outstanding. I was particularly impressed with the HMI's comments focusing on our curriculum being broad and rich which clearly stood out. The emphasis on behaviour of our children stood out also. I have said it many times and it is encouraging to hear externally how wonderfully well behaved our pupils are. I often receive comments or emails highlighting this too. This was recently exemplified in Liverpool throughout our trip meeting members of the Liverpool community, but it is typical wherever our pupils go. We focus on behaviour for learning as well as those essential manners and social skills to enable our children to communicate with others. As a result this engenders an interest in learning and an engagement in activities to enable pupils to get the most from experiences. We encourage self-regulation also so that pupils become independent in managing behaviour which means the children do not just conform in school but live out good behaviours in the community and beyond.

Our pupils have taken part in many activities and visits which are appreciated and provide a rich experience. From sporting competitions such as tag rugby, netball, cross country, judo, to the many creative experiences e.g. comic arts festival, music performances and concerts. Classes have been to Knowsley Safari, Vehicle museum, Liverpool residential and visitors such as the Owl visit, Councillors, Meeting John Bercow at Pupil Parliament to meeting Prince Charles at the Westmorland Show. Only last week our Year 5 pupils met Katherine Woodfine a highly regarded author who proved to be a great inspiration to the children.

It is so encouraging to see so much interest in looking outward towards others in the children's (and adults) charitable giving. This term alone we have supported a range of causes as well as supporting the PTA. This has included taking part in our termly Tradecraft coffee meeting, Children in Need, the Poppy Appeal, hearing about the Noah's Initiative in Kenya and many more concerns.

All organisations face their various challenges, we as a school are no different however we have appreciated your understanding if occasional human errors are made. We are working hard to maintain communication each week or via letters, text and emails. Our website is hopefully a helpful resource and go to location to get information.

As we look ahead and build on advice made on the inspection report to get to 'outstanding', we are also perusing our vision to improve our outdoor education. This is something we are looking to develop significantly over the next few years. We are already at RHS Schools Award level 3 (5 being the highest) and we are keen to put the equipment and infrastructure in to ensure our children further engage with the natural environment.

Spiritually, we have spent some time reflecting in the period of Advent and considering the story from different perspectives. Christmas can be a most wonderful time but it also can be challenging for families and we are encouraging the children to think about others and how they are experiencing Christmas. I hope the children are able to have a very happy and special time this Christmas. I pray for all of our families who have experienced bereavements this year and those who we know are facing challenging circumstances. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time. I also pray for the wonderful excitement and fun that Christmas time can bring.

I would like to say thank you to the staff and the pupils for their hard work throughout the term, and indeed the support we receive from parents and carers in making a difference to so many young lives. Finally, I would like to wish all pupils and parents, from all the staff and governors of the school, a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Our Spring term begins on Thursday 4th January. On Thursday and Friday we will be having a time of outdoor learning to start the year on a positive experience.

Christmas is a time for many traditions to take place, particular to each family. In my family we light a candle in the window on Christmas Eve similar to the tradition in Ireland. This may be seen as symbol for the light to guide Mary and Joseph, as a sign of welcome to others, and a sign of hospitality or even in memory of someone special and remembering past Christmas times. Whatever your traditions are that make Christmas a special time I pray the following for you and your family.

An Irish Blessing:

*God Grant you lightness in your step,
A smile on every face you meet,
Loved ones gathered at your hearth,
And at your door, good friends to greet,
A holy hymn upon your lips,
A window candle burning bright,
And may the Good Lord bless your heart
And come to dwell there Christmas night.*

Yours truly