

Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

December 4th 2020 Volume 13

Christmas Performance

Our Christmas performance continues to progress and excitement is building as we get towards completion. Reception and Key Stage 1 recorded their performance yesterday with Brendon, while, all being well, Key Stage 2 have their turn on Tuesday. The children can come to school wearing any colourful Christmas jumper / top / shirt / dress. If not a full dress, then the bottom half should remain black (your school uniform trousers, skirts, shoes will be perfect). Black leggings would be fine too. If you've not got anything with Christmassy patterns, then any red, green, silver, gold or white upper half will still look great! If you happen to have any Christmassy outdoor extras (e.g. hat, gloves, scarf) please bring along too as some filming may take place outside. I would like to stress that we are not expecting people to go out and buy/order new clothes, especially at this difficult time. The idea is that this performance will be shared through a website link on our Facebook page and I really look forward to seeing the whole play pieced together. I am determined that we continue to function as a community and also transmit the magic of a Primary School Christmas to the parents and families after what has been the most challenging calendar year for everyone.

Be the best that you can be

While we are going to try and ensure that the children have an enjoyable time in school as Christmas approaches, the children and staff are continuing to work incredibly hard. Miss Bowden and I have visited some classrooms again this week and have been so impressed with what we have seen on our travels over the last few weeks. The pandemic meant that there had inevitably been lost learning time across the country and, of course, Ox Close was affected by this, as was every other school. However, I must say that a lot of planning has gone into how we can make the children feel safe and secure and then allow them to have a platform on which they could make accelerated progress. In terms of provision and engagement, the signs are really promising and I think it is important to acknowledge the hard work of the children and staff this term despite the uncertainty in the world at large. We will continue to strive to do our very best and I know that our amazing children will do the same.

Team Solan/Ox Close Primary Christmas Jumper Competition

We have been busy looking through all of the fantastic entries to the Team Solan/Ox Close Christmas Jumper competition. I have spoken to Mark twice this week and we will bring you further news on the outcomes of the competition soon. Watch this space!

Prospective Reception starters for September 2021: Virtual Tour Video

Our initial programme of virtual open meetings for prospective parents is now over and we have had a number of people who have tuned in! We now have a brand-new virtual tour video, which can be seen on our Facebook page. The video captures a day in the life of Ox Close and also features some superb overhead drone footage. Choosing the correct school for your child is vital so if prospective Reception parents have any questions then they can still get in touch with either me or Miss Bowden. I understand that there are still 30% of prospective parents across County Durham who have not yet expressed their preferences. If you know anyone who is in this position then please alert them to our video and let them know that we would be happy to hear from them.

Staff Advent

Thank you to all of the staff for agreeing to take part in the Virtual Advent Calendar. This is another attempt to spread some cheer and I am very grateful to them all for being good sports. If you have not yet seen this feature, check out our Facebook page for your daily dose.

Virtual Classroom

Our Virtual Classroom continues to be available on our school website. There are some children that, as we go through the term, may need to self-isolate for numerous reasons. To ensure that these children are still learning whilst at home, we will upload planning on a weekly basis. These plans contain suggested activities to complete with your child and links to useful websites. In addition, we are also making arrangements to COVID-proof our curriculum in case of further significant longer-term lockdowns. Mrs Harvey has started recording some Geography lessons and she has completed a Years 3/4 unit and is now tackling 1/2 and 5/6. She will then move onto recording Spring Term Foundation subject lessons so that we are ready for any eventuality after Christmas.

Christmas Jumper Day – Friday 11th December

This is a national day and one we love to join in with. Children can come to school in their Christmas Jumper or non-school uniform - whichever they prefer. We will **not** be collecting donations this year.

Christmas Parties

The parties will take place on the following days:

Reception	Tuesday 15 th December
Years 1 and 2	Tuesday 15 th December
Years 3 and 4	Monday 14 th December
Years 5 and 6	Thursday 17 th December

Children can come to school in their party clothes. At lunchtime, Karen and her team will provide the children with a party lunch. If your child does not stay for lunch and you would like to order this one-off menu then please log on to Parent Pay and select the red option for the party. Alternatively, you can phone the school office and book through Mrs Smart and Mrs Ozturk.

COVID-19

If you or anyone in your family are displaying COVID-19 symptoms then the following link is useful in order for you to be able to book a test: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Alternatively, you can also call 119. Under these circumstances, please keep us informed. It is also important that if anyone in your household, child or adult, displays symptoms or has a test all within the household self isolates. This means that all siblings who live with a child or adult who is displaying symptoms should not attend school until the end of the self-isolation period or after the affected person has had a negative test. Please check by calling the school office if you are unsure. Thank you.

Christmas Cards

As mentioned last week, class Christmas post boxes are in the entrance to each classroom so that children can post their cards and then sanitise their hands. All cards will be left in the post box until the last day of posting on **Friday 11th December**. No cards will be accepted after this date. Cards will then be quarantined over the weekend and handed out to children in the final week. Please ensure that your child only brings in cards for **their** class as they will not be able to wander around and post cards in other post boxes like in previous years.

Class Charts

I am delighted to announce our Class Charts winners of the week. In Reception Grace R gathered the most points while our top scorer this week in 1/2 was Frankie M. In Key Stage 2, Dakota C was the top scorer in 3/4, while Callum R scored highest in 5/6.

Attendance

Despite the particular challenges of COVID-19, our attendance has been excellent since the beginning of term. Once again, I would like to thank parents for their support with this and also to pay tribute to the children and the staff. Classes 5/6P, 5/6S and 5/6T had the highest attendance this week with 100%. The overall school attendance this year is 97.9% while this week it has been 98.7%. The threshold for what is termed as persistent absence has been determined as 90%. **Unfortunately, we are also unable to authorise term time holidays as we have to follow the Government and Durham County protocol. The Durham County protocol explains that penalty notices must be issued 'in instances of unauthorised holidays in term time (where the holiday gives rise to 7 days or more unauthorised absence in any period...).** The school processes absences and then the County Council pick up on unauthorised absence. The Government have now reinstated fines for unauthorised absences and their expectation is that all children will attend school.

Dates for the Diary

Friday 18 th December 2020	School closes for Christmas holidays
Christmas Holidays	
Monday 4th January 2021	PD Day – School Closed
Tuesday 5 th January 2021	Children back to school

A Bowden

Miss A Bowden
Head of School

D Harrison

Mr D Harrison
Executive Headteacher