

Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

December 18th 2020 Volume 15

Christmas Story: Bringing the community together

I hope that you all enjoyed our Christmas performance, the Christmas Story. There certainly seemed to be a positive reaction from people who had viewed on Facebook. In my opinion, it was a real triumph in the most challenging of circumstances. The children were incredible and their talent was evident on the screen. Ensuring that the children had as enjoyable Christmas as possible has been a big aim of mine ever since we returned to school and everyone has pulled together to make that happen. At times through the project, the guidance would only permit for groups of 15 to sing together and this is why we saw the classes split into different groups. When I explained my vision to Brendon in September, he was so enthusiastic and he did a brilliant job to pull everything together - even if he did pressgang people into singing! I would like to thank Brendon for everything that he has done with this project, as well as our VE Day celebrations and other community events during lockdown. I would also like to thank all of the children for their brilliant efforts and the staff for supporting them.

Ox Close/Team Solan Christmas Jumper Design Competition

The Ox Close/Team Solan jumper design competition has been another exciting event at Ox Close. Mark delivered the prizes to school today. Each winner has had their design made into an actual T-shirt and also receives a selection box - a magnificent prize. The winners are as follows:

RB- Kodie
RP-Rosie T
1/2C- Eila
1/2P- Caleb
1/2R- Miles
3/4C-John
3/4H- Lois
3/4W- Harmony
5/6T- Danielle
5/6P-Mateo
5/6S- Ellie

Well done to all of the winners and thank you to everyone who entered. Thank you to Team Solan for providing the prizes and we look forward to working with the organisation in 2021. I especially appreciate Mark taking the time to do this for us as he is so busy helping people at Christmas time, this year more so than any other year.

Thank you Kaye

I would like to say a huge thank you to Kaye Roberts (Kandy Kaye) for helping make Christmas special for the children this year through her amazing generosity. Kaye provided ice cream for every single child to have at their Christmas Party - enough for 300 children! She also provided a selection box for every single child - wow! Thank you so much Kaye!

Spennymoor Town Council

Thanks also go to Spennymoor Town Council as they have also provided a selection box for every child. It is marvellous that people and community organisations are being so kind to the children this Christmas after what has been such a challenging year. Thank you to the Town Council!

Taylor Shaw Christmas Card Competition

Special congratulations go to Emily A of 1/2C and Isla Rose M of 3/4C as they have won a county wide Christmas card competition. The prize was to have their cards made into the designs which Taylor Shaw have actually sent out to all schools - something to be very proud of! Taylor Shaw also provided a present for Emily and Isla Rose. Well done girls!

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 - there have been some memorable ones already and there are further memorable ones to come too!

Christmas Parties

The children have loved having their Christmas parties this week - thank you to Karen and the team in the kitchen and to all of the staff for making the parties possible.

Children's Leadership Team

All classes in Key Stage 1 and 2 have held Class Council meetings and this week I met with all of their Children's Leadership Team. The children came up with all sorts of ideas and I will sift through these and construct a Children's School Improvement Plan with Emily, the Children's Champion, in the new year. I also asked the children what they liked best about Ox Close and every single class mentioned the chance to be with friends, which I think says a lot after the year that we have had!

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 nearly 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.

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 recorded Autumn Term Geography lessons for Years 3/4 and 5/6. She has now moved onto recording Spring Term Foundation subject lessons for Years 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6 so that we are ready for any eventuality after Christmas.

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. Miss Bowden sent an email today explaining the protocols for COVID which will apply over the next 6 days. Both Miss Bowden and I are required to be available to assist with contact tracing over the next 6 days and the email explains procedures.

Class Charts

I am delighted to announce our Class Charts winners of the week. In Reception Rosie T gathered the most points while our top scorer this week in 1/2 was Willow. In Key Stage 2, Miley was the top scorer in 3/4, while Laila D scored highest in 5/6. We also have winners from across the course of the half term. Lacy won the most points in Reception, with Tyler coming out on top in 1/2. In 3/4 Joshua W triumphed, while Lucy scored highest in 5/6. Well done to all!

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. Class 1/2C had the highest attendance this week with 98.9%. The overall school attendance this year is 97.7% while this week it has been 96.2%. 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.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

As I sign off for 2020, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year on behalf of all of the staff and Governors. 2020 has been a year like no other, a year that has presented us with our greatest ever challenges but which has also featured some of our biggest ever successes. I am so proud of all of the children and staff and thank them sincerely for everything this year. Thank you for your support and best wishes for the festive season and 2021! We look forward to seeing you on Tuesday 5th January!

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