

Happy Christmas!



December 2014

Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

Dear Parents / Carers

Well a whole term has gone past in a flash and we are approaching Christmas at a pace. This first term has been one of discovery for me finding the strengths of the school, of which there are many and building on those, but also finding those areas which need to be improved. A few weeks ago we had a monitoring visit by Ofsted to check how the school was doing following the 2012 inspection and the main findings are below.

In the best classes children achieve well i.e. make good progress in their writing and mathematics. They are developing a cursive style of handwriting (joined up handwriting) and really good presentation. The marking in these classes is detailed and there are extra tasks set for the children to complete which accelerate their learning and are acknowledged by the teacher. Where there still needs to be improvement the expectations of what the children can achieve is not as high as it should be. This presents itself as poor presentation and untidy handwriting and the marking is not as detailed with inconsistent approaches to providing the children with further tasks to increase their rate of achievement.

So where does that leave us? Things are improving and the whole school community are dedicated to ensuring that every child receives the best possible opportunity to fulfil their potential and be as ready as possible for the next stage of their education at high school. You can help us by checking the quality of your child's work and talking to them about work that could be done better and of course congratulating them on a piece of work that is well done. One of our catch phrases at the high school is

"That'll do will never do"

It's up to us working together to inspire the children to give of their best all the time. To further improve teaching and learning I have decided that we need to have clear leadership of all year groups i.e. heads of year. This is a model that works well in high schools but also in larger junior schools. I hope to have these appointments completed by the end of term or early in the new term and I will communicate the outcome to you. All these appointments will be made internally.

I feel a bit of a Scrooge like character putting this into a Christmas newsletter but I know you would want to know the full picture. While I am writing this though I keep popping into the hall to listen to the wonderful singing and acting of the children who are practising for the school nativity play. It is truly wonderful and we must never forget that the whole school experience is made up of such activities. I would also add that the Firside children are some of the most polite and happy I have ever met and there it is impossible to place a value on these characteristics. A big thank you to the

children and staff that took part and attended the Hellesdon Community carol concert on Sunday. For some reason the first invitation did not reach us but Mrs McCash managed to assemble 26 of Firside's finest to put on a great show. It was great to see so many of you at the Christmas productions and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas

Gerard Batty
Headteacher

PS Chocolate Quiz. What is the language the words next to the picture are written in and what does it mean?



Many thanks to all of you who donated a bag of sugar in return for your Christmas performance tickets. I am very pleased to tell you that we donated 150kg of sugar to the BEFA appeal.

Dates for your diary:

December

Friday 19th Last day of Autumn Term, school closes at 3:15pm

January

Tuesday 6th First day of Spring Term

February

Monday 2nd Class photographs

Mon 16th – Fri 20th Spring Half Term break

March

Wednesday 4th Book Fair

Friday 27th Last day of Spring Term

LOST PROPERTY - that has been found this half term will be laid out in the hall on Friday – please come and have a look. Don't forget to check all uniform you have at home in case your child has taken someone else's clothes home by mistake!

SCHOOL MEALS - **Please remember** that school meals should be ordered and paid for at the beginning of the week on a Monday – Thank you.

REMINDER - that on Friday (19th) everybody is invited to wear a Christmas jumper – either bought or personally decorated with tinsel, ribbon, etc. There is no charge for this, it is just for fun!

RESIDENTIAL TRIPS – Please note that by now £65 should have been paid towards the Kingswood trip, with the next payment due by the end of January. £20 should have been paid towards the Holt Hall trip, with the next payment due by the end of February. Any problems – please see the office.

FUSION KUNG FU are based at Firside Junior on Mondays and Thursdays with classes for children starting at 5:30 and for adults later in the evenings. One or two of our children regularly come to classes but there is still room for more! For further information visit www.fusionkungfu.co.uk or phone Ben on 07786 982832 or Keith on 07796 133340. Maybe this could be part of a New Year resolution to get fitter?!