



Highwood Primary School
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Promoting Resilience, Achieving Potential
Headteacher Mrs B Rai

Monday 11th December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,



With the end of the term fast approaching and the festive feeling across the school, we have been continuing our learning with enthusiasm and curiosity. Pupils have started to perform at the Christmas special events.

Our youngest children in Nursery and Reception sang and danced without forgetting their important parts in the story of the Nativity. They were amazing, bringing huge smiles to all of us. It's hard to believe that they joined us only 13 weeks ago! This week we are looking forward to Year 1 and 2 presenting their lovely Christmas production.

Pupil Voice: The theme of this year's 'Anti-Bullying Week' was called 'Make A Noise About Bullying'. The overriding theme shared and promoted across the school during this designated week was "to not be silent about the hurt that bullying can cause, or to remain silent when we hear bullying just dismissed as 'banter'."

At Highwood, we endorse this sentiment wholeheartedly, and have further promoted the values of unity and respect by running a poster competition. Our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (ABA) have been working hard to encourage and support their peers to be kind and empathetic towards each other. Our ABA's meet regularly to address actions about how we can create events throughout the year to continue to raise awareness and combat any form of bullying (physical, verbal, relational or cyber) across our school community. Our ABA's are extremely keen to support their peers in their roles this year.

As you know, our school is a very diverse community. Promoting key values, such as respect, is extremely important and will continue throughout specific PSHE lessons, circle time and assemblies. With the work of our school ABA's, and valuable discussions around this important theme, we want to make a noise about bullying, and racism and decrease the impact that it has on society.

ABA's Judging the Anti-Bullying Competition



Autumn Term Assessments

We have carried out some initial analysis of attainment data and can see that there has been significant academic progress this term. We continue to refine our methods to find out how much pupils can remember and recall in their learning.

The Maths Mastery Approach to teaching maths is making a difference, resulting in children recalling number facts fluently. Please encourage your child to read every day and complete their Reading Record. We know that more effort needs to be applied in writing from Year 1 to Year 6. Children need to build their stamina to write longer pieces of work. In the spring term, we aim to focus on skills of editing, proofreading, and reflecting upon what has been written. Our school improvement advisor will be visiting the children in January to observe and delve into what each year group should be able to do independently.

Mistakes that pupils need to spot:

- Capital letters in places they are not needed
- Missing capital letters at the beginning of a sentence or the name of a person or place
- Misspelt words
- Missing words
- Punctuation in the wrong place or missing
- Mixing up punctuation
- Sentences that do not make sense when you read them



Charitable donations accepted and distributed this autumn term. Thank you so much!

- ♥ Harvest Food Festival; donations of non-perishable food and items were distributed to New Hope
- ♥ Donations to Friends of Highwood for Spooky Day and the tombola in preparation for the Christmas Fair. At the fair, you raised £2,753.00!
- ♥ Families donated pre-loved school uniforms items to the school
- ♥ Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal – we raised over £453 to support ex-servicemen in this worthy cause.



A special Thank You to the Friends of Highwood Committee for creating so many happy memories!

Music teaching You will have noticed that Mrs Nicolas has been unable to provide music lessons this term. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, it has been difficult for her to give continuity and commitment to teaching each week. She has made the difficult decision to leave Highwood. She has worked at the school for 11 years and has brought great enjoyment to singing, playing instruments, and the development of the choir. Every child has had the opportunity to learn to play the recorder and had fun through her inspirational teaching.

During her absence, we have contacted Hertfordshire Music Services. It is worrying to learn that the service has had to make drastic cuts to staffing and there are new changes on its horizon. In the meantime, we will advertise for a music specialist to help with the music teaching. We will continue to follow the National Curriculum and teach it ourselves, as are many schools having to do nowadays.

Mrs Nicolas' passion for music spread cheerfulness across the school. She is very much missed and we wish her all the best for the future.

Due to Mrs Khindey leaving for her new Headteacher post, I am pleased to announce that Mrs Thompson and Mrs Gerrald, our senior leaders, will be stepping into the succession planning roles of Acting Assistant Headteachers. The governors and I felt that their successful experience working at Highwood made them very worthy of interim appointments. Miss Marriott and I will support them in their new roles, which will continue to focus on raising standards of teaching and learning. They will continue to teach in their respective phases, but they will have additional strategic roles of responsibility. We also look forward to Mrs Woodward joining us in January. She is an experienced, enthusiastic teacher who will work closely with the senior leaders.



A reminder to those of you with younger children. Applications for our Nursery for September 2024 can now be submitted. **The closing date is 9:00am on Friday 23rd February 2024.** Please pick up an application form from the school office.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Wrap Night tomorrow, ready for the children to enjoy the Secret Shopping Room on Friday. You can pay on the School Gateway (£1.50 per gift to a maximum of 5 gifts per child) until Wednesday 13th December.

Wishing you an enjoyable week ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Bindu Rai
Headteacher

Tuesday 12 th December	Friends' WRAP Night for Secret shopping room
Wednesday 13 th December	KS1 (Years 1 and 2) Christmas Performance 9:15-9:45am Christmas lunch and Christmas Jumper day
Friday 15 th December	Friends' Secret Shopping Room – details to follow
Tuesday 19 th December	Years 3 and 4 Christmas Performance 9:15-9:45am
Wednesday 20 th December	End of term! 2:00pm finish
 Christmas Holidays 21 st December – 3 rd January 2024 	
Thursday 4 th January 2024	Start of term
Thursday 11 th January	School tour for prospective parents 2:00pm
Tuesday 23 rd January	Year 3 trip to Tring Museum
Thursday 15 th February	End of half term – finish at 3.25pm
Friday 16 th February	INSET DAY – School closed to pupils
Half term Monday 19 th -23 rd February 2024	