



*We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together*

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21<sup>st</sup> December 2022

Dear parents and carers

Today we have reached the final day of the Autumn term. I must take this opportunity to thank the entire staff team who have as usual gone above and beyond each day to ensure that your children have the very best opportunities to learn, love and be. I would also like to thank your children for their amazing commitment to their learning and to the sense of community this term - they have been brilliant and are a credit to you! Finally, my thanks turn to parents and carers for your cooperation and consideration and for your support for the whole community.



Thanks are also due to our amazing PSA committee who, supported by your generous donations, have managed to raise an amazing total of £2,856.96 towards school funds. This has enabled the purchase of two new laptops for each hall, the funding of an online Pantomime (from the Hippodrome), crackers for each child at the Christmas dinner and more reading materials across the school. The PSA also kindly presented each child with a wrapped Christmas gift this week. Cake sale funds have resulted in Lego and games in many classes. Thank you to all volunteers and to everyone who has contributed in time or financially towards events. It is very much appreciated.

The past two weeks have been particularly busy with so many creative Christmas activities. The school is covered in sparkles and there is a beautiful sense of excitement and expectant joy as we travel through the school. Last week Christmas dinner caused much excitement. Thank you to Mrs Pickard and her team for their amazing festive treats and to Mrs Lorimer for ensuring that the hall was transformed into a beautiful setting for a magical meal!





Last week also marked the return of our 'in person' nativities. Thanks are due to the Year 2 staff team and to the children in Year 2, 1 and Reception for their beautiful retelling of a 'Fireside Nativity.' It was wonderful to have a packed hall full of parents and friends to celebrate with. Charity collection after the nativities raised an amazing £280 for Macmillan Cancer Support.



Friday marked the return of our popular 'Christmas in Song' event. Each year group from Reception to Year 6 performed a beautiful song and retold the familiar nativity narrative in a unique way. Although the dreaded lurgy prevented the Diocesan Choral Director, Yvette Murphy, from being with us for the performances, the children demonstrated brilliantly all that they had learnt with her in singing some complex and varied choral pieces. We were also able to witness the inaugural performance of our new school choir. What talented children we have! Collections after the two performances raised an amazing £270 for the Catholic Children's Society. Thank you for your generosity following our concerts over the past two weeks.





On Monday classes in different key stages worked together on creative craft activities and in the afternoon classes engaged in traditional party games. On Tuesday classes were filled with laughter, singing and active participation as the children watched a pantomime version of Cinderella, streamed from the Hippodrome.

Today the whole school joined together for a beautiful Christmas assembly. We listened to scripture readings, poems and prayers, sung carols and celebrated together. At the end the staff team joined together in a surprise performance of jingle bells on the tuned hand bells for everyone. A taster of our handbell skills is available on Twitter today!

Today marks Mrs Pickard's final day in school. Mrs Pickard has been Cook Manager at the school for 28 years and begins her well deserved retirement tomorrow. Her legendary chicken pie will be greatly missed as well as her rice crispy bakes! We will be ensuring that Mrs Pickard leaves her recipes for her successor! Over her years with us, Mrs Pickard has served approximately 1,330,000 dinners to about 1680 children. At breakfast club, Mrs Pickard has served up in the region of 60,800 breakfasts. That's a significant commitment to Stevenage children which we all thank Mrs Pickard for.



Wishing you a happy, blessed and fruitful retirement, Mrs Pickard! This term we also say farewell to Mrs Butler who has assisted us with maternity cover in the office since April. We thank Mrs Butler for her friendly nature and her efficient operations. We are delighted to welcome Mrs Brooke to a permanent office position from January.



Please note that from January, as previously mentioned, Reception class will fall back in line with the rest of the school so that the staggered end time is removed. As such, like the rest of the school, they will finish at 3.15pm as they always used to pre - covid. This ensures maximum learning time and enables an uninterrupted story at the end of the day for all children.

On behalf of the staff team and the governors of the school, may I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. May the festive season for you mirror the beauty of the child in the manger and may your family be blessed with peace, happiness, love and joy. Thank you for your kind words, messages, gifts and cards – they have been much appreciated by all!



We look forward to welcoming everyone back after the Christmas break on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jon White".

Jon White  
**Headteacher**



### **Dates for your diary**

Wednesday, December 21 2:00pm  
Thursday, January 5, 2023  
Friday, January 6, 2023  
Monday, January 9, 2023

SCHOOL CLOSURES FOR CHRISTMAS  
OCCASIONAL DAY - SCHOOL CLOSED  
INSET DAY - school closed to pupils  
SCHOOL REOPENS FOR SPRING TERM

