



Liskeard Hillfort
Primary School

Newsletter



20th December 2017

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Principal: Dr Tim Cook

Dear Parents and Carers...



I must start this newsletter with an apology. The technical gremlins got to us last week, and the newsletter didn't get sent. Genuine apologies for this – but we have uploaded it to the website for parents to reference. Apologies again.

More positively, the last few days have flown by in a blur of rehearsals, costumes and performances. Exhausting though it may be, there's no place like a primary school in the run up to Christmas. Children have conducted themselves well, and performed beautifully. Well done to all of those involved.

As I noted last week, we have had a review in school very recently. We were delighted with the findings – so I have offered a summary below and reproduced much of the final report. I hope that you find this informative.

Over the Christmas break and the inevitable trips to the shops, visits from in-laws and viewings of Doctor Who, it's worth remembering what an incredible County we live in. Please, consider taking the family for a day trip or two to places which can support your child's education – possibly to some of the various museums across the County or to the art galleries (some great ones in Penzance). The cliff paths are stunning whilst the moor land around Minions offers a flavour of Cornish history. Alternatively, Liskeard library always offers a warm welcome and of course, library books are free! Whatever you get up to, have a restful time (never easy at Christmas) and I look forward to welcoming you back after the break.

Happy Christmas,

Dr Tim Cook

tcook@liskeardhillfortprimary.org.uk

Christmas Performances and Fayre:

A massive thanks to all of those children, parents, PTA members and school colleagues who have supported these recent events.

The fayre was well attended with lots of great stalls – we are delighted to announce that the total profit was **£987**. We have already given a large contribution of this towards the purchase a polytunnel which the children will use as a fantastic additional outdoor learning space, hopefully growing vegetable which the pupils will sell.

The performances were lively opportunities for children to showcase their incredible talent. Thank you to parents for your support as these performances were so well attended. In fact, they were so well attended that we will be running lower Key Stage 2 and upper Key Stage 2 performances to ease the pressure on the hall. Just another thing we have to consider as our school becomes increasingly more popular!

Pirate FM Santa's Song:

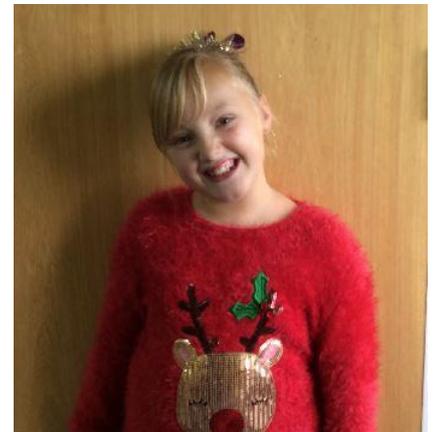
Just a reminder to Reception and Year 5 parents and families that can listen to our version of Santa Song on Pirate FM's breakfast show on Friday morning at 8.15am. It will go live on our website shortly after:

<https://www.piratefm.co.uk/features/sleeps-til-santa.php>



Christmas Jumper Day:

It was fantastic to see all of our children in their Christmas jumpers last Friday. We are delighted to have raised £260 for Save the Children.



Amazing Openings and Fantastic Finishes:

Many thanks to those colleagues who have enriched the children's curriculum through our 'Amazing Openings and Fantastic Finishes' programme. Throughout the term, our children have had opportunities that many other schools simply would not offer. Even today, our Year 2s have just departed to go to the Maritime Museum in Falmouth! From the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro to 'Climbing and Writing' on our extended Fridays, colleagues have gone out of their way to offer amazing experiences to children. We look forward to launching the new term in January with excitement!

Closure of car park:

Following my letter of Tuesday 19th December, please be aware that the car park will be designated for staff only when we come back after the break. The only parents from Hillfort who should have access are parents with blue badges. Mr Tandy will shut the gates at various points to enforce this, at least until we have sufficient funds to install electronic passes on the gates.

I am aware that this move will not be a popular one. However, given the number of incidents recently, I am not happy that the school car park is a safe place for children leaving the school. I hope that parents and carers will understand why I have taken this decision and make alternative arrangements accordingly.

Reminder: we have free passes for free parking in Westbourne Road car park that should help to ease the congestion. Please do approach the school admin team if you would like one.

Computers and Safeguarding:

Over the Christmas break, of course there will be times when children spend time on electronic devices. It's highly likely that Santa might bring a few tablets and mobile phones to Liskeard this year.

Therefore, we have issued a leaflet on social networks and e-safety (sent home in hard copy on Wednesday) to advise and guide parents. Only this week a parent came to me with serious and legitimate concerns about social networking – I am sorry to say that these things do happen and we need to be aware of how to help children act safely online.

In the New Year, if any parent would like Mr Parkes to add parental locks onto digital devices, he is available every Tuesday. Just drop into our main reception to ask him to help.

Attendance:



Each week the class with the highest attendance gets to look after CJ Bear from Commando Joe. We aim to achieve greater than 96% each week which is the national and county attendance target.

11/12/17 - 15/12/17

Whole School Weekly Attendance - 95.31%

Rockets - 89.26%%

1ET - 95.83%

2SW - 94.29%

3RK - 92.8%

4SM - 96.00%

5ML - 97.67%

6VM - 94.83%

Stars - 96.92%

1BH - 91.67%

2NB - 96.67%

3DW - 99.05%

4CH - 97.5%

5HB - 92.59%

6JF - 99.26%

This week's KS1 winners are Reception Stars

This week's KS2 winners are 6VM

Well done to both classes.

Diary Dates:

School re-opens to pupils after Christmas Break on Monday 8th January 2018

Challenge Partners review: Liskeard Hillfort Primary:

We were delighted last week with the outcome of our Challenge Partners review. For three days, the school was reviewed by inspectors, headteachers and school leaders. They went into every class, met with children independently and interviewed various school leaders - including myself.

We were delighted that they graded the school to be overall a 'Good' school with 'Good' awarded for both leadership and for Teaching and Learning. We were ecstatic that we were awarded an 'Area of Excellence', denoting outstanding practice in the area of inclusion and therapeutic practice. This comes from the various therapies, relaxation and specialist provision from learning support colleagues that we offer at the school.

This verdict does not replace our Ofsted judgement - but it does indicate that the school continues on its journey of improvement. Congratulations to all staff and children involved!

School leadership:

The principal and school leaders have made a sustained and substantial impact upon pupils' attitudes to learning by investing heavily. The strategic implementation of change introduced by the principal has resulted in achieving a calm, ordered learning community where pupils are keen to learn and behave very well together.

The school community has worked hard to build and establish their aims and vision to ensure low aspirations are challenged and a new horizon established. To ensure this continues to improve, expectations of attitude and academic progress have been significantly raised for both pupils and staff.

Across the school, relationships between pupils themselves and with adults are supportive, cordial and respectful. To a great extent this has come about through much improved quality of teaching, learning and assessment, a more appealing curriculum and the development of 'therapeutic care'; the school's submitted and accredited area of excellence.

Almost a third of the school population has required aspects of the therapeutic care intervention. Its success is evident in significant improvement in attitudes to learning, attendance and upon progress. Actions have particularly impacted positively upon disadvantaged pupils, whilst also building supportive and helpful relationships with parents and the broader community.

School leaders are directed by a well-thought through and researched school improvement plan (SIP) and subsequent subject action plans. The SIP is monitored and updated regularly to ensure it is achieving what it set out to achieve. The principal and other members of the leadership team have a thorough knowledge of what is happening in the school and have adapted quickly, changing approach and direction when needed. For example, some approaches to their literacy programme, 'Read, Write Inc' and the new mathematics scheme.

The extensive use of external sources of validation and collaboration have provided staff with a range of helpful opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD). During this academic year, a focussed approach to the development of leadership skills, knowledge and practice for middle leaders has resulted in their firm understanding of school improvement processes. This has also developed their confidence in challenging all staff to improve their teaching and raise expectations for pupils. It has also created sustainability and leadership capacity within and across the school. The 'Researcher in Residence' linked to Plymouth University, has provided ongoing assessment and evaluation of the leadership development programme.

Teaching is almost all good across the school and leaders support and act decisively to deal with any that is less than good. The appointment of a non-class-based assistant principal, dedicated to improving teaching, learning and assessment, has greatly improved the process of supporting staff to achieve more high quality teaching.

The curriculum has been adapted over the last year to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils, with a number of new initiative and published schemes that are supporting this. Leaders are aware of the need for teachers to understand the rationale of each and adapt it when necessary, rather than rely upon adherence to one delivery approach.

Quality of Teaching and Learning:

The school presents itself as a well ordered and welcoming learning environment with a growing range of resources and outdoor facilities that enhance curriculum opportunity and pupil engagement.

Teachers have established a nurturing environment where pupils feel safe, both physically and emotionally around the school and in their classrooms.

Through the establishment of a wide and growing range of learning environments, better teacher and learning and the excellent therapeutic care programme, pupils authentically care about the behaviour of others as well as their own behaviours. The inter-relationships established across the school have established high levels of mutual trust.

Good behaviour has resulted in much improved attainment and progress.

Pupils are exhibiting a growing willingness and desire to learn by taking pride in their work and the school. An increasing number of opportunities develop their leadership skills and reflect their desire to do more.

Whilst still an area for further development across the school, pupils are increasingly developing positive learning behaviours. For example, in the Foundation Stage class, children were easy adapting to making their own choices of activity to follow, then independently recording their findings: in Year 6, independent research and choice of approaching problem-solving activities were encouraged and developed well.

The use of a thematic approach to the delivery of the curriculum and checks to ensure cross-curricular writing and mathematical development have been made, are supporting the drive for improved outcomes. Teacher planning and delivery supports pupils in purposeful engagement within lessons and enjoyment of their learning.

The development of reading holds a high priority across the school and is being resourced and promoted extensively. This has had a positive impact upon pupils' enjoyment of reading.

Adults are effectively deployed to support different groups of pupils, especially those who are involved in the 'therapeutic care' programme.

The school is well resourced, especially in targeted curriculum development areas. High levels of engagement are enabling pupils to access the curriculum, whilst working towards achieving appropriate outcomes.

Teacher's subject knowledge is particularly strong in English which has led to strong progress and appropriate outcomes as evidenced in pupils' books. The school's marking and assessment policy was followed very securely and systematically, providing pupils with well-structured processes and responses. This has improved their work and built greater personal responsibility for their own learning. Teachers and support staff know the children well and this has resulted in personalised learning when necessary.