



Headteacher:
Mr Wheeler

"Shine like stars in the sky as you hold on to the word of life"
(Philippians 2:15)

Thursday 14th
December 2023

Good afternoon everyone,

We've made it! I hope you're feeling ready for Christmas and I'm sure you have lots of lovely plans for the Christmas holidays. It's been another hugely successful term for the school and it's been wonderful to share so much of that with you in the recent Christmas events. There are too many achievements to name all of them, but we are hugely proud of all the children's progress; of our own inspection outcomes; and of the fact we look set to be oversubscribed for the second successive year in terms of reception intake. The school's reputation has shifted tremendously in recent years and I am so grateful to all of you for spreading the good word about the school. It is especially great news for the school in terms of security around budget setting, but please don't be concerned as existing parents about whether siblings starting in the 24/25 year will get a place. Having siblings in school already is a priority factor when admissions are making their decisions about who is offered places.

The one thing that stands out to me personally though, is the children's (and your) engagement with the 'Be a Hero' project. I have written an update on that below and want to ensure we give appropriate attention to celebrating what has been an amazing response.

Thank yous



Those most deserving of praise and gratitude for the achievements mentioned above are **the staff**. Their tireless efforts throughout the term have ensured the strong progress and wellbeing of the pupils. It has been lovely to see so many families expressing that gratitude with Christmas cards etc too. I know I speak for the team when I say that your kind words are so valued, especially at the end of a long term when everyone is so tired.

I also want to give a special mention to the awesome **Mrs Martin-Papp** who has enabled us to showcase the children's talents and enthusiasm in the various Christmas events as well as the Wimborne Twinning Association event earlier in the year. We're also enormously grateful to **Robin Langdown** (church warden at St. Stephen's) for stepping in to lead our Christingle service while Reverend Suzie was unavailable.

Last and by no means least, huge thanks and credit must go to **Clare Humphrey and the PTFA** for the range of incredible events they have supported already this year. The Pamphill 10 Fun Run was a particular highlight but the children have benefitted from such a rich range of extras thanks to the support they provide voluntarily. This includes those who provide weekly reading support, which is just so vital in a small school where it is difficult to staff that provision. The community feel we all benefit from around the school is in no small part down to their efforts.

I would also express my personal gratitude to all of those who accepted the disappointment of not being able to come in to watch the Christmas concert yesterday, that was of course something I was hoping to avoid but the community's acceptance of that made me feel so supported, so thank you. Please do pass this sentiment onto any grandparents who will not receive this. And to the team of mums (**Clare, Lisa, Bella, Leanne and Zoe**) who helped enormously to ensure we could still show something, a massive thank you on behalf of myself and the children who were so keen to perform. THANK YOU!

Finally, I am tasked with passing on the Royal British Legion's gratitude for supporting their poppy appeal this year. They were delighted that we were able to raise **£179.84** for them. Of course we also ensured that the children's understanding of Remembrance day also grew at an age appropriate level.

Christmas

Even though it seems we are breaking up for Christmas so early this year, the build up has still been absolutely wonderful (barring a minor hiccup yesterday for the Christmas Concert) and I do hope that you and the children have enjoyed it as much as I have. It was such a shame that the singing at Kingston Lacey needed to be cancelled due to the weather, but the other events have been just magical.

Christingle service: It was a joyful service in the school hall and seeing the children all parade in with their Christingles was especially lovely. They sang so well too and engaged in the service beautifully.

Panto @ the Lighthouse: Rave reviews have come back from the panto experience at the lighthouse. This one can only happen because of the hard work fundraising that goes on throughout the year but, from what I am told, it was worth every penny! Special thanks to Mrs White in the office for her organisation around this one that has helped us to make it as cost efficient as possible in order to make it viable. A massive well done goes out to the children too for representing the school so positively in terms of their behaviour and enjoyment!



Christmas performance: The children really excelled themselves in the changeable circumstances that led to us rearranging this to take place in the hall at the last minute. Thank you again for your flexibility and for all of your support with costumes etc. too because they looked absolutely fantastic. Well done to the storytellers from Stags who spoke up so well between the fabulous singing. And of course a special mention for Mrs Martin-Papp and the staff too who held it all together! I just wish I could have tucked into the mulled wine. I have been made aware that some photos and video content were taken by parents yesterday despite requesting that that did not happen - please do not share these more widely or online if you have them, as it would violate other parents' requests for protection in that regard.

Christmas Fair: The PTFA put on another great finish to the term. Mr and Mrs Claus were excellent with the children as always and provided a special addition to the fun and games available in the hall. Massive thanks to Clare and her team for arranging and orchestrating the event.

Be a Hero Project - **THIS IS SO EXCITING!**

I sincerely hope people haven't felt frustrated by the relative silence on this topic in the last few weeks. The response to this project was greater than I could have imagined and there are some really important conversations going on behind the scenes between myself, Stephen Collins and the Emily Collins School. I am very keen to ensure that the achievements linked to this project are marked properly, but fitting that in amongst all the Christmas activity was not possible. It has however given us the opportunity to think carefully about the next steps. I will be in touch in early January regarding an evening of celebration where the incredible total raised will be announced. If all goes to plan, we will also be able to show the children the impact of their efforts - something I am incredibly excited about. The impact of this project is going to be truly life changing, and I hope this is really just the start. I could not be more proud of our school community.



Road Safety

Thank you for your response to my message earlier in the week on this subject. For those who didn't see it, can I please remind you that **we have asked the community not to park alongside the fence outside the school**. The bad weather has brought back the pot holes as well as a fair amount of mud on the roads, both of which negatively impact stopping distances and safety. While there is only so much we can do about that, we can control the speed at which we drive and the way we park. I have noticed that there has been a recent increase in the number of cars parking alongside the fence, which negatively impacts visibility and safety on the road outside the school. This is concerning.

Some parents have also expressed concerns about the speed some people are driving at around pick up and drop off time. This is even more worrying at a time when visibility is restricted by those not using the car park / parking too close to the corner of the school building.

The school is doing all it can to support your families' safety, and we only ask that you play your part too. I have also been in contact with the National Trust regarding repairing pot holes in the car park and improving accessibility during the winter especially. The land outside the school walls does not belong to the school though, so I alone cannot alter it without the correct permissions.

Please be considerate of the whole community, and thank you to those who are.

Thank you again for all of your support, **I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas!**

Mr Wheeler

Upcoming Church Linked Events

Sunday 17th at 4pm: a beautiful Christingle service at St Stephens. Come with your Christingle!

Wednesday 20th at 7pm: a traditional Carol Service at St Stephens – candlelight, carols and totally Christmassy!

Thursday 22nd at 7pm: an informal gathering around the War Memorial in Shapwick for carols and mince pies

25th – Christmas Day at 10am: a Family Communion service (50 mins) at St Stephens to mark Jesus' special day! Aimed at all a

