



## St Peter's Church of England (VC) Primary School

Mount Pleasant, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7BE

### Newsletter

**14th December 2017**

#### **Christmas Wishes**

It seems an age since I joined the school and first stood at the gate in September. It's been a steep learning curve, as it always is when a Headteacher joins a new school. Whilst I don't know how all of you feel about me being here, for my part I am extremely pleased to have joined St Peter's and am thoroughly enjoying working with such superb children. They are a joy. We have a lovely school and I look forward to playing my part in its continued success and getting to know more and more of you as the months and years continue.

Can I take this opportunity to thank all of the staff for their hard work and professionalism and for making me feel so welcome. We are fortunate to have a very committed staff and governing body, who genuinely love their school. I thank them for all of their hard work.

I would like to wish all of you a very merry Christmas. I hope that you enjoy a relaxing and social time, and that Father Christmas is good to you. I have asked for 3 points for QPR and a home win for Wasps against La Rochelle, but I'm not sure I have been quite good enough to get both of those. Have a wonderful Christmas.

#### **Well done to Reception & KS1 on your Amazing Nativity!**

I think the nativity performances last week showed just how amazing our staff and children are. They were truly wonderful. The nativity is always the high point of my Christmas and I find it hard to watch without getting a tear in my eye. Seeing the children sing and perform, and take such delight in doing so as they wave to their parents is truly magical. It is so innocent and their joy at performing the nativity in front of you is really beautiful. I congratulate all of the children and Mrs Stone and her fantastic team for putting together such an amazing performance.

Those of you who came on Friday evening will understand when I say that we will be altering the ticket process for next year. It will become all ticket, with a maximum allocation for each family over both performances. We were full to the rafters on Friday and we need to manage the allocation more precisely. We will address this next year.

#### **And Well done Nursery for your Superb Performance!**

I have just watched a wonderful performance by the nursery children! They sang and signed their way through a medley of Christmas carols and songs. Given their age, simply sitting still in front of an audience of all the parents is impressive enough, but to sing and sign as well was incredible. I want to congratulate them and of course Wendy and her team on what they put together with such young children. It was superb. Well done!

## **Christmas Service**

Please try to join us tomorrow at 2pm, when we will hold our Christmas Service in the church. Having just witnessed our practice run through, I can assure you that it will be a beautiful end to the term and a perfect beginning to Christmas.

Amongst many highlights, Elizabeth in Year 6 will be singing solo for us. She has just won admittance to the UK National Choir and her voice is wonderful. Hearing her sing, with the acoustics of the church, was a moving experience. We are privileged to have one of the UK's foremost singers attending our school and it is a joy to hear her sing. I hope she feels very proud of her accomplishment. Well done Elizabeth!

## **Thank You!**

The SPSA raffle will be held on Friday after the Christmas service. Please come along to the school hall where the SPSA will be providing mince pies whilst the raffle is drawn. I would like to thank all of the SPSA for giving up their time to support the school in the way they do. It really is appreciated– thank you.

There are some superb prizes in the raffle and I want to thank the generosity of those who have provided them. Mr Stevens has provided a helicopter and sports car ride, which is extremely generous of him. Some lucky winner is going to have quite an experience. Mr Reed, who manages the Costco, has provided us with what must be one of the largest cuddly monkeys ever to be produced. I want to thank both of them for supporting the school so kindly. We also have a seasonal planter from Homebase, a family photographic session from Images Unlimited and Gallagher's have donated £100. Thank you to all of them for their support.

Can I also thank Mr Page, who works for Buildbase. His company very kindly donated Christmas trees to both the school and the nursery. It makes a big difference having a real tree to decorate. Thank you very much for your generosity.

## **Maths Mastery**

Last week, Mr Eastwood delivered an hour's lesson on how we teach maths in the school. Thirteen parents came along to find out how things have changed and what approach we take at St Peter's. From their comments to me, they found it extremely informative and it will certainly help them support their children more effectively at home. I thank them for coming along and Mr Eastwood for giving up his evening to run the session.

In the new year, we will organise another session on how we teach phonics. We will let you have the details next term. Please do try to come along if you can. The phonics session will be especially useful to those of you with children in Key Stage 1, or for whom spelling is an issue.

## **School Uniform**

I've noticed an increasing number of children coming to school without a uniform coat and/or bag. There are quite a few dotted around the school but a more sizeable number are children in Year 6. As of next term I will speak to parents at the beginning of the school day as I see the children without the correct uniform, but this is embarrassing for the children and all concerned. Can I please ask you to provide your children with the requisite coat and bag. The policy is established and it has been discussed and reinforced by the governors. Please adhere to it.

## **School Dinners**

We are down to the last few classes having parents come in and join them for lunch. Once we have been all the way through, we will change the day and start again with Year R. I know that some parents couldn't make a Thursday. I will liaise with the cook at Ditton and see what other day she can offer us. I hope that all of you who have been in, have enjoyed having the opportunity to join your children for lunch.

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## Snow Closure

I will always try to keep the school open if it snows—sorry children. I do appreciate that if we close, it is a major inconvenience for working parents. At my last school, we managed to stay open in almost every snowfall. However, that site was very accessible and I had a great number of staff who lived locally, so they could always get in. Here, very few staff live within walking distance of the school and as we all know, the road network around here is clogged at the best of times, so any snowfall will make it difficult for the staff to drive into school for the beginning of the day.

In order to open, I must be sure that I have sufficient staff on site to cope with any major emergency, such as a fire and that I can clear the school site sufficiently to ensure that is safe to access. I am sure that I could do the latter, if we can get in, but I think it would be very difficult to guarantee having enough staff on site to actually open.

If we have any snowfall in the new year, you will receive a message via our system to let you know if the school has to close. I will contact the radio stations as well and they will publicise it but the school system should work for all of you anyway. However, please make sure that the school office have an up to date number for you. If you have changed your number, please let us know.

## Parish News

St Peter and St Paul's Church, warmly invite you to join in celebrating the love, joy and peace of Christmas.

### Sunday 17th December

4.00pm Traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, including readings, hand bells and beautiful singing by the choir of carols old and new.

### Friday 22nd December

7.00pm - **Carol Singing in the Square** —“Joy to the world...” Come and join us in the square at the centre of Aylesford Old Village, for an evening of carolling in frosty air, and help to raise money for charity. There will be festive refreshments in the Church afterwards!

### Christmas Eve

8am & 10am **Holy Communion**

5.00pm - **Christingle and Crib Service** — A short service of celebration for all the family – the real start of Christmas! Christingle oranges will be given as a reminder of the Light of Christ coming into the world. Children will be invited to “travel to Bethlehem” and share in creating a “live” nativity scene. A special collection will be taken to support the work of the Children's Society.

11.00pm - **Carols and Midnight Communion** - Carols will lead us into a traditional celebration of Holy Communion for Christmas. A special way of remembering the depth of God's love revealed through the birth of his Son on the first Christmas night.

### Christmas Day

10.00am - **Family Celebration of Carols** An informal and joy filled service, in which we sing carols together and read the Christmas story, as the focus for all our celebrations. For those who wish to stay, this is followed by a short service of Holy Communion.

### Thought for the week

The Son of God became a man to enable men to become the sons of God.—C.S.Lewis