

## **THURNHAM CE INFANT SCHOOL**

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**Autumn Terms 2018**

**Newsletter No 6**

**“At Thurnham we learn to love and love to learn.”**

**Dear Parents,**

I know it seems early still, but we are already planning Christmas in school and parts of this newsletter will hopefully help you understand arrangements. I am sure you are deep in preparations for the festive season too!

### **Letter Of Praise For Thurnham From Government Minister**

I was pleased to receive a letter from Nick Gibb MP, Minister for School Standards, praising Thurnham for its consistently high outcomes in the Government Phonics Screening. I would like to thank staff, children and parents for their endeavours in this area - we can only do this thanks to working together and parental support.

As parents who have had children at Thurnham over the years know, whilst I believe results are important for assessing how well the children are doing, it is equally important to ensure the whole curriculum is an interesting, rich and most importantly, a fun one. I am equally proud of the achievements in for example, Music, Sport or Art and am always delighted to share those in Celebration Time for instance.

If you wish to read Mr. Gibb's letter, I have placed it on the school website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

### **Advent Market - Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December - Reminder**

The Advent Market starts from 2:15pm. Children can be collected from classroom back doors if you wish, or they can stay with their class teacher until the end of school and be collected at the usual time. I will therefore open the gates at 2:15pm.

There is a one way system for parents collecting children so please read this carefully.

- ★ Please go through the gates by Silver class and round to your child's back classroom door. I will be there to guide everyone. If you are already in the school, you need to go out of the front door of the school and round through the gates.
- ★ Note, the office is open as usual but is NOT an entry point for the Advent Market. Mrs Johnston spends a lot of time redirecting people to the appropriate entrance otherwise.
- ★ Once you have collected your child you can go round the back of the school and through the cloakroom door by Purple class and on through the double doors to the hall to return to the market.

I know this sounds complicated, but we will put out signs to help on the day.

Children will leave their coats and bags in their classrooms and return later to collect them before they go home.

Please note that when you have picked up your child from the classroom s/he becomes your responsibility, so please supervise carefully - the Advent Market gets very busy.

As part of promoting the Advent Market, Friends Of Thurnham have asked if the children can have another non-uniform day, also with the option of wearing a Christmas jumper on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December. I am happy to let the children do this.

Note, wearing the Christmas jumper is not a requirement so please don't go and buy one especially for this day!

### **Advent Market Raffle**

As usual, Friends Of Thurnham will be running a Christmas raffle. Rather than drawing the winners during the Advent Market, I will draw the winning tickets one evening just before the school gate opens before the end of term. This will give parents a longer period to buy them.

### **Christmas Tree**

Next Friday after school we will be putting up the Christmas tree in the Hall in readiness for the Advent Market.

A huge wave of excitement always goes around the children when it is set up and we work hard to help the children understand we are only in Advent and end of term has not arrived yet. They still have lots of work to do!

### **Christmas Dinner - Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

Mrs Johnston will send out a flyer concerning Christmas lunches shortly. I appreciate so many children now stay for dinner anyway but it may be for that day only (if your child usually has a packed lunch and they may want a festive meal).

### **Christmas Productions Tickets - Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> and Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

Letters concerning these tickets will be sent out soon so remember, if you do not need them please return them to the office and we can redistribute them. Please note, if we do not receive a return slip by the deadline, we allocate your tickets to people on the waiting list. If you would like a spare ticket the office will operate a waiting list for returns on a first come, first served basis.

Just to be clear - the Reception and Year 1 productions take place in the Hall, the Year 2 Carol Service takes place at Holy Cross Church. We decided to put the Year 1 production first and Reception second as the Reception children do take a little longer to get ready!

### **Christmas Charity**

Every year the School Council decides on a Christmas Charity who we collect for at the Christmas events. This year they have decided to support Demelza, a charity I am sure you will know supports children with illness and their families.

A representative from Demelza visited and talked to the children about it being a special hospital that helps children and their families who may be ill but we understandably did not discuss the sadder parts of Demelza's work with the children. There were also a few children who had visited Demelza already for open days, charitable events and other reasons.

### **Dads / Grandads / Male Family Member Christmas Storytime**

In a previous newsletter you may recall I said one of our areas of focus this year was to reduce the gap in outcomes for boys against the girls' outcomes within school. Our overall boys (and girls) outcomes are substantially above national average (as seen in the Government Minister's letter earlier), we are just thinking about how to better equalise those outcomes.

We appreciate that we tend to see Mums and Grandmothers more often at school than Fathers and Grandfathers. Whilst we fully appreciate it might not always be easy for them to be here, we thought it would be a lovely idea to invite Dads and Grandads etc. to have a visit one Friday afternoon to come and read a Christmas story with their child / grandchild.

Teachers will obviously still be present with all the class children and we will provide the Christmas stories (unless you want to bring a suitable Christmas one of your own). It will be from 2:35pm on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December and a nice opportunity for a male role model in the family to come in and do this. Please note the date!

We obviously want to be fair to everyone and thought it would be lovely to do this again for Mums, Grandmothers and/or female family members on an afternoon near Mother's Day in late March.

## **Y2 Carol Service Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

This will be held at Holy Cross Church at 1:45pm. We moved it fifteen minutes earlier as we think it will be hard for those Year 2 parents with other children at Thurnham and Roseacre to get back to school quickly otherwise.

The Y2 children will walk to the church after lunch with their teachers. Please try not to arrive at the church before 1.30pm.

I politely ask parents do not park near the Church or in the car park unless absolutely necessary, as the sheer volume of cars creates extreme congestion. Previously we had to deal with complaints from members of the public and residents whose cars had been blocked due to poor parking by some parents.

Y2 children will need to be taken home by parents from the Church. Please ensure you either come to the church or make arrangements for your child to be collected from the Church.

Siblings in Year R and Year 1 can be looked after until you get back to Thurnham to pick them up if you are a little delayed in getting to school from Church. Please warn class teachers in your child's contact book.

## **Poppy Appeal**

Our collection for the Poppy Appeal raised £384.56. Thanks to everyone who generously donated.

## **Future Dates For Your Diary**

As part of Writing Week in late January, we will hold a 'Phonics and Spelling' evening for parents to find out more about how this is taught and how you can continue to support at home. The date is Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January at 6:30pm and open to all parents.

For Year 2 parents we will hold an evening about the forthcoming Year 2 Government assessments that will take place in May / June 2019. The date for that is Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019 at 6:30pm.

We will send out letters about them nearer these events.

## **Forthcoming Parental Engagement & Communication Survey**

Another area we are looking at this year is how best to communicate and engage with parents and how we can enhance what we already do. In the next few weeks, you will receive a school e-mail with a link to a Survey Monkey questionnaire on this subject. We are using Survey Monkey as a trial to make it easier to collate the data quickly and efficiently. I hope you will be able to spend a few minutes taking part when it is available.

## **Thank You!**

I would like to thank parents for their ongoing support to the school which as already stated, leads to letters such as the Government one we received this week. It is particularly appreciated by staff when we receive parental messages of thanks or praise for the little things we do.

I am sure the school events will make a lovely contribution to your festive season!

**C K James**  
**Headteacher**