



CASTLETOWN PRIMARY NEWSLETTER



CHRISTMAS 2017

Welcome to our Christmas newsletter.

Many thanks once again to all parents for your continued support over the last term. I'm sure you will be aware that Mrs Jackson is leaving us at the end of this term to take up a new position as Deputy Head Teacher at Eppleton Academy. Mrs Jackson has worked tirelessly for our children and has been a driving force in moving our school forward. She will be a huge miss to Castletown but I know that our loss is very much Eppleton's gain. We all wish her every success in her new position.

Fundraising

We raised a massive **£343.25** for the Children in Need appeal. The children and staff had a fantastic day dressed in their pyjamas. We also raised a fantastic **£601.36** at our Macmillan coffee day. Thank you all for your continued support.

Attendance

We would like to remind you that regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Castletown Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. If a child's attendance falls below 95% during a half-term parents/carers will be invited into a meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss the child's absence.

Choir

Choir has had a hectic time in the run up to Christmas. We have a lot of new members this year, many of them very young and they have done an amazing job learning all these new songs in a short space of time. Our choir concerts were a great success and we raised a whopping £1215! This money has been shared out among the classes and pupils have chosen charities to donate to. None of this would be possible without the fantastic support of parents and friends and their incredible generosity. We really appreciate it. The choir has spread cheer and happiness throughout the community and the pupils have, as always, been fantastic ambassadors for the school. Many members of the public have commented, not only on their beautiful singing, but also on their lovely manners and impeccable behaviour. Our Year 5 and 6 members went to the hospital and performed on various wards, as well as switching on the tree at reception. They put smiles on many people's faces throughout the hospital. Choir also performed at a VERY CROWDED Brewer's Fayre and at Sainsbury's, as well as at the Hilton

Hotel and Hylton Castle! I'm exhausted just listing them! Congratulations Castletown Primary School Choir for a hugely successful term and we hope pupils and parents alike enjoy a well-deserved break!

Dogs and Car Parking

Thank you to all parents who have responded to my request not to bring dogs onto school premises. Dogs tied up outside the school gates have also caused problems messing the pavements and frightening some children. Please be mindful of this and leave all dogs at home.

Parking outside school continues to cause a problem. Please park sensibly and make sure we never have to face the situation where one of our children is knocked down. Can you please ensure that **you do not park in the designated drop off zone.**

Sports

Y6 won the Castleview swimming gala, well done to all

Y6 footballers are having a rest from 9 a side, 7 a side and cup games ready for the push next year for both league and cup titles.

After school football club will start again on the 22nd January 2018

Mr Richards would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year & thank you for all your support.

Shoe Box Appeal

Many, many thanks to all the parents and friends who supported this year's shoe box appeal! It was a huge success and we managed 106 shoe boxes. This year, we will be giving 106 children a very special Christmas and they will think fondly of their far away friends as they open their gifts. We also provided additional toys and sweets which will be used by the local team of volunteers to prepare additional boxes. Fortunately, our wonderful friend, Mrs Jones from Operation Christmas Child was back in school to collect the shoe boxes again this year. Our boxes will be going to children in Latvia for the first time. A huge thank you and a very Merry Christmas to you all.

Derwent Hill

Years 5 & 6 will be visiting Derwent Hill on Monday 15th January until Friday 19th January. The children are looking forward to new challenges and working as part of a team. Let's hope the weather is reasonable for the children, but I am sure that they will have a fantastic time whatever the weather. Many thanks to Miss Reynolds, Mrs Palmer, Mrs Ebdon, Mr Perrett and Mr Richards for accompanying them!

Grotto

There is a wishing well for any donations you would like to make beside our grotto in school. All donations will be sent to 'Child Line'. Many thanks to Mr & Mrs Finnon who give up their spare time to set up the grotto and make it a wonderful experience for our children.

Nursery

The boys and girls in nursery have had a very busy time. We have been learning all about winter and enjoyed playing in the snow. We have loved practicing our Christmas songs and really enjoyed doing our Christmas sing a longs for our mummies, daddies and special grown ups. The children had so much fun at our Christmas parties and are looking forward to learning all about nursery rhymes in January. Thank you for all your support and a very merry Christmas from the nursery team.

Reception

What a fun half term we have had in Reception. We are very busy at the moment getting everything ready for Christmas. Our classrooms are all decorated and we have made lots of Christmas crafts, there is glitter everywhere. We have modelled with clay, made decorations for the Christmas tree and had some fun Christmas baking. Everyone is worn out from our preparations for our Christmas show. This year our Christmas show was 'Wriggly Nativity'. We just loved singing all of the songs and getting dressed up. Going on the stage was the best bit! We hope that you enjoyed watching it as much as we enjoyed performing it.

In our classroom we have two very naughty elves. Every day they are up to mischief and causing chaos. Mrs Harvey and Miss Ramsden nearly had to get Mrs Lumsdon to come and talk to them!

On behalf of all the Reception staff we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and we will see you again in the New Year. Merry Christmas!!

Year 1

We have had an incredibly busy first term in Year 1 and the children have settled in really well!

We have worked really hard all term in Maths and focussed on developing our number skills. Our understanding of place value has really improved and we are much more confident at reading and writing numbers within 20. The children have worked really hard on mental addition and subtraction skills as well as counting in multiples of 2, 5 and 10 orally. We have really enjoyed using all of the practical equipment as it has really deepened our understanding in all areas of maths. Our problem solving skills have really been exercised this term and we

are beginning to explain the reasoning behind our answers in maths- the children have made fantastic progress!

Progress in reading is also good and the children are beginning to implement phonetic knowledge well. Progress has also been super in RWI (Read Write Inc) with some of us even moving onto new levels. The children have adapted well to home reading books and are showing good progress with their reading skills. We will be monitoring reading very carefully in the New Year.

The children developed their writing skills in literacy and have started to write for a range of purposes using different genres. The children have been following the 'Talk for Writing' programme which focuses on exploring, planning, retelling and creating a range of stories. So far, we have read *The Enormous Turnip* and *The Gingerbread Man*. It was all very exciting when an enormous turnip grew in year one over lunchtime and also when our gingerbread men escaped- we even had to call the police and there was a crime scene in the practical area! The children have responded so well to the programme and it has helped their writing massively. After Christmas, we will be having a big push on literacy and the children will begin to write more, exploring a wider range of genres.

Both staff and children really enjoyed putting together our Christmas performance of 'Baubles' and the children loved learning new songs, the rest of the school even said our singing was the best! We also really enjoyed our school trip to the pantomime to see 'The Naughty Elf' and the children were really well behaved. It always makes us feel very proud when the children are good ambassadors of the school.

The children are really looking forward to bringing home all of the Christmas crafts they have enjoyed making (as we are sure you are all just as excited to receive....) - We have had a lovely time over the Christmas period, especially with the help of Jingle and Bell (the classroom elves). Mrs Coates and Miss Humphrey will be glad when they return to the North Pole!!

Year 2

Year two have had another fantastic and busy half term! The children have participated in class assemblies, Christmas productions, skipping challenges, a trip to Beamish and they have all worked really hard in all other areas of the curriculum.

In literacy:

We have continued with traditional tales and have worked on various genres such as; recounts, narratives, letters, instructions and non-fiction texts. We have enjoyed story planning, acting out scenes, describing characters and the settings of a variety of stories. The children have also been introduced to a new joined writing scheme called Pen Pals.

In Numeracy:

The children have been working on addition and subtraction. Thank you for your support on completing the homework booklet! The children have been learning their times tables and doubling and halving numbers to 50. The children were recently introduced to multiplication and division, they have been working on arrays, multiplication as repeated addition and solving division problems. We will continue with multiplication and division next year, knowing their times tables is essential for this unit.

In Topic:

We have used maps and atlases to identify the Antarctic. We used geographical language to describe key physical features. We have explored the weather and climate around the world, looked at famous explorers, such as; Grace Darling, Scott of the Antarctic and Hillary's conquest of Everest.

In Art:

We have been looking at various artists and used their styles to make self-portraits, collage pictures and our Christmas cards. We have been looking at various printing styles.

In Conclusion:

We hope you enjoyed our Christmas performance and the school choir performance, (for those who attended) the children were fantastic! Thank you for all your support throughout the term. The year two staff would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2018.

Year 3

Children have loved our Ancient Egyptian topic this term and we are delighted to have had 2 special events linked with this. We welcomed 'The History Guy' into school who taught us all about mummification and using ink to write hieroglyphics and at the end of the term we visited The Oriental Museum where we could handle Ancient Egyptian artefacts ourselves which were over 2000 years old. Class 9 led a fantastic assembly all about this topic.

We also enjoyed a great day out at Broom house Farm, where we learned all about a real working farm. We collected eggs and watched a sheep dog demonstration where one small dog was able to gather and move a whole field full of sheep with some careful instruction. We saw cows, goats and piglets and the biggest pig we have ever seen - Dave! We spent the afternoon in the woods in an adventure area with lots of physical challenges, including zip wires, tunnels and slides. We are looking forward to returning to the farm in two more visits where we will see how the farm changes in the different seasons.

We have experienced two special days linked to our novels with our Witches and Wizards Day and Polar Express Day. We learned a special witches dance which we performed in full costumes with broomsticks! Both novels have inspired us to write some fantastic pieces this term from diaries to play scripts.

The term has ended with a brilliant Strictly Come Dancing style Christmas Show - Lights Camel Action, which we hope you all enjoyed. From everyone in Year 3 we wish you all a Merry Christmas!

Year 4

In Year 4 we have completed our work on the novel 'The Witches' by Roald Dahl. We have looked at many different genres of work. We worked on character descriptions and writing leaflets we even wrote our own play scripts. We read, performed and wrote our own verse for Macbeths 'Witches Chant'.

We worked hard in numeracy, focusing on addition and subtraction and learning our tables. We have been using maths equipment to support us in the concrete or objects stage of our learning. We completed topic work on measure of perimeters, Roman Numerals and negative numbers.

In Geography we found out a lot about France and the capital city. We compared climatic data for the different regions of France. We researched different aspects of French culture using the internet, we even created our own crepe, which we made and ate - delicious! We have also been learning a lot of French vocabulary with Mrs Pritchard.

In science we looked at 'Living Things and their Habitats' we learnt how different animals are classified and how they adapt to the environments they live in.

We have studied the picture 'Luncheon of the Boating Party' by Renoir and drew our own pictures in his style.

In History we have studied the Ancient Greeks, we found out about their lives and beliefs and about their customs. We discovered that the Ancient Greeks created the very first Olympic Games. We also found out about the different myths and legends including the story of Theseus and the Minotaur.

We have had a visit from a rugby coach who taught us how to play Tag Rugby, Mrs Longford also taught us how to dance. We had a great Hula Hoop session where we all learnt how to hula hoop.

We have had a lot of exciting visits this term, we went to the Palace Green Library in Durham to find out more about the Ancient Greeks, and we made clay models and acted in a very dramatic performance! We went to Beamish Museum to discover all about the traditions of

Christmas, and we had a fantastic time at the Empire watching the Pantomime 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

Year 4 also worked extremely hard learning all their lines and all the songs for their fantastic Christmas production 'Lights, Camel, Action!'.

All the staff in Year 4 would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

Year 5

Year 5 have had a very busy first term!

In Literacy, our novel has been 'The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' by C S Lewis. We've used the novel as a basis for lots of different genres of writing. For example, character and setting descriptions, instructions and a letter written from the perspective of one of the characters in the novel to recount a key event in the story.

After the children's hands recovered from writing, they worked out their Maths brains. We started the year with Number and Place Value (numbers up to one million). This is always an ideal way to start the school year as it helps the children to understand numbers in greater depth which was then put to excellent use in the following addition and subtraction unit. Having a secure knowledge of number and place value also enables the children to develop their mental calculation skills too. We have just begun our next unit, multiplication and division. Throughout each unit we are extending the children's Mastery Maths skills by answering a range of questions and problems based on real-life scenarios, as well as developing their reasoning skills to explain their logic when answering a question.

In the first half of the term, the children discovered lots of fascinating facts about the Vikings. We explored their lives by learning about where they came from, their way of life, religious beliefs, how they travelled and how they invaded Britain. In DT, the children worked in groups to create their own model Viking longship, complete with sails and shields.

In Science, the children have been learning about the properties of different materials. Through lots of investigations, the children analysed a range of objects, identified the material used in its construction, explained its properties and suggested reasons why that particular material was suitable for the object.

In PE, the children enjoyed Tag Rugby and learning the rules of the game. We were very impressed at the skills and enthusiasm shown by all Year 5 children.

Finally, in Computing, the children have been developing ideas to create their own simple game in Scratch, using coding. Throughout the term, we have also reinforced the children's understanding of how to stay safe online. We have discussed the dangers associated with social media and technology (including mobile phones, instant messaging and other online tools).

The children have also developed their technical skills by researching facts online in subjects across the curriculum, as well as creating their own fact file about famous landmarks around the world in our recent Geography topic.

The children have earned a good rest and we can't wait for next term!

Year 6

What a great term! Looking back it's hard to believe everything we have achieved since starting in September. We have thoroughly enjoyed our Sunderland at War topic and learnt an amazing amount. Our trip to Eden Camp helped us to gain more of an insight into what life was like for people (and prisoners) during this time. Creative and detailed projects were showcased at our end of unit celebration. Our year group community came together to celebrate with us as we shared all of our new knowledge and understanding. It was a lovely afternoon. Reading the emotive 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' enabled us to think about the war from a different perspective. We showed our empathetic natures as many of us were moved to tears by both the book and the film. Hopefully, this topic has taught us to be a little bit kinder and respect everyone regardless of their race or religion. A valuable life lesson. Have a wonderful and restful Christmas break. We look forward to seeing everyone refreshed and revitalised in the new year.

End of Year

School closes on Friday 22nd December 2017 and re-opens on Monday 8th January 2018. May we take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we will see you all in January 2018. A full version of this newsletter can be found on our website: castletownprimary.co.uk (please note that it is not necessary to put www. in front of the web address)