



DEBDEN PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Friday 4th December 2020

Dear Parents,

As we enter the festive season here at Debden Primary Academy, we have a number of events and activities taking place across the school (COVID-safe, of course). Please consult the communication letter that we sent last Friday for details of all of these upcoming dates.

Some of our Christmas events have already taken place, and I would like to extend a huge thank you to Mrs Hare, a member of our FODs and parent of two of our lovely children, who ran a virtual wreath-making workshop on Monday. Not only has she helped many people to add a bit of sophistication to their Christmas decorations, but she also managed to raise a whopping £400 for our school! Thank you Mrs Hare, and to all of the FODs, for all that you are continuing to do to support our school through events such as these – we are exceptionally fortunate to have you!

As one further Christmas arrangement, throughout this season of goodwill, we would like consider those who are less fortunate than ourselves. We will therefore be hosting a 'Giving Tree' event in school, which is being organised by the fantastic Ms Weetch. The challenge is for as many children as possible to bring in one small present in a gift bag or box, which is labelled for either a 'boy' or 'girl', alongside the possible age range that the present would be suitable for. The child then gets to place the present underneath our Giving Tree in the hall (we will of course get pictures) and a company called Home Start will collect these for vulnerable and deprived families who have young children. You can find out more about Home Start here: <https://www.home-start.org.uk/>. It is a lovely way to think of the wider community and how we can have a positive impact. The student council could also be involved in setting up and promoting this.

This week, we have continued to monitor the learning in the school, and Mrs Murrell has been looking at what the children have been studying in RE. As a Church of England school, what children learn 'about' and 'from' religions is extremely important to us. Mrs Murrell was really pleased with the children's knowledge of their different RE topics, and also the deep discussions they were able to have about their own personal spirituality (how different ideas and rituals made them feel, and any messages that they can apply to their own lives).

You may have seen in the news this week that the KS1 SATs have now been cancelled for this year. The SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) paper has also been cancelled for KS2, although KS2 children will still sit their reading and maths papers, and their writing will also be summatively assessed. I know that people have varying and often strong opinions regarding assessments at primary school, however this seems to represent a fair compromise considering the circumstances. We have been quietly confident of a great set of results this year from our Year 6 children, who have been working extremely diligently with Mr Brown, Miss Everitt and Mrs Hayden, and so we are pleased that they will still get the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and skills.

On the topic of assessments, a big well done to all of the Year 2 children, who have been sitting their phonics check over the past couple of weeks. Whilst I am not permitted to reveal exact scores/ percentages etc. just yet, I can reveal that they have done very, very well and we are extremely pleased with the results. Thank you to Ms Weetch, Mrs Murrell, Mrs Cox and all of the KS1 team who have supported the children throughout their phonics development.

Message from Mrs Platt

'I think we've come to the end of the run for school photo orders! If anyone has paid for pictures and they haven't received them, please let me know. If anyone still wants pictures they haven't ordered, the final deadline is Tuesday. Of course, if you've received pictures you haven't paid for, please do so! The children were

lovely to photograph: polite, engaged and fun and thank you to the parents for your kindness, compliments and patience. In the process of doing this we have made £317 for the school so a huge thank you to everyone for your involvement.'

We would also like to extend a massive thank you to Mrs Platt for once again taking our school photographs – particularly this year under the very tricky circumstances we all find ourselves in. We are so lucky at Debden to have such talented parents who are willing to share their considerable skills for the good and benefit of our school.

It is pleasing to hear that there may be a chink of light at the end of the tunnel with regards to the virus, vaccines, etc. There is nothing that we would like more than to be allowed to safely ease the current restrictions that we have in schools. I am really hopeful that one day soon we will all be able to enjoy an achievement assembly together again in the hall. Fingers crossed that things get back to normal again soon.

Due to a couple of us being unable to physically get into school today (myself included) there is no achievement assembly this Friday. However, we will be back with a rollover next week!

Wishing you all a pleasant weekend.

Mr Hawley