



Balcombe
Church of England
Primary School

"In all that we do we are guided by God"

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER



Dear Parents,

We've made it to the end of another term full of adventure and exploration, investigation and discovery..... and what a lot of learning we have done!

We know that Balcombe School is a great place to learn, work and visit, but it was lovely to have this reinforced by our recent visit from Ofsted and then by letter, from West Sussex's director for skills and education, Deborah Myers.

Deborah wrote to congratulate us on our progress over time, stating that ".....since the last inspection, the school continues to improve and has gone from strength to strength. This view is also shared by parents through their overwhelmingly positive feedback." She also said that she appreciates "...that at the heart of the school there is a commitment to improving opportunities for learners, with pupils being integral within the process. "

Deborah went on to say that she realises the staff and governors have worked extremely hard to maintain the judgement of "good" under the current

framework for inspection and wished her thanks to be passed on to all involved.

I think we have all earned a bit of a rest now, so I would like to thank you all for the cards and gifts, wish you a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR, and I'm going into hibernation until 2018! Have a great holiday!

Wendy Millbanks

STAFFING

Lunchtime Supervision - This half term we have been struggling to cover the long term illness of two staff members in addition to the normal winter sickness cover. Thank you to the lovely ladies who keep stepping in to help us, particular mention needs to be made of Jenny Smith, Beth Sanderson, Rene Chapman and Ros Thompson. We couldn't manage without you ladies and we are most appreciative.

We desperately need more 'bank' staff to step in to provide cover when necessary – if you can help (or know someone who can) please let the office staff know.

Goodbye & Welcome

We say a big thank you and farewell to Christine Willmington, Clerk to the

Governors for the last couple of years. Christine is moving on to other pursuits but we are lucky to welcome Karen Smith to take on the role. Karen will be starting with us in the new year.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Thank you to those parents who kindly filled in a questionnaire for us.

The responses were very positive with all parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the leadership team are committed to driving improvement across the school, that pupils thrive and know how to keep themselves safe and only one parent was undecided about the consistency of teaching and learning.

In answer to the questions relating to Christian ethos and values, some parents were undecided, mainly parents of children lower down the

school who felt they did not have enough experience to make a comment on this area, but most thought that the children have a good understanding of, and are able to follow, our values and code of behaviour. The majority also thought that the children are developing a good understanding of a variety of faiths, including Christianity.

One or two parents questioned the overt focus on Christianity. As a Church School we are held to account by the diocese and expected to promote our Christian distinctiveness but the leadership team are well aware that as a village school, we serve children and families on our community who may follow the Christian faith, another faith entirely or indeed, have no faith. For this reason, we have chosen to concentrate on teaching our children values for life, that will help them develop into the kind, thoughtful, independent, hardworking, caring, happy people that we all want them to be. Many of

these values can be, and are, linked to Christian teachings, but not exclusively.

We also want our children to grow into adults who are knowledgeable about world faiths, understanding and having respect for those whose views and beliefs are different from their own. To this end, our Assemblies (collective worship) and RE teaching focusses on stories and traditions from a range of faiths and beliefs, significant events in history and inspirational individuals from all walks of life.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Once again Christmas lunch was a jolly affair with lots of children who normally bring a packed lunch opting for the Christmas meal. See our [pictures](#) on the website gallery.

SCHOOL MEALS (January)

Thursday 4 January will be 'back to school menu' usually baked potato with a selection of fillings.



NATIVITY

Wasn't it great? A big well done to all of the children for entertaining us with a fabulous retelling of the Christmas story and putting a very special infant "spin" on it. It was lovely to see **all** children playing their part and clearly enjoying the whole experience.



Our New Nativity Scene

And thank you parents for your generosity in giving £205 to our collection at the Nativity for the Friends Reaching Out charity.

BREAKFAST CLUB SURVEY RESULTS

All parents, and possible pre-admission parents for 2018, were circulated for interest in resurrecting a breakfast club at Balcombe School.

Just 28 parents (including 4 preadmission) responded to the survey

Unfortunately there is insufficient interest for Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays but we are investigating whether the company would be willing to operate a breakfast club on Wednesdays and Thursdays where interest is slightly higher each day. This interest would of course have to convert to firm bookings.

We will notify everyone of progress or otherwise in the New Year.

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

What a wonderful selection of Christmas jumpers were on show

on Friday to support the Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day – we raised £80 for the charity!



Public Health Warning

Public Health England have warned about a recent rise in Measles in our local area and we have been asked to urgently raise awareness of Measles and MMR vaccination especially ahead of Christmas travel.



[Factsheet](#)

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

PTA UPCOMING EVENTS

Race & Curry Night - 19th January . Tickets are £10 to include curry and will be available from your class rep after the Christmas holiday.

APPLYING FOR A 2018 RECEPTION PLACE

Applications for Reception places September 2018 must be made by the national deadline of 15 January. Early indications are that numbers are low this year and Balcombe School will be able to offer places to applicants from outside of catchment. If you, someone you know, has not yet applied for their Reception place this should be done online – see link below.

[LINK TO WSCC Admissions](#)

Victory Hall Films will be showing [Dunkirk](#) on Friday 26 January

[Barney's Soft Play, Uckfield](#)

[Census Day Menu – 18 January](#)