



Dear Parents / Carers

On Friday this week we 'break up' for Christmas after a busy 7 weeks at Eastlea. This letter provides information for the remaining days of this week as well an update on some of the many events which have happened in recent months.

Eastlea Christmas activities

We are continuing to enjoy another successful Eastlea Christmas. **THANK YOU** for your tremendous support with everything we have arranged and for attending events in such large numbers:

- our **Nursery and Reception family Christmas craft workshops** were extremely well attended and seemed to be very well received
- the **Festive Meal prepared and served by Year 6** was also well received by parents/governors who were able to attend and the children did themselves proud with their preparations, cooking, serving and entertaining. On that afternoon the children raised a further **£42** for their Enterprise funds.
- the heavy rain did not dampen the response to our **Christmas Fair** and the hard work of Mrs Holdsworth and Chris in decorating our Santa's grotto in the courtyard was particularly well received. In total we raised the amazing total of **£2207.50** which goes towards our Golden Day funds. *(And another £55.81 was added to this total from the donations for refreshments last week at the performances – thank you!)*
- last week the audiences for the **singing/violin club concert**, the **carol concert in Bedlington** (which a large number of our singing club took part in) and the five key stage **Christmas productions** were treated to some great performances in the school hall (as were the family members who came to the Rocksteady band concert the week before!)

There are of course still more events going on, with the Christmas dinner tomorrow and the last of the class parties this week, Year 6 carol singing at Sainsbury's Manor Walks on Wednesday at 10am and obviously the countdown continuing to our special Christmas Golden Day on Thursday this week!

RE Day

A big thank you also to the members of the **Church of the Nazarene** who made us so welcome this morning during our visit as part of our Christmas themed RE day. The 'characters' really brought the story to life and the Bethlehem experience was much enjoyed by the children.

School meals this week

Due to the Christmas dinner tomorrow, the school lunch menus for Tuesday and Wednesday will be as follows:

- Tuesday 19th – Christmas dinner
- Wednesday 20th – chicken / turkey (!) curry

The other days will follow the usual Week 1 menu and when we return in w/b 9th January it will be week 1 menus again – *we always start with week 1 after a school holiday!*

Parent Governor update

You may remember from the previous newsletter that we were asking for parent volunteers to join our Governing Body, as two had come to the end of their 'term of office'. We were pleased to have some 'new' parents who were prepared to put themselves forward for this important role. I am pleased to say that our new parent governors are **Mr Jonathan Barlow** (parent of Christopher) and **Mr Alex Bell** (parent of Evelyn). They will formally take up their posts in the spring term once the necessary paperwork/checks have been completed by NCC.

Charity and Fundraising Support

We have had a number of charity events this half term and wanted to say **THANK YOU** once again for your generosity and support for each and every one of them...

- **Poppy Appeal** – last month the half term started with our annual support for the Royal British Legion poppy appeal. **£263.19** was raised by the pupils for this very worthwhile cause.
- **Children In Need** – our traditional 'Pennies for Pudsey' event took place last month and we raised the excellent total of **£449.79** for Children in Need.

- **Book Fair** – the Scholastic Book Fair which took place last week was well supported by those who attended the Christmas productions and others who bought books at other times. In total we sold **£556** worth of books. The commission arrangements mean we will get 40% of this total (approx. £221) to spend on books for our Eastlea library. Great news!

End of term awards

- **Reading** – Our Planets reading challenge which started at the end of September has been very successful and most of the children from across the school have extremely good reading routines each week. The first Bronze awards were presented on 1st December and so far we have been able to present certificates/'space' keyrings to **184** children. These pupils are already starting on their silver bookmark! If your child hasn't yet received the bronze award, it is not too late! Encourage them to keep reading and more certificates will be awarded in the New Year! **Reading in the Christmas holiday counts as one sticker on their 'Planets' bookmark!**
- **Writing** – on 29th November 'Star Writer' certificates and letters were presented to the children chosen as autumn term writing award winners for their enthusiasm and progress shown in writing across the curriculum in their class since September. Well done to them all!
- **Maths** – on 4th December one child from each class was chosen who had shown real enthusiasm, improvement and determination in class-based maths lessons. These maths award winners each received a letter and certificate. Times Table Rock Star (TTRS) certificates were also presented to members of KS2 who had shown improved scores, accuracy, speed of recall and extra effort. Congratulations to all our winners!
- **Sports** – our **Y5/Y6 basketball team** were delighted to be presented with medals following their involvement in the Thunder in the Valley tournament at the Eagles arena and I know that the large group of children and family members who came to watch this and/or the Eagles game that evening had a great time. We also involved the whole school in the **National Santa Dash** on Friday 8th December which was organised by our Year 6 School Sport Organising Crew. Thank you!
Eastlea came 3rd in the **Year 5 Cramlington and Seaton Valley multi-skills** competition and our **Year 3** class today were announced as the partnership **Hoopstarz winners for 2023** – they were the best class overall across Cramlington with the highest number of children able to hula hoop for 1 minute. They were presented with a super trophy for their fantastic achievement!

HUGGG 'Free School Meal' vouchers for eligible families

This week an order will be placed for the vouchers which can be exchanged for groceries at local supermarkets. This will mean that parents of those children eligible for benefit based free school meals will have a link emailed to them which they can activate to generate a gift card for use over the Christmas holidays at a supermarket of their choice. Please note that the expiry date to activate the vouchers is 31st January 2024.

Christmas Golden Day – Thursday 21st December

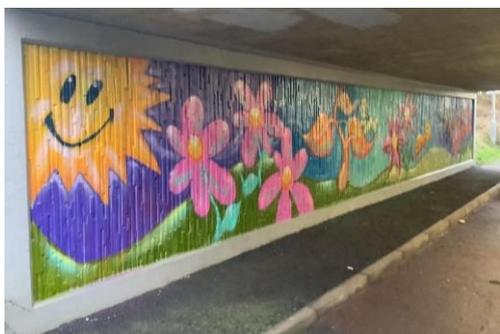
As I am sure you are aware, everyone who has earned the right to take part in Golden Day is looking forward to Thursday! Nursery children are in school for their Christmas/puppet based activities, while everyone else will be heading out after an early lunch to Newcastle Theatre Royal for the matinée performance of Pinocchio. We can't wait!!

Please remember that for all children (apart from Nursery) school uniform is required on the day – with the option of festive headgear (Santa hats/reindeer antlers etc).



Can we also ask that no reading folders, water bottles, bags, scarves/gloves etc are brought into school that day. They won't need them and it will make it easier to dismiss the children quickly on our return to school without them needing to go to classrooms/cloakrooms.

On our return to school the pupils will be taken into the school hall to be dismissed from there by their class teachers – the timing of 5.15pm is approximate, but we will aim to let you know a more specific time when we are on the way back to school depending on traffic.



Underpass art work

For anyone who walks/cycles to and from school under the nearby underpass you will I'm sure have noticed a change in recent days! Our Brainwaves team (school council) have been working with Joe Eltringham from Cramlington Town Council on different ways to improve our local environment. One idea was to paint the underpasses so they were brighter. At Eastlea the children submitted design ideas for 'our' underpass and artist John Craggs then used lots of the different ideas to create the magnificent new murals.

Last week we had an email to say that John would be starting to paint the walls of the underpass on Friday. The Brainwaves were delighted to see the work in action and were over the moon to see their designs come to life! This morning when we went to the Church of the Nazarene the whole school saw what had been painted so far. The other wall is due to be completed this week. Brilliant!

Early Years updates

1. Most Nursery parents have now completed their application for Reception places in September 2023. A final reminder that the **closing date for Reception school admissions is 15th January 2024**. The information about this is all on the Northumberland County Council website (school admissions).

2. We have 13 children who are due to join our Nursery next term. We will welcome them for either full day or half day sessions. These children will start during the first couple of weeks of term in January and arrangements for this have been shared with the families concerned.

3. Our Nursery continues to be very popular, so I would advise that if you or someone you know has a pre-school age child and they would like a place at our Eastlea Nursery then it is best to apply as soon as possible, even if it is for some way in advance!

Year 4 swimming – advance notice

Swimming starts for pupils in Year 4 in the spring term. The first session is on Monday 15th January and the children will have a one hour session at the pool for 10 weeks in the spring term. The cost of each session is £4.50 per child per week. This price includes the school subsidising the costs of the lesson and the transport. The swimming lessons are part of the KS2 PE curriculum but in order for us to provide this for the children we have to pay for the instructors and the coach transport to get us to the pool at Concordia. In common with the other schools in the Cramlington partnership we therefore have to ask for a £4.50 donation from parents/carers each week. Without these contributions, the lessons will not be able to go ahead in this format. A letter with further information about this will be shared with Year 4 parents.

Hope Centre uniform

A reminder that if you need to 'refresh' any school uniform over the Christmas holiday the Hope Centre Uniform and baby bank in Cramlington will still be open over the festive fortnight before the new term starts in January if you need any **FREE** pre-loved items. They can be contacted by email on: hope1uniform@gmail.com

And finally, I would like to wish everyone a 'Merry Christmas'...and don't forget that the pupils break up at 1pm on Friday for their Christmas holidays.

Have a safe and happy holiday and we will see you all again on **Tuesday 9th January 2024** when we reopen for pupils for the spring term! (Monday 8th January is a staff training day).

Yours sincerely,

Miss E Beeston
Head Teacher

