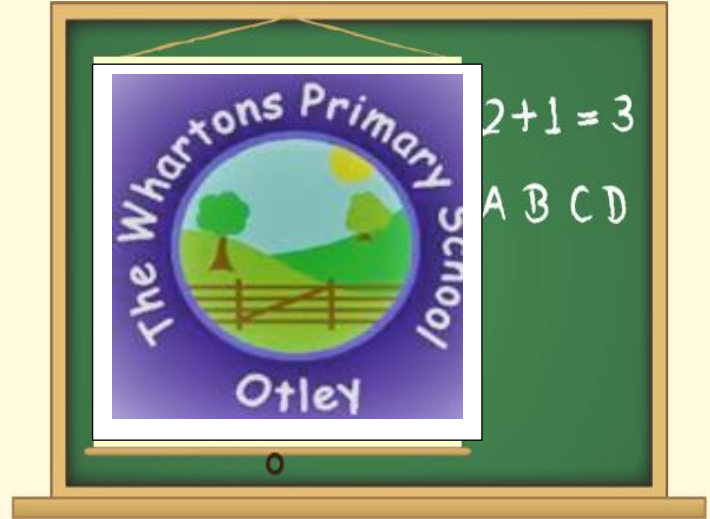


8th December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,
I can't believe how fast this half term is proceeding. We have had so many lovely events already over the past few weeks and there are still Christmas productions, Christmas parties and Christmas dinner to go yet.
It has been lovely to have some crisp and cold days where the children have been able to wrap up and enjoy the winter sunshine and also just a sprinkling of snow.



Assemblies and Productions

Our assembly theme for this half term is Celebrating Differences. Over the last couple of weeks we have been finding out about a range of winter festivals which are celebrated by different religions over this time of the year. The children have been considering the similarities and differences of these 'Festivals of Light' and sharing their own personal/family traditions around these special times

Well done to the certificate winners over the last two weeks who have worked particularly hard.

Rec – Jack B & Erin C, Yr1 – Luca, Poppy, Lyra & Grace J, Yr2 – Pippa, Seb, Wren & Jake, Yr3 – Lola-Rose, Kayden, Florence & Jake, Yr4 – Barnaby, Fateh, Joseph & Evie, Yr5 – Duggie, Marty, Astra & Freddie, Yr6 – Kelsey, Alex W, Frankie & Abby

Hanukkah and Christmas

In our assemblies we have looked at the traditions of two more religious festivals which happen in December, Hanukkah and Christmas.

Each festival has a story which is represented through traditions, treasured objects, family gatherings, games and special food. The theme of light in this dark time of year to symbolize hope and joy through the Jewish Menorah and the Christian Advent Crown is also another similarity between the festivals.

The children enjoy hearing about how different groups of people and families celebrate important festivals.



Christmas Jumper Day

The range of Christmas jumpers and other paraphernalia were impressive. The children (and staff) thoroughly enjoyed dressing up.

There was a real Christmas spirit around school.

Thank you to the Parents' Association who ran a Christmas Jumper swap shop at the Christmas Fair where families could recycle and upsize their Christmas jumpers.

Great for the planet and a good cost saver.

Thank you for your donations. We raised £150 for Save The Children Fund.



- RED Award
- Music Quality Mark
- Christmas Fair

Trauma Informed Practice

At school we always strive to find the best way to support children in both their learning and overall wellbeing.

As such we seek out expert advice and best practice to develop our own expertise. The whole staff team took part in trauma informed practice training this week delivered by the Leeds virtual school. There are times when children and families may experience traumatic events. We would like school to be a place where we can use the right strategies to support children through such times and recognize when they may be struggling or need different approaches or recognition. The training was hugely helpful and informative. Thank you to trainer Neil Barton

Music Quality Mark

Mr Williamson worked with Leeds 'Artforms' last year, sharing his Ofsted music deep dive experience and knowledge with other music leaders from across the authority through the music and arts service.

This term Mr Williamson met with a member of the Artforms team to explore securing recognition for the great music teaching and provision offered at The Whartons. Also, to further develop and build on this, whilst working towards A Music Quality Mark Award. It will be exciting to embark on a new journey in the area of music, developing access to a wider range of musical experiences for the children.

Diversity and inclusion are drivers of our whole school curriculum. Two years ago we gained investors in Pupils alongside our Family of schools and through the coordination of Chris Lillington from PHGS. The Investors in Pupils had built upon the Diversity Charter our cluster of schools have drawn up several years before. The focus on Inclusion and celebrating differences has always been key for us.

Chris Lillington has, through the Red Kite Teaching Alliance, created and launched a

new award 'The RED Award' to support schools in building on the good practice of promoting/



celebrating diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.

Members of RKA will be supported to audit current practices, identify areas to improve and enhance then create an action plan for the next 18 months. Mr Hampson has worked on our audit and will be submitting this by the end of the week. I will keep you updated on progress towards our targets.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

The Parent Association Christmas Fair was a great success again this year and I want to thank the whole team of parent volunteers who worked so hard to make the event a possibility.

There was a wonderfully magical Santa's Grotto, a comfortable stopping off point for Father Christmas and his Elf helper to rest and meet the children. There was time for Santa's Elf to read the children a story and for Father Christmas to chat to the children about what they would like for Christmas, what they were looking forward to and to remind them to put out a little something for the reindeer on their long journey.

The tombola's were super popular, creative stall did a brisk trade all afternoon with children enjoying glitter tattoos, dough decorations and Christmas cards. The café was a welcome place to refuel as was the mulled wine station!

Thanks to everyone who donated to raise funds for our PTA.

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- *Pantomime*
- *Christmas Choir events*
- *Diary Dates*

Diary Dates

[Mon 11th Dec](#) – 1.30pm

KS1 Christmas performance in school.

[Tues 12th Dec](#) – 1.00pm

Audiology Team visiting Year 1.

[6.15pm](#) KS1 Christmas

Performance at school.

[Thurs 14th Dec](#) – Flu

vaccinations taking place in school.

[6.00pm](#) KS2 Christmas

performance at The Bridge Church.

[Mon 18th Dec](#) School

Christmas lunch.

Pantomime

There was a change to our traditional trip to the panto this year....instead the pantomime came to the Whartons!

As everyone knows times are difficult for families this year and whilst costing the whole school pantomime excursion Mr Fisk realized that costs of transport had risen sharply, and the trip was going to become prohibitively expensive.

The tradition of watching a live pantomime at Christmas though is such a lovely thing for the children to experience that the alternative option of securing a travelling theatre group was the perfect answer.

The M&M Company transformed the school hall into an amazing theatre space. The scenery and backdrops were sensational, and the professional actors were brilliant. The children enthusiastically joined in with the customary 'He's behind you!!' and 'Oh no she didn't!!'

The production was hilarious, and a great time was had by all. We are already looking towards securing the company again for next year.



Christmas Songs Galore

The pop choir have been seasonally busy over the last few weeks. Mr Williams has led a lunch time pop choir club which is open to all enthusiastic singers from across the ages in school.

They have been learning new songs with dedication and practicing hard to ensure their performances were joyful, moving and in tune.

Firstly, the Whartons Pop choir were chosen to perform at the Otley Christmas Lights switching on event. Last Monday the weather improved over the afternoon and was cold but dry as the choir took to the stage at this community event, introduced by Otley's Town Crier. They sang a selection of Christmas songs both traditional and contemporary. It was magical to see and a real start to the festive period. The choir then also sang a longer set at the Otley Victorian Fair, where there was even a sprinkling of snow to add to the ambiance of the occasion. Thank you to everyone who turned up listen and to sing along with us.



A Final Note:

Have a great weekend and we look forward to welcoming parents to our KS1 performance and KS2 Carol concert at Bridge Church next week

Julia Dickson