



# St Lukian Newsletter

Learning, Laughing, Loving at Family St Luke's

Issue 21 Dec 2018

It's been a really busy end of term as we practised and performed our EYFS and KS1 nativities and also got ready for our KS2 Carols and End of Term service, not forgetting our Christmas Fair, Grandparents meal, Festive lunches, parties and visits from Santa as well as all our usual Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Oh, and of course, we had some important visitors last week who inspected the work of the school in and around all of that! So it's fair to say that at times, the peace and joy of the season could have got a little squashed but with 460 children, getting more excited for the Christmas holidays by the minute and performing brilliantly in their individual events, that just didn't happen! I for one feel truly blessed and privileged to share in the season with all our children and their families no matter what their faith and belief. It is a distinctive characteristic of our school, that whilst we will always be guided by our core Christian beliefs and delight in the Christian message of Christmas, we understand not everybody shares that faith and instead sees Christmas from a different perspective. Nonetheless, we are still able to join together in our wonderful diversity to celebrate those central and shared values of Hope, Love, Peace and Joy and focus on all our similarities and not our differences. Our children and our families here at Hanley St Luke's model that brilliantly- thank you one and all. So, as we come to the last few days of term, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas time, however you choose to spend it, and I pray for health and happiness and rich blessings for you and your families.



## Christmas Fair Thanks

We raised an amazing £1,109 which will help to fund all of the children's Christmas presents as well as the various other additional extras that we spend in school this time of year (7 ft Christmas tree, decorations, crackers – the list goes on...) and, of course, the pantomime in the New Year. A special thank you to all who donated items and a huge thank you to the ladies who prepared and served the Asian food which was (after Santa, of course), probably the star of the show- delicious!!



## Swimming Success

This year we used some of our Sports Premium to ensure we could have the whole of the pool to ourselves, rather than having to share it with other schools which in previous years had made for a very cramped and frustrating experience for the children and the staff trying to teach them! As a result, Miss Hunt, our PE lead, is delighted with the improved outcomes for children as 30% more children across Y2- Y6 gained a certificate this year than last and there was a significant increase in those children achieving their length certificates. We will review our swimming provision for the next academic year but for the time being, well done to all the children who tried so hard in their lessons, regardless of whether they were able to achieve a certificate this time round or not!



## School Admissions

Please note that the deadline for applications for a place in our Reception is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019, so if your child was born between 1st September 2014 and 31st August 2015 this will apply to you.

Nursery applications can also now be made for September 2019, if your child was born between 1st September 2015 and 31st August 2016 this will apply to you.

You can follow this link to apply directly on line: - [stoke.gov.uk/admissions](http://stoke.gov.uk/admissions). Reception paper applications forms are available from the school office now and Nursery paper forms will be available in January 2019!

## Attendance

As I write this newsletter, the attendance for the school is 95.1% which is considerably lower than our school target for this time of year and in part, is greatly affected by parents taking children out of school for unauthorised leave in September and October. The national absence figure for an academic year stands at 95.8% so if we continue on this trend, we will be well below national by the end of the year, which is not acceptable.

At present the percentage of children who have attendance below 90% and are therefore classed as Persistent Absence, is also far higher than national, standing at an unacceptable 16.49% against a national figure of 11.3%. However, it had stood at an eye-watering 19.32% in 2015/16, so we have made some progress here but there is a way to go. We cannot teach your children if they are not here, and whilst children will always be ill and need to be away from school for short periods until they are fit to return, our attendance figures indicate that far too many pupils are taken out of school by their parents for holidays or visits abroad, adversely affecting their education and the whole school attendance figures. We will continue to work closely with the Educational Welfare Officer to ensure that pupils at Hanley St Luke's enjoy attendance in line with their peers nationally and are therefore not disadvantaged. I thank all parents who already support this aim and trust that future requests for authorised leave will be limited to very exceptional circumstances such as a day for a family funeral or a wedding. Thank you for your cooperation.

**EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS**

## Internet Safety

We are sure lots of children will be having phones, tablets and consoles for Christmas which provide so much fun for children and really are amazing- it's so hard to keep up with the latest inventions for sure! However, as you are no doubt aware, these devices can also present a real risk if not appropriately supervised or controlled. Children can be easily exposed to content inappropriate for their age and even more concerning, where devices are internet enabled, children can be vulnerable to a wide range of risks such as grooming, leading to child sexual exploitation or radicalisation. This link provides really practical advice for parents and carers on how to keep your children safe, whatever their age. Please do take a look - it might save your child from being at risk of harm now and in the future: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>



We celebrate our children's achievements outside of school in our Celebration Assemblies each week. These cover a wide range of skills and interests such as badges earned at Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers and Cubs; gymnastics, trampolining and martial arts; football Man of the Matches; individual drama and musical performances and a whole lot more besides. This month I am aware that Svetlana in Year 6 performed at the Choirs for Christmas Concert at the Victoria Hall, playing her cello in the Rootz Folk Group, which I am sure was a wonderful occasion and a celebration of her own musical skills too- well done Svetlana. It's great to hear about our children's significant achievements outside of school, so please do let us know so we can celebrate them.

## Dates for your Diary

- Wednesday 19th December 6.00pm—7.30pm - Grandparents Christmas Meal
- Thursday 20th - Attendance Certificates (KS1 9.00-9.30am—KS2 9.30-10.00am)
- Thursday 20th 2.30pm - KS2 Christmas Carols
- Friday 21st - School closes for Christmas
- School re-opens on Tuesday 8th January 2019

