



Whitehorse Manor Junior School

Newsletter 16th December 2014



Dear Parents and Carers,
May I begin by saying a huge thank you to all those parents who brought their children back for our evening performances of 'The Happy Prince'. A really special thank you must go to parents of children in the choir who brought their children back for both evening performances. I read recently that no West End show will ever be as important as seeing your own child in a nativity play so I am very happy that we manage to include all our children in our Christmas production. Many larger schools limit this to a specific year group and some children, and parents, miss out as a result. It's a challenge getting them all rehearsed, but this is part of our music and enrichment curriculum so it's lovely that we get to share the outcome with you. We are very lucky to have a stage and a hall big enough to 'put on a show' and everybody that I spoke to afterwards was full of praise for the work that the children and staff had put in and left feeling very festive! Pride in our performance is at the heart of our school's spirit and I'm very pleased that the vast majority of you demonstrated your school spirit by coming back and taking part. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

E-safety: As we approach the Christmas holidays and children will doubtless have some free time to pursue online activities, can I ask parents to be extra vigilant about E-Safety issues please? The question that all parents need to be asking is: Is my child safe online? Unfortunately, all the data seems to suggest that the answer to this question is: No. The simple truth is that our children are too young and innocent to fully understand the dangers of communicating with strangers online, or to deal with the emotional fall-out and 'bullying' caused by falling out with 'frenemies' (friends/enemies) online. In addition, what happens on online at home can often have a knock-on effect in the classroom that detracts from the important task of learning. I deal with at least one incident a month that is directly linked to children communicating inappropriately with each other online, be it through Skype, Facebook, MSN or the like. Sometimes children are too young to have accounts, but have done so with parental blessing. There is so much good about the internet – what did we do before Google could search a word in an instant or Wikipedia could give us the answers? But children shouldn't be left alone online. It is not safe. Coming home with the newsletter this week is an important document about how to keep your child safe. Please take the time to read it.

Communication: We do try very hard to communicate well with parents. Please remember that club letters (the part you keep) will usually have the start and end date for the club on, so put these in your diary; the website is updated regularly so you can plan ahead; newsletters go home half-termly and you can sign up to twitter so we can tweet you when a new newsletter is published; we send home text messages that you will receive if we have your correct mobile number; school bags should be checked daily for letters; older children are trusted to pass on messages accurately, verbally and finally, you can call or email the school if you have any queries about when an event or activity is taking place - we are always happy to help and copies of all letters sent home are kept in the school office.

Reading Homework: I was reminded recently that reading is the single most important homework activity that you can do with your child. A child who reads for 20 minutes per night, over a year, gains the equivalent of 10 school days (that's 2 half-terms' worth), which is certainly food for thought.

November Fund Raising: Mr Roberts has asked me to pass on his thanks to all who supported our 'Movember' fundraising. Several male members of staff looked particularly hairy for the month, but the children did enjoy voting for the winning 'Most Marvellous Mustachio', which Mr Stephenson won in a landslide. We also raised over £640 for this very worthy cause, thanks to your kind donations.

Ms. N Achenbach - Head of School

Some key dates next year

Monday 5th January: INSET day (school closed for children)

Tuesday 6th January: Children return to school

Friday 13th February: Museum Day (come and see our thematic work!)

2nd-6th March: Book Week

10th & 12th March: Parents' Evening