



Whitehorse Manor Junior School

Newsletter 17th December 2015



Dear Parents and Carers,
A huge thank you to all those parents who brought their children back for our evening performances of 'A Not So Silent Night'. 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. A really special thank you must go to parents of children in the choir who brought their children back for both evening performances. This was the farewell performance for Mrs Matthews, our music teacher, who will be returning to Canada shortly to enjoy life with her family, in her homeland. This is the fifth original script and score written by Mrs Matthews and her husband, Tony, and I really want to extend a huge thank you to them both and wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Mr Matthews has made a DVD of the performance (a Year 3/5 DVD and a Year 4/6 DVD) and, should you wish to purchase either of these, they cost £10. Please add your name to the list that Mrs Kissi has in the office. Orders will be taken up until 8th January, with pre-payment in cash necessary to secure one. The production and our 'crafts and carols' event have helped put us all in a very festive mood and we all wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The playground: The new playground equipment has been fitted by Wicksteed and the children are finally enjoying some long-anticipated 'monkey bar' action! I personally see the completion of the playground as the last thing necessary before I could honestly say that the whole building project was finished. It's finished! Yay! We have a timetable so the children have fair access and the children have been taught how to play safely on it, although discovering your own physical limits is an important part of physical development. We have also introduced 'Playground Friends' who can be easily identified by the other children and whose role it is to offer a friend to play with if no others can be found or if you want to learn a new game. Ms Smythe has been busy training the Playground Friends in a number of team games that should help us all to have even more productive playtimes.

E-safety: This is a copy of my message from last year about E-safety. It's still as relevant today: 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. Please make sure you always know who your children are communicating with on line.

Award winning building: The Whitehorse Manor building has won the Architectural Review's first prize for best educational building in the world. This accolade adds to a growing number that the building has received since it was finished. You can read the full article and watch a video of the building 'in action' on the AR website <http://www.architectural-review.com/today/ar-school-2015-winner-whitehorse-manor-schools/8689335.fullarticle>

Ms. N Achenbach - Head of School

Some key dates next year

Monday 4th January: INSET day (school closed for children)

Tuesday 5th January: Children return to school

Friday 12th February: Museum Day (come and see our thematic work!)

Week beginning 29th: Book Week

8th & 9th March: Parents' Evening