

St Thomas' CE Primary School Newsletter

December 2017

Assembly theme for this month: *Advent*



Dear Parents and Carers,

Well, we are counting down the next few days until the Christmas break. This last few days will be very busy and filled with much activity as we remember the birth of Jesus- the reason for the celebration. Sometimes the busy preparation and gift buying can exclude the promised Messiah who came to us as a baby, the greatest gift ever! However you celebrate His birth, we hope you all have a joyful time.



St Thomas' CE Primary School
Learning and growing in the sight of God

This academic year is a very exciting one for us as it marks the 150th year of St Thomas' School in Heaton Chapel. Here is a short history of the school...

The first school was proposed in 1866 and its first academic year was 1867-68. It was to be built on a strip of land adjacent to the Church and given by Lord Egerton on the condition that it would revert to him (or to his heirs) should the land cease to be used for a school. The school was a wooden structure measuring built at a cost of £700.

By 1889 the school had to be enlarged. Lord Egerton offered a plot of land of three quarters of an acre at a rent of £15 per annum. This was some distance from the existing building, and it would appear that there was some disagreement with his Lordship over the conditions he wished to impose on the transaction. During the course of negotiations a tender of £2,530 from W Southern and Sons was accepted. The school was built of brick, was far larger and was much more substantial. At one point it is believed to have housed 300 pupils aged up to 15 years of age. All were accommodated on the ground floor in what is now the school hall. During a recent internal extension, evidence of partition doors and windows was uncovered. These allowed the school hall to be divided up into classrooms. There were fireplaces located at each end of the building.

In 1891, the committee decided to obtain land adjacent to the existing school, and a plot of some 1891 square yards was purchased from a Mr R Scott at a rental of £25 per year, which was still being paid in 1979. During the 1950s the graveyard to the west of St Thomas' Church was relocated to the churchyard and the surface tarmacked in order to increase the amount of playground space for the school. Very strict conditions were placed on its use!

Sir John Alcock, who with Arthur Whitten Brown, made the first non-stop transatlantic flight in 1919, was raised in Heaton Chapel and attended St. Thomas' Primary School.

Over the coming year, we are planning to host some events that help us celebrate the long life of our school, starting with our Victorian themed Year 6 Carol Service.



EXCITING TIMES FOR ST THOMAS' CE!

Our school has secured over €30,000 of Erasmus+ funding to run a Key Action 1 project for staff to enhance and develop their French skills and share best practice. Over the course of the next 2 years staff from St Thomas' will have the opportunity to spend a week in the south of France in order to improve their confidence and fluency in speaking French and to learn ways of introducing a more global element into their topic work and lessons. We will also set up a link with a school in Toulouse which will enhance pupils' and teachers' intercultural awareness and understanding and will offer real insight into children's lives in another country.

The teaching of a foreign language has been a statutory requirement in Key Stage 2 from September 2014. At St Thomas', we begin our French teaching in Year 2 to give the children access to a language at a particularly receptive age. The training which our staff will receive in France will greatly increase the opportunities for our pupils to use and apply French throughout the whole week, not just during their dedicated French lessons with Madame Taylor.

While in France staff will be keeping in touch by updates on the school website and a Twitter feed @ErasmusStThomas. The first staff to go to France were Madame Taylor and Mr (or Monsieur!) Campen who spent a week in a French school in November.

Young Carers



We are proud and encouraged to have been awarded the Young Carers Bronze Award recognising our support for children who are carers at home. Well done, everyone, but, especially, Mrs Boardman!

Free School Meals entitlement

We would like to remind parents and carers in receipt of benefits to apply for Free School Meals. We would especially ask those who have children between the ages of 4 and 7 to apply as our school will then get **extra money** to help your child in class. If you do not apply for the benefit then our school loses funding. Even though our young children actually get a free meal from the government you should still apply as school will get extra money to support learning. Please call our school office if you need further clarification.



Traffic news...

Please could we remind everyone that when parking your cars that our children's safety when coming to school is paramount. Please park safely, without obstructing driveways or crossing places. We have received many unhappy and angry emails and from local residents in recent weeks and the police have been patrolling the area.

SPORTING NEWS

A huge, 'Well done,' to all the children who have participated in competitive sporting activities this term. They have represented our school wonderfully!

The new football pitches at the Junior Site have played host to a few local competitions in recent weeks- it is lovely to have a home advantage for a change!! Keep an eye on the school website for fixtures as it would be lovely to have lots of spectators now we don't have to travel! Here are some of our competitions and experiences...

5 th October	Sports Hall Athletics- Year 3s (3 rd place and 6 th place)
10 th October	Sports Hall Athletics- mixed group
20 th October	Year 6 Sports Ambassadors Conference- we now have 8 children trained as ambassadors who run 'Going for Gold' sessions with Year 3 children on Thursday lunchtimes
31 st October	Year 6 Sports Hall Athletics
3 rd November	Year 6 Mini Whistlers- 4 of our Year 6 children are trained as Junior Referees
21 st November	Tri Golf- mixed group
23 rd November	Girls Active Day. 8 Year 4 girls attended

Soccer matches as follows:

Year 5/6	boys v St Peter's (lost)
Year 5/6	boys v Broadstone (won)
Year 3 and 4	boys v Broadstone (won)
Year 5/6	girls v Broadstone (won)



Huge thanks to everyone involved in the recent Christmas Fair. There were lots of enthusiastic comments about what a wonderful community event it was and there was a fantastic turn out, too!! The luxury Raffle alone raised over £3,000. Particular thanks go to the PTA organising committee who worked their socks off to make it an amazing event.



In recent weeks, probably due to colder weather, we have seen an increase in the number of parents asking if they or their smaller children can use our toilets at the Junior Site before the end of the school day. While we understand your predicament, it is causing a safeguarding issue for us. This means people are milling around the inner school reception area as our children come out of classes and go through to After School Club or to the school office to pick up their mobile phones. We don't always know who everyone is and our office staff are busy with many things at the end of the school day and find it hard to check everyone. Could we please ask that you refrain from doing this if at all possible.



School Council Arboriculturalists!



"This is brilliant- we planted a forest!"

Representatives from Manchester City of Trees organisation donated well over 200 trees to our school and our School Council members in Years 3 and 4 were asked to work with the team and plant the trees at our Junior site. The children really enjoyed learning how to plant the saplings and had a big say in where the trees should be located.

Beth Kelsall, Heritage Trees Technical Officer and her team, made sure the children learned the science and geography of tree planting in a practical way.

"We really enjoyed working with the children who were a really nice group. As I mentioned on Friday, their ability in terms of the tree planting was higher than what we'd expect for their age group."





If your child has lost an item of clothing at school this term, please could we invite you to check the lost property on each site- now located in waterproof boxes outdoors so you can access them easily. Unclaimed clothing will be disposed of at the end of term.

Keeping your children safe.

I am sure we all agree that we want our children to arrive at school safely each day and return home in the same way. There have been a growing number of cases where our Junior children are walking wholly or partially to and from school unsupervised. Groups of our children have also been congregating in the area around the railway line. This causes us some concern. It has always been our policy that only Year 6 children should come to school and go home independently and that parents in Year 6 inform school if this is their arrangement. This year group may have mobile phones for this reason and these are held for safekeeping at school during the day.



Dates for your diaries....

School closes for Christmas	end of day, Wednesday 20th December
School reopens	Thursday 4th January 2018
INSET for Staff training	Friday February 16 th 2018
February Half Term	Monday 19 th to Friday 23 rd February 2018
School closes for Easter	end of day, Thursday 29th March 2018
School reopens	Wednesday 16 th April 2018

For information regarding Christmas performances and events please see our school website and the information booklet we gave out in September.



*Wishing you a very happy Christmas holiday,
From all the staff and pupils at St Thomas, CE Primary
School.*