



'Be Smart... Be the best that you can be...'



St Martin and St Mary Church of England Primary School Newsletter No.4 – Friday 20th December 2024

Staffing Changes - As noted last month, we say goodbye to Nick Jones (Year 5) and Becky Gibbs (Year 6) today. We thank them for all their hard work and everything they have contributed to our school in the time they have worked here.

We are also delighted to announce (somewhat belatedly) the arrival of Miss Lang's second son, Reggie. It was lovely to see Emily and Reggie in school last week enjoying the EYFS/KS1 Nativity performance. I am sure you will agree that the children did a brilliant job, performing the story of the first Christmas. Well done and thank you to everyone involved.

A message from Jen Braithwaite our Chair of Governors;

Firstly, I wanted to thank you all for everything you have done to support your children and our school through this first term in our new structure.

Our staff team has worked incredibly hard to make a smooth transition for everyone and I hope you will join me in thanking them all and knowing that your children have all continued to receive the best levels of education and care. We continue to work and develop things behind the scenes and I want to assure you all that we are here to support our Headteacher, our senior leaders, our whole school team and our families to ensure that we move forward in the best way for everyone.

As you all know, Matt will leave us at the end of the Spring Term. I want to thank him personally for all he has done and continues to do for our school – Matt you will be very much missed!

This week our Governors agreed and approved arrangements for Leadership in school beyond Easter 2025.

I am pleased to tell you that Louise Swindlehurst will be the Interim Headteacher of the school from April 2025. Louise has aspirations to be a headteacher, is completing all the relevant qualifications, knows all of our staff and children and has worked across school. She is incredibly well placed to take on this role. This also means less change for everyone during a time of transition and re-organisation. During the interim period the Governors alongside our Senior Leadership Team will consider and plan what this might look like.

I, along with Governors and the SLT, have worked really hard to get provisional plans, taking advice from the Local Authority and the Diocese. I am really grateful for all the support behind the scenes and to Louise for accepting this challenge. Naturally, school is already considering arrangements for identifying a teacher to fulfil Louise's teaching responsibilities in Year 1 and 2.

We wish you all a peaceful, happy Christmas break and look forward to the future of our amazing school.

Jen Braithwaite
Chair of Governors



Attendance Raffle – I am delighted to announce the first winner of our Autumn term attendance raffle. Manfred's name (Year 5) was pulled out of the hat. Well done to him! The raffle resets after the Christmas break with a 12 week term where children can earn a ticket every week. I wonder who will win the prize at Easter...

Stair lift Installation – Many of you, when visiting the school, will have noticed that we have had a stair lift installed on the small set of steps outside the upstairs hall. School wanted to say a huge thank you to the various people who contributed to the cost of the purchase and installation of this equipment. The stair lift ensures that our entire school campus is accessible for children with any additional mobility needs, both short and long term, improving equality and inclusivity for our school. Thank you so much to everyone involved.

PTA – A message from our PTA Chair, Amy Thompson... Thank you so much for your continued support to the PTA's fundraising events. This term we have had a fantastic movie evening, raising £500 and a fabulous Christmas Fair with our very special visitor that raised over £2100. These events would not happen without the help of our teachers and parents, and we are extremely grateful for all their help. If you would like to join the PTA then we are always looking for new members. We are a flexible and friendly group who pitch in when we can and you don't need to commit to every event! Just drop Amy an email on athompson@windermere.cumbria.sch.uk



School Swimming Pool & Sports – Thank you once again to Craig and Grant and the team at the Brown Horse. The Sportsman's Dinner hosted back in November raise over £3700 for our school pool and sports equipment. We plan to invest this money in improving the pool heating and control systems and updating some of our very well used PE kit.

Sadly, our local electricity suppliers have still not yet been able to co-ordinate their efforts and resolve the issues with our electricity supply in school. As a result, the Air Source Heat Pump is still not operational. We are pushing hard to get this resolved but as yet we have no indication when this will be done. We will keep you posted.

Our swimming pool committee met on Tuesday after school and plans are afoot to develop a website to promote our pool and encourage local people and local businesses to get involved in using and supporting the pool. More news on this in the new year...



Mini-Police – Our team of Mini Police children joined their friends from St Cuthbert's last week and visited the residents of Gatesfield House just over the road from our schools. We delivered hand-made Christmas Cards, sang carols and shared Christmas memories with local members of the community. Thank you to Mrs Clarke for looking after the group with Mrs Harper and for sorting out the wonderful Christmas cards.



Arbor App – You have received log in information about the Arbor App. Please try and get this set up on your phones, tablets and devices as soon as possible. From the New Year, this will be our principle means of communicating with you, we are trying to streamline our communications and be more efficient. This means that we will no longer be using SMS to communicate with parents so if you haven't signed up it may mean that you miss out on important information. The App also allows you to update contact information, consent preferences and medical information amongst other things so it will prove very useful in making sure we hold the correct information about your children and you.



Attendance – Well done to our lucky attendance raffle winner, Manfred.

We go again next term. Remember, for each week of 100% attendance your child will have an entry into our school attendance lottery. Every week of 100% attendance is an extra ticket and an increased chance of winning a prize.

Admissions – change to PAN Sept 2026 – Outcome of our consultation; the Governing Body have considered the small number of concerns raised by stakeholders about reducing our PAN (Pupil Admission Number) to 30 for Reception class in September 2026. The Governors have decided that, on balance, it is in the best interests of the school to proceed with this adjustment and, when and if necessary, apply the Admissions criteria specified in the policy in the event of applications to Reception class being greater than 30. This is very unlikely in the current climate.

Morning Club – We have had to make some adjustments to our Morning Club and After School provision for younger children. You will have been contacted directly if your family uses this provision routinely. We are trying hard to establish a cost-effective alternative to support those families who do need that care for their younger children. Please remember that all 5 year olds and above can access 'Wrap Around Care' through Kids Club.

Cygnets – Play Group – On Wednesday 6th November, (9.15am to 10.45am) our very own ‘Cygnets’ playgroup started in school. This has been a huge success and it has been great to see lots of new babies and toddlers in school with their families. More details can be found on our website or by following this link; [Cygnets Playgroup](#)

Christmas performances and KS2 Christmas Church Service – Thank you to everyone involved in our Christmas Services and Celebrations (children, teachers, parents and families). We have had a lovely few weeks in school celebrating with all of you in readiness for the Christmas season.

In school, we hope that all of you have a fun filled break, spending time with your families and reflecting on the importance of light, hope and aspiration in the darkness of winter. I hope to see all of you well rested and positive about the excitement of the new year ahead.

Some additional reminders...

Outstanding payments – Invoices up to the end of term have been sent to parents for Pre-School & Nursery fees, early morning club and lower school after school club and payment was due by 4th December. Currently, we are owed £1,336 so please can I ask for these invoices to be settled by the end of term.

Illness – It’s that time of year where there are lots of viruses going around and we have had a number of children off/sent home with sickness bugs recently. Please can we remind you that if your child has been sick or had diarrhoea, then they can only return to school 48 hours after symptoms have stopped. We realise that it is frustrating if your child seems well enough to be back in school, however, it is important that we try and avoid it spreading to other children and staff.

Important Diary Dates - All dates are in the school calendar on our website for easy reference

- Friday 20th December – **Term ends today at 12.00noon** for Pre-School & Nursery children
- Friday 20th December – **Term ends today at 2.00pm** for Reception to Year 6 children
- Monday 6th January – INSET Day
- Tuesday 7th January – Spring Term begins
- Wednesday 22nd January (AM) – Reception & Year 6 height and weight checks
- Friday 7th February (AM) – PTA Sponsored Bounce (KS1)
- Monday 24th February – Year 2 Countryside Explorers trip to Windermere Jetty Museum
- Tuesday 25th February – Year 1 Countryside Explorers trip to Windermere Jetty Museum
- Thursday 27th February (PM) – Year 4 Brewery Dance Platform in Kendal