



# The John Hampden School Wendover



## NEWSLETTER

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### 1. MESSAGE FROM MRS BARNES

As we head towards December and the end of the Autumn Term we are all looking forward to the enjoyable activities that are a feature of this time of year in an infant school. This week the rehearsals for the FS Nativity have stepped up a gear and rehearsals for the KS1 Christmas performances are being planned. (You should be receiving letters about costumes any day now) The parties are being organised and preparations for the Christmas Fayre are well underway. Very soon everywhere you look in the school there will be further signs that Christmas is approaching!

For the Christmas Performances space in the hall is at a premium, please note that you will be entering the hall up steps via a side route so please do not attempt to bring pushchairs into the school. Our pupils and staff work very hard to put on these performances and we would ask you, on this occasion, to make alternative arrangements for all younger siblings as they can find it difficult to sit still and quietly and can spoil the enjoyment for others. Your co-operation would be greatly appreciated.

The Friends of John Hampden Christmas Fayre is next weekend - Saturday 30th November, and I am sure that will really start to make us feel festive—my thanks to all the FJH committee for demonstrating, once again, their amazing organizational skills in the run up to this event. Also thanks to all the volunteers, governors and staff who will give up their time to run stalls—we hope to raise lots of money so do come along and support us. Last year much of the money raised by the FJH was used to purchase and install new resources to improve the outside learning environment for our Year One classes—this has made a huge difference to the opportunities we offer. This time the funds generated will be used to improve the outside learning environment for Year Two so we can provide high quality education inside and out in all year groups. We are incredibly lucky to have such an active PTA and we truly do appreciate the time and effort that so many volunteer committee members provide. Many of them are already very busy people and the staff, governors and pupils at the school would just like to say a really big THANK YOU for all their hard work.

**Christmas parties** are planned for **Wednesday 18th December**. We invite the children to come to school wearing party clothes/Christmas jumpers and suitable footwear on that day (the children will be going outside at playtimes so clothing needs to be appropriate for colder weather). We will be asking you to provide your child with their own Christmas party packed lunch on this day rather than the hot meal option and, as this is a special occasion, we are happy for them to have any food which you consider to be appropriate e.g. sweets, chocolate etc.

Each year we are amazed by the wonderful lunches that are provided. Lunchboxes are often specially decorated, some even contain particularly Christmassy items. (The FJH provide every child with a Christmas Cracker to enjoy at the party)

The Foundation Stage children eat together in the Octagon and the KS1 children join together to eat in the hall which is beautifully decorated by the Friends of John Hampden. If we are lucky, a very special visitor usually arrives carrying a big sack of presents while the children are eating!

**PLEASE REMEMBER FRIDAY 6th DECEMBER IS AN INSET DAY**

## 2. GOVERNOR SECTION

In any organisation effective performance management is important for many reasons. It is a way of aligning teams to strategic aims and objectives. An opportunity to reflect on past performance and look forward to future opportunities and areas of development. Good communication, clear objectives and constructive feedback contributes to getting the best out of people and motivating staff.

John Hampden School aims to provide pupils with the opportunity to develop towards their full potential; academically, emotionally and socially. The performance of our teaching staff is essential to achieving these school aims so I thought you may be interested to know a bit about how performance is managed at the school.

Our Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher are responsible for the performance management of teachers and all other staff working at John Hampden, in some cases delegating responsibility to others to ensure everyone in their team has regular opportunities to get feedback and reflect on development. The Governing Body is responsible for managing the performance of the head teacher. As a Governor at John Hampden I sit on the Personnel Committee and the committee responsible for Head Teacher performance so performance management is an area I am heavily involved with.

The Performance Management committee recently met with Mrs Barnes and an experienced external adviser appointed by the governing body to hold our annual head teacher performance review. Teacher appraisals were completed by 31st of October with other staff reviews happening throughout the year.

The performance management reviews look back at the previous year's objectives and consider whether the objectives were met as well as setting new objectives for the upcoming year. These objectives need to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) and will be appropriate to the teacher's role and level of experience. They also need to tie in with the annual School Development plan, take into account the Department of Education Teachers' Standards and are aligned with the school ethos aims and values.

Teaching staff receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the year highlighting particular areas of strength as well as any areas that require further development.

The Personnel committee meets termly and receives reports and updates from the Headteacher relating to performance management (among other staffing related matters). We ensure that performance reviews happen, the appraisal policy is applied fairly, objectives align with the School Development plan and the process is robust, open, consistent and fair.

Ofsted inspectors consider the quality of continuing professional development for teachers and how leaders use performance management to promote effective practice across the school

I believe we have very effective performance management standards embedded at John Hampden which contributes to ensuring the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff delivering high quality education for all pupils.



Suzanne Pim  
Parent Governor

The Governing Board is always willing to listen to parental queries and to explain in more detail what the Governing Body does. They do realise, however, that it may not always be appropriate to speak to us at the school gate so please feel free to email the Chair of Governors, James Edley, [jedley@johnhampdenwendover.co.uk](mailto:jedley@johnhampdenwendover.co.uk) if you would like to raise a matter for discussion or if you just have a query about the school.

### 3. IMPORTANT MESSAGES

#### **CHRISTMAS PLAY TICKETS**

From next week you will be receiving your allocation of **two** tickets for the Christmas Performances, if you have requested them. Also from later next week we will send an email out to advise if there are any extra tickets available and you will be able to log on to ParentPay to purchase any further tickets you may require. We allocate two tickets initially to make sure every family can attend. We will issue any further tickets you order via your child's book bag.

#### **CHRISTMAS CARDS**

At this time of the year many pupils wish to send Christmas cards to their friends in the school. We accommodate this by installing two Christmas post boxes which will be in position from Monday 2nd December. One is positioned in the Foundation Stage Octagon area and the other one, for Key Stage One pupils, is positioned near the school office. If your child would like to send some cards this year please would you check the envelopes to ensure the cards can be easily sorted and delivered by our Year 2 postmen.

**Each envelope needs to have the name and class name of the recipient clearly written on it.**

Unfortunately we are not able to provide parents with class lists, but I am sure your child will remember the names of their very close friends.

We will encourage all children who bring cards into school to post them in the post boxes because the children are always very excited when the Christmas Post arrives in their classroom. Regular deliveries are made in the days leading up to the end of term.

The following information may help you with envelope writing!

Foundation Stage	Year 1	Year 2
Caterpillars - Miss Webb	Squirrels—Mrs Beattie	Firecrests - Mrs McNally/Mrs Tysoe
Ladybirds- Mrs Mills	Hedgehogs - Mrs King	Hérons - Mrs Bowman
Honeybees—Mrs Shrimpton	Badgers—Mrs Shyvers	Red Kites - Mrs Spencer

#### **FUNDRAISING**

Many thanks for supporting all the recent charity fundraising . Pupils at John Hampden managed to raise £271.80 for Children in Need.

#### **Adverse Weather Conditions**

If we need to close the school this winter due to adverse weather conditions the following procedures will be used to inform parents.

1. A decision will be made about the school closure by 7.30am. This decision will be based on health and safety grounds, which may include not having enough staff at school to supervise our pupils.
2. By 7.45a.m the school website home page will be updated with closure details. MIX 96 will have been contacted and should announce our school closure at regular intervals throughout the morning. The County Council's website will also list our school closure: [www.buckscs.gov.uk](http://www.buckscs.gov.uk)
3. If the notices listed above have not been implemented then you are to assume the school will remain open.
4. With these three methods of communication in place, there should be no need for you to telephone the school asking whether we will be open or closed.
5. Should the school open but need to close earlier than 3.15p.m, we will contact you via text or telephone.

**Please be assured that school closure will always be a last resort.**

**It is entirely the responsibility of the parent/carer to decide whether it is safe to travel to and from school in inclement weather and we respect the choices you make. As usual please inform the school by telephone or in writing if your child will be absent from school.**

#### **SICKNESS & DIARRHOEA**

Sadly we have had a number of children suffering with sickness and diarrhoea recently. Please remember that children should not return to school until 48 hours after the last bout of illness. This way we can be sure that your children will not pass on their germs to others. Please ensure we have up to date contact numbers for you and any other emergency contacts as poorly children need to be collected as soon as possible.

#### **P.E. Kit**

Please remember to provide some named tracksuit bottoms and a sweatshirt for your child to wear if they do P.E. outside.

#### **Pants and Socks!**

We are in desperate need of spare pants, socks and tights if anyone has any spares that they could give to the school we would be very grateful. Thank you.

## 4. CURRICULUM

### Helicopter Stories

As the leader of English I wanted to share a new initiative we have introduced this academic year - Helicopter Stories.

"One sunny day there was a kitten, a little kitten. She lived in a rainbow palace and when the moon rose she turned into a rainbow queen. Suddenly there was a witch, a wicked witch and the witch knocked at the door - KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK! The queen came down the stairs and she opened the door. The witch said, "You cannot stay a rainbow queen forever because you must turn into a kitten again...."

TO BE CONTINUED

Katherine

Katherine is always delighted to dictate a story and she never ceases to amaze me. In fact in every single Helicopter Story session I am continually amazed and blown away by the creativity and imagination that our children have at The John Hampden.

Scribing a story for a child, and supporting them to act it out, is a great privilege, for it is an invitation to an adult, to step back into the enchanted place, the one that only children inhabit.

#### **So what are Helicopter Stories?**

In theory, 'Helicopter Stories' is a simple approach. The teacher scribes the children's stories, word-for-word, and then the class comes together to act them out. The equipment needed is minimal: a roll of masking tape to make a stage, several sheets of A5 paper, a pen and an adult who is curious to uncover the dexterity of children's imaginations. In action, it is a highly effective learning strategy.

For the children, they get the chance to share something that is of huge importance to them; their story, developing their speaking and listening skills as they pay attention, and respond to each story from their class. By having their words scribed verbatim, they make the connection between the spoken and the written word, and as an inclusive, whole-class approach, every contribution is valued. Every child has the chance to shine with Helicopter Stories. Even quiet and shy children clamour to share their ideas and deepest thoughts. A Helicopter Story environment is one where children's gifts are recognised, where the whole group can be brought together - and where the creativity of all pupils can be nurtured.

Children in the Nursery, Foundation Stage and Year 1 have regular Helicopter Story sessions and we have a lunchtime Helicopter Story Club. Every day I am stopped by children in the corridor telling me how much they enjoy Helicopter Stories or asking to tell a story. Personally, I will never tire of hearing the stories that children want to tell.

Mrs Parkinson

Reading is like breathing in and writing is like breathing out, and storytelling is what links both: it is the soul of literacy. The most powerful tool that we have to strengthen literacy is often the most underused and overlooked, and that is a child's own stories.

— Pam Allen —

## 5. PUPIL'S SECTION

"I love Helicopter Stories because I love the exciting stories. We use lots of adjectives so we can really think about what the person who told the story wants it to be like." Charlie

I love Helicopter Stories because we listen to stories and act them out. It makes me feel happy when I make up stories." Kingsley

"I like thinking of different actions and pretending to be different things – it is exciting." Alex

"I like acting the stories out because my favourite thing is shows. I liked pretending to be a monster." Harry

"I love telling stories and pretending. " Heidi

"Helicopter Stories are so much fun. I like telling a story to everyone and then because it is my story I can choose who I want to be. When I see my story being acted out it makes me feel special." Penny

"I love helicopter stories because people use their imagination." Freja

"We act our own stories out and use our imagination. I liked thinking about how to be a cave – it was tricky at first but we collaborated. " Poppy

"We didn't do Helicopter Stories at my last school – I love doing them at this school. " Shirley

"I like acting the stories out." Billy

"I love acting out our stories. Sometimes I am pretending to be a forest or a beach and sometimes a dog or a dinosaur. It is brilliant." George

"I love listening to other people's stories, especially my sister's stories. It is exciting when other grownups come to watch us. Yesterday we had Helicopter Stories twice and that was amazing." Blake

"At first I was shy and I didn't want to act in the story. But not now. Yesterday I was a stomping dinosaur." Jake

"I really love Helicopter Stories." Alex

"I love telling stories and I love acting them out too. It is just like magic. I like telling stories that need to be continued." Katherine

I like telling stories, listening to other stories and acting them out." Wilbert

"I love all of the story endings we use – Snip snap snover, the story is over. Snip snap snout, the story is out. Tap the nail, the nail bends, this is how the story ends. Four leaf clover the story is over." Jorjy

"I really like acting the stories out." Cameron

"Helicopter stories are fabulous because we get to act stories out all of the time." Isabelle

"I love everything about helicopter stories. I wish we could do them every day." Ava

## 6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

We aim to keep you fully informed of our actions linked to the school improvement plan. Since the last news-letter we have made progress linked to the actions outlined below:

### GOAL A: QUALITY OF EDUCATION

There is a real desire and commitment to ensuring collaborative working and this week staff from John Hampden have met with colleagues from the other Li-aison Group Schools to discuss subject leadership. This middle leader role is undertaken by every qualified teacher in a school and it is vital in ensuring every subject is valued and delivered in the most effective way. At the meeting, subject leaders met each other and collaborated to share their knowledge and experiences with the aim of establishing useful contacts for mutual benefit.

Also this week, staff have been involved in evaluating the transition weeks at the beginning of the academic year. We work hard to ensure transition arrangements are strong and it is important to reflect and evaluate how successful this has been. We have asked for feedback from staff, pupils and parents to ensure we hear the views of all concerned.



### GOAL B: BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES



We firmly believe that happy children will learn well but it is equally important that we have a happy and motivated team of adults in the school. We are currently looking closely at the data we gained from the annual staff well-being survey and planning actions to address the lowest scoring areas. These actions include individual job chats as part of the Performance Management Cycle, snap shot observations of staff at work and professional dialogue linked to well-being and work life balance.

Behaviour monitoring for pupils continues and we are working hard to spot the triggers for particular behaviours and to plan strategies and interventions that meet the needs of all.

### GOAL C: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

This week Mrs Spencer has organised and led a School Council meeting for pupils and governors at John Hampden, Wendover Junior School and The John Colet School. The focus for the discussion was the issue of parents/carers driving onto and parking within the campus. The group attempted to come up with ways to alleviate the difficulties that this causes. The meeting follows a Class Council Circle Time at John Hampden where every class was given the opportunity to consider this issue and express their opinions. It is just one example of how we listen to the views of our pupils and engage them in school improvement discussions.



Since returning to school after the half term break all lunchtime and after school clubs are now up and running. The clubs are well attended and provide opportunities for pupils to develop or learn skills, enjoy a new or familiar activity or meet with new friends.

### GOAL D: LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT



Last week the first Finance, Premises, Health & Safety Committee meeting of the school year took place. Austerity measures over the last three years appear to be impacting positively on the school finances but there is still some way to go to reduce the deficit completely. We await news on additional education funding once a new Government has been elected but all parties appear to recognise the detrimental effect of historical underfunding of the education system

Recently staff have been involved in scrutinising pupil's work in year group teams. This sharing opportunity allows us to monitor consistency across the classes and helps to ensure all expectations are being met.



## 7. MISCELLANEOUS

### A New Venture - Wendover Juniors Cubs



Wendover Junior Football Club are delighted to work in partnership with Bucks Sport Academy to bring you a new section to the club. The WJFC Junior Cubs provides football for boys & girls aged 2.5 up to and including Reception/Foundation stage. This is a fun, friendly learning environment for your child to be introduced to playing football and the partnership with Bucks Sports Academy provides quality coaching from top FA-qualified coaches.

The sessions last one hour, every Saturday and are designed to improve your child's:

- Social Skills
- Develop their imagination & creativity
- Help develop counting, colour and shape recognition
- Improve balance and coordination through dynamic movements
- Develop kick, throw and catching skills
- Develop spatial awareness

Sessions from now until the end of February are running in the John Colet Sports Hall 9.30am - 10.30 am and a free taster session is available. In the Spring, the sessions will move outdoors to the grass football pitches.

Sessions can be booked as a block and are great value at only £4 a session, with sibling discount available too.

To find out more please visit <http://www.buckssportacademy.co.uk/wendover-jnr-cubs.html> or email [development@buckssportacademy.co.uk](mailto:development@buckssportacademy.co.uk)



**St Mary's Church**  
At the heart of the community



# *Join us this Christmas at St Mary's Church*

8 December - Christingle at 3pm

22 December - Carols by Candlelight at 7pm

24 December - Nativity Service at 1.30pm  
(for children under 5 years old)

24 December - Crib Service at 4pm

24 December - Midnight Service at 11.30pm



