



St Nicholas^{CE}
First School

learning and believing, growing and achieving

St. Nicholas CE
First School, Codsall
Belvide Gardens
Codsall
Wolverhampton
WV8 1AN

Friday 15th December 2017

Dear Parents

What a week! Firstly an apology to any parents that were inconvenienced with the school closures this week. This is always a difficult decision to make and we always endeavour to be open where possible. As a group of Codsall schools we make a collective decision, whilst also bearing in mind individual school situations that may be different. On this occasion, almost all schools intended to be open on Tuesday, but early morning conditions which were re-assessed across the schools meant that it was more sensible to close. I do appreciate for working parents this last minute change from open to closed will not have aided organisation for the day. Likewise I understand why some parents felt it was too hazardous to come in on Wednesday once we were open again.

A big thank you to our caretaking staff Mr Trevor Walmsley and Mr Martin Smith who this week have worked incredibly hard to clear the school site and make access to and from the school building as safe as possible. Outdoor work for an extended period of time in freezing conditions is no easy feat and they have worked as a team to do a tremendous job.

We are disappointed that we have not been able to enjoy our Christmas service down in church this week, but Rev Liz and I thought it was inappropriate to trudge so many little ones through the snow, close to the road and to have them sat in wet shoes etc through the service. We will have our own internal school service however before we break up.

When we return to school after the holidays children will have their Inspiration Days to look forward to. Due to some work we are doing with St Nicholas Church on developing children's understanding of their local church it is necessary to split these over two days. Nursery, Reception, Years 2 and 3 will have their special day on Tuesday 9th January, whilst Years 1 and 4 will have their day on Wednesday 10th January. Please see the next page for details of what will be going on in Inspiration Days next term.

This will be the final newsletter for the term. May I thank you for your support for school events, school expectations and of course your child's learning. I hope you feel your child has developed in different ways throughout the term.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Best wishes

Miss J Parker

Head Teacher

Here is Charlie with our new pupil Kid Frost!

This term we bid farewell to two families who are relocating. We wish them all the best in their new adventures!



For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counselor,
The Mighty God,
The Everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.

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Inspiration Day info

Tuesday 9th January

Nursery

Next half term Nursery will be learning through the topic of "Let's Pretend." For Inspiration Day children are invited to wear dressing up costumes. The book of the week will be "Potion Commotion." The children will each make a magic wand so that they can perform their very own magic! We will be needing our wands for our experiment, which will create an unstoppable magic potion (vinegar, baking powder and food colouring)! The children will also have access to many other exciting activities and crafts. Please note that although every effort will be made to keep children clean, and paint will be avoided, children will still have access to sensory play.

Reception

Santa's elves are having a wonderful time in Reception this half-term, but it will soon be time for them to return to the North Pole in time for Christmas. As we wave goodbye to Santa's elves we are due to welcome some new friends to Reception in our topic 'Let's Pretend'. On our Inspiration Day we invite the children to come to school pretending to be anything they like - what a magical idea to be anything you like? Perhaps your child will choose to be a football playing magician, or a tutu wearing cowboy/cowgirl, or even a dancing giraffe - the possibilities are endless. By giving your child a voice in deciding what they want to be for the day, the children will immerse themselves in a topic of great interest. On this day we will be getting to know who we are, what we are best at and how we can help each other. During this time we will be going on a hunt for our new friends, therefore clothing must be suitable for the outdoors and of course all the other messy elements of early years learning that makes learning engaging and exciting for young children. Please don't send your child to school in something that will leave them upset if they become muddy or get a bit of glue or paint on it. We hope you are just as excited as we are for this child led topic!

Year 2

Year 2 will start the New Year setting sail across the great oceans of the world in our new topic. We will be learning about some of the great sea explorers from the past, the history of boats and ships as well as learning about the creatures living beneath the surface of the sea.

For our inspiration day we would like the children to dress as either sailors (not pirates) or divers or fishermen or mermaids or even a sea creature!

(Please do not go to the expense of buying a costume. The things the children already have or make with a little imagination make the best costumes.)

Year 3

Year 3 will be learning about Viking invasions in their topic in January. On Inspiration Day we will be building our very own Viking Longships. Cereal Boxes will be required! This will give children an opportunity to explore and investigate what life was like on a longship as well as consider the design and layout. This topic builds upon the Autumn topic of Romans which will allow children the opportunity to compare and contrast the different invaders. Children will also be beginning to learn the songs for their exciting 'Viking' assembly for parents which will take place on Wednesday 14th March at 2.15pm. A separate letter will come out with information relating to this closer to the time.

Wednesday 10th January

Year 1

After Christmas we will be starting our topic of "Castles" as part of the 'We are Britain' unit of work. To launch this exciting topic, we are inviting children to come to school on Wednesday 10th January dressed up as someone who worked in a medieval castle such as a knight, jester, king or queen. We also need lots of junk modelling (boxes, cardboard tubes, yoghurt pots etc.,) so please start saving these over the holidays and send them in as soon as you can.

Year 4

Take a breath as we step back around 2700 years in time as we explore the common experiences and beliefs of Ancient Greece. Our first stop will be investigating a range of historical sources related to Ancient Greek pottery, where we will make inferences about life in Ancient Greece by focusing on the role of different shapes and sizes of pottery in every day life and how the use of pictures depicts common events. Of course, we will be making our very own pieces of Ancient Greek pottery using different materials. Who will be able to create the most historically accurate? After that, we will move onto comparing the Ancient Greek alphabetical system and learning all about the Greek Gods, where we will write riddles about each God using the ancient symbols and our partners will not only need to translate each riddle but also try and solve it – indeed, we will be excited for adventurous use of language choices. We will then be taking our inspirational learning experiences outside to participate in a range of common Ancient Greek Olympic Game activities, comparing and measuring our attempts by converting between different units of measure! Who will succeed by triumphing against the Year 4 staff? One of our key learning questions (What was it like to live in Ancient Greece?) will be investigated by us independently carrying out some research on the common human and physical geographical features, using different sources, taking our new-found knowledge to persuade an audience to visit an Ancient Greek City using a digital presentation. What a busy and productive day it is going to be!

As we are going to taking part in a range of activities, please can you send your child into school with clothes that you do not mind getting messy, ideally in a pair of joggers (which will be comfy) to save changing into PE kits, in order to maximise the learning time and activities we have during the day.

Spring Term Worship

Our worship theme for next half term as a whole school is centred around the Christian value of **perseverance**. Children will learn Bible stories that focus on perseverance and they will think about how they can apply these teachings to their own lives. If any of our families of other faiths have stories that teach the same value that they would like to share please do let Miss Parker know.



Luke 21:19 tells us "Stand firm and you will win life."

To support your child with learning through this value feel free to check out the following websites with pointers towards stories. [Jelly Telly](#) and [Kids of Integrity](#)

Diary dates for next term (so far)

Wed 3 rd January	School reopens to children
Mon 8 th January	Y2-4 Trompos Assembly
Tues 9 th January	N, R, Y2 and Y3 Inspiration Day Y1 and Y4 visit to explore and investigate church
Wed 10 th January	Y1 and Y4 Inspiration Day Y2 and Y3 visit to explore and investigate church (am) Class 2S first Forest School session 6pm Dance Competition at Codsall Middle School (Y3/4)
Thurs 11 th January	First Y3 swimming lesson Class 2A first Forest School session
Tues 16 th January	R-Y4 only Eco-Day organised by School Council and Miss Griffiths – wear something green or something that has been made out of recycled materials e.g a hat made from a cardboard box etc. Eco themed school dinner.
Wed 17 th January 7pm	PTFA meeting in school all welcome
Thurs 18 th January	Dentist visiting afternoon Nursery for a talk to children.
Tues 23 rd January 3.30pm-4.30pm	St Nics@St Nics, all welcome.
Wed 24 th January	Church led whole school worship
Fri 26 th January	Dentist visiting morning Nursery for a talk to children.
Tues 6 th February	Safer Internet Day – Saltmine Theatre visit for Y2-4 "Escape"
Wed 7 th February	Cross Country inter school tournament at St Nics Y2-4
Mon 12 th & Tues 13 th February 4-7pm	Parents Evening in classrooms
Fri 16 th February	Break up for half term
Mon 26 th February	School reopens to children PTFA Film Night
Tues 27 th February 3.30pm-4.30pm	St Nics@St Nics, all welcome.
Wed 28 th February	Church led whole school worship 3HW first Forest School session
Thurs 1 st March	World Book Day (dress up as your favourite book character) Y1 Samuel Pepys experience 3M first Forest School session
Tues 6 th March	Arts Festival Choir Performance with Lane Green and St Christopher's
Wed 7 th March	Annual Dance Festival at CCHS (invited pupils)
Thurs 8 th March	Y4 work with Ex Cathedra and perform at St Nics church in the evening. (info in due course). Funded by the Arts Festival
Wed 14 th March 2.15pm	Y3 Viking assembly
Thurs 22 nd March	Y1 Easter Play 10am
Fri 23 rd March	Y1 Easter Play 2pm
Sun 25 th March	PTFA Easter Egg Hunt
Mon 26 th March	Y3 Experience Easter at St Nics church
Tues 27 th March 2.15pm	Y4 Ancient Greek Exhibition
Wed 28 th March 10am	Easter Church Service
Thurs 29 th March	School closes for Easter holidays

NB As always these dates can be subject to change, but where possible we will always seek to give you maximum notice of this.

Spellings in the new year

Most people read words more accurately than they spell them. The younger pupils are, the truer this is.

From January onwards children will be asked to learn and apply a spelling pattern/rule rather than learn a list of words in their weekly spelling test.

In KS1 we will send home 8 words to learn each week using the same spelling pattern (i.e. **sp**ort, **for**t, **nor**th after teaching the children that the **or** always comes in the middle of a word). We will also send home 2 common exception words.

We will test children on a **selection of the 8 words they have taken home** as well as a **selection of unseen words that use the same spelling pattern**. We will also test children on the 2 common exception words they have learnt at home. Therefore the test will be 10 words in total. Teachers will say the word in a sentence each time so children get used to hearing/using the word in context.

When children are ready, we will send how alternative spellings of the same sound (**e.g. or, aw and ore**) and test as above.

The same principle will apply for KS2 children, although we will send home 10 words and 2 common exception words. This may include some revision of KS1 spelling patterns/rules as required from our half termly assessments.

This is a change from learning a given number words and being tested on them. By moving away from this rote way of learning the spelling the intention is that children will learn the rule as opposed to a list of words which they are then able to supply with some independence in their writing. Too often do we have children getting 10/10 in the weekly spelling test but then not using the spelling accurately in their independent work.

What are "Common Exception Words"?

These are the "**Tricky Words**" that children need to learn to help them with their reading and writing. A Tricky Word/ Common Exception Word is a word that the child cannot yet decode (work out) from the sounds they know at that stage in their learning. For example "the" is the first tricky word that a child will need to learn, it needs to be learnt because it is used a lot, but the children will not be learning about the "th" sound for a little while and even the "e" doesn't make it's normal sound!

Because these words cannot be decoded they need to be learnt, and that takes **regular practise**. Children will cover them in their phonics lessons at school, but helping them at home will improve things so much for them. The children use a variety of skills to learn these words, some will look at the first letter to help them, some will look at the over-all shape of the word, some will see if the word looks like another word that they know. Each skill is fine, but it may help them if you ask them how they remember, so you can jog their memory next time you test them.

When you practise these words with children please try not to do them in the same order each time, children are remarkable at learning patterns and we do not want them to know that the *word-after-"the"- is-"to"* as that means they aren't actually recognising the word.

[Year 1 and 2 Common Exception Words](#) [Year 3 and 4 Common Exception Words](#)