**December**

Stories around the tree

There was a huge amount going on during the final few weeks of the autumn term. On the last day we sang carols accompanied by Tim Brown playing the piano and then had some Christmas stories around the tree – the children were magnificent.

Christmas Service and Choir

That same week we also had an amazing Christmas service at St Nicholas’s. From the bell ringing welcoming us in, the musical accompaniment from Miranda, David and Tim and the quite frankly superb singing from everyone; it was a great celebration before breaking up for the holidays. A special word of thanks to Mrs Featherstone, Mrs Lane and Tim Brown for their work with the choir – they were magnificent (Carol of the Bells was my favourite). I can see why the choir is becoming more and more popular, the children really enjoy it.

Friday Dance

Another incredibly popular and effective club is Friday Dance. Charlotte has done a superb job with the children. Its popularity is growing and growing and so many children are enjoying the club and the performances. The dancers performed in two of the nativity performances and then again to parents – superb work and very professional. Well done to all the children who took part and particular congratulations to Charlotte for her hard work and dedication.

Christmas lunch

Huge thanks to June and Gundega in the kitchen for producing a fabulous Christmas lunch and thank you to parents for coming in to join the children; it was fantastic to have so many of you come in and share lunch with the children. Everyone looked great in their Christmas jumpers and it was brilliantly organised – thanks to Mrs Crisp for the rota which worked superbly!

Production

Wow! What can I say? A superb nativity production by Squirrel and Fieldmice classes. To have Nursery perform on the Monday during the dress rehearsal was an added bonus and the two performances were really well performed. Thanks to teachers and TAs for their help and well done to the children – a great effort!

Pantomime

The children were also treated to a panto before Christmas. A visiting pantomime group came into the school and performed Beauty and the Beast. This was generously paid for by the PTFA and we thank them enormously. The visiting group were superb and said that this school was the best school they had visited this academic year. They said how wonderful the pupils were and really appreciated the support of the staff and thought the school was wonderful – we agree with them!!

PTFA events

The PTFA were very busy in the last few weeks of term. The hot chocolate and cookies after school on Fridays were very successful and the Christmas jumper swap and raffle tickets for the Christmas hampers were also excellent fundraisers. Lastly, the film night was a resounding success. I don’t think I have ever seen such a well supported film night here, thank you to all the volunteers for their help and organisation. The money raised from the Christmas hamper raffle, the hot chocolate sales, film night and donations at the Nativity have meant that we can add three more iPads to our collection. In addition, I would really like to thank the Buckley family for their incredibly generous donation via Pay360 which will fund an additional iPad. This means that four more iPads will be used by the children across the school, tremendous work in just one term. Thank you to everyone who has been involved, this will make a real difference to the children.

Building work update

I was very excited to let you know about our environmental works in the last Warbler. This has been delayed, but we should see the majority of the work happening over the Easter holidays.

Volunteers

We would love to have volunteers in to help with children’s learning. This would usually involve reading with children. In order to facilitate this we would need to take up a DBS check; please contact Mrs Crisp ([office@greatwilbraham.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@greatwilbraham.cambs.sch.uk)) for more details.

**January**

Lunchtime Clubs

This term, teachers and I have started up some indoor clubs for part of the lunch hour. These clubs include Book Club, Chess, Colouring/Drawing, Homework and Lego and are open to all children. They have been very successful and the children have enjoyed having a variety of activities at lunchtime. I have really enjoyed watching the children developing their chess skills and thank the teachers for their time with the other clubs.

Travelling to school and safe access to the school

I have been involved in a number of meetings with the parish council and local transport groups over improving provision for children crossing the road to the school. We want to avoid a serious incident occurring and therefore will be working with the children in school on reinforcing messages about how to cross roads carefully and continuing to support external agencies to find alternative solutions to create safer routes to school. Mrs Forshaw is leading the travel ambassador scheme and will be working with the county, the parish council and school to promote safer routes to school and this work has already started.

Phonics meeting

Thanks to Mrs Francis, Mrs Forshaw and Miss Maddison for their presentation to parents about phonics and early reading which was held this term. Thank you to those who could make it for your questions and support, I hope it was informative.

Lilibet Garden official opening

We were able to officially open the Lilibet Garden this month. Representatives from Cambridge Community Fund and the Diocese of Ely joined parents, governors, staff and children to look on as Rev Alice and myself officially opened the garden. It has been used with great enthusiasm by the children and will be a welcome resource.

Thanks to Jason and Charlie for their efforts in constructing such a wonderful space for the children; to the TAs for helping bed in the plants I bought and to the children of Badger class for helping place the pots and plants (and unloading them from my car!). Finally, this would not have been possible were it not for the donation from Corpus Christi College and the grant money I was able to procure from the Cambridge Community Fund. These donations and grants were able to cover half the cost and the school funded the rest.

Squirrel class outside area

Not only has the Lilibet Garden been completed but the Squirrel class outside area has also had work completed on it. It is a bit more of a blank canvas but we are excited for the children to be using it in the future. Again, Jason and Charlie have worked really hard on this area and it is so much better now – thank you both for your dedication.

Fieldmice experiences

Brr! It has been cold this term but Fieldmice class have been busy outside. Not only did they wrap up warm and go on some frosty walks but they also had a visit from our PCSO Chris Wiseman who showed them his police car and things he uses in his job.

Lastly

I have been around the school a lot talking to children about their work and have shown round members of the governing body and Local Authority. They have all concurred how wonderful the children are to work with and it has been a pleasure to see their fabulous learning behaviours.

Richard Brown