



December Newsletter

North Wootton
Academy

Dear Parents and Carers,

Our Christmas season kicked off on Friday with the annual Christmas Fair. As always, we are extremely grateful to everybody who braved the cold to support this event and particularly to the PTA, staff and Year 5 pupils for running it. It is a fantastic fundraiser for the school with all funds going directly back into the children's playground equipment. More importantly, it is a great time to see the whole community begin the month of Christmas together.

Christmas at North Wootton Academy Whilst the fair marks the start of our Christmas celebrations, every day really does count in school and so the teaching will continue as normal almost right up until the last day of term. However, we also try to punctuate this with some key events both inside and outside of the school day to try and build the excitement towards the holiday:

- **Christmas Cards**—Whilst our internal mail box is open for children to exchange cards should they wish, this is not something we particularly encourage or discourage: it is a great way for the children to practice using capital letters but also an additional expense. Therefore, we are more than happy to pass these on but would hope that parents do not feel they have to send these.
- **Community Carol Singing (8th)**—Our school choir will be visiting Wyndham House to sing traditional carols for the residents this week. This is an important part of our community service and a rewarding experience for the pupils.
- **Christmas Performances**—Rehearsals are in full swing for our two performances of the Nativity Story and so the school is full of singing already. The Year 6s will begin these shows with their formal carol concert at All Saints Church (11th), with the Reception pupils following this up with their 'cuter' interpretation later in the week (14th/15th). We look forward to seeing as many family members as we can accommodate during these times.
- **Christmas Pantomime/Dinner/Jumper Day (18th December)**— We believe this is a really important Christmas tradition and forms part of our commitment to take all of our children to a theatre at least once during their time at North Wootton. However, being mindful of the cost pressures that families are facing, we alternate between attending an external show with experiencing this in-school. Therefore, this will also be our Christmas Dinner day where we encourage pupils to wear a festive jumper instead of their normal uniform jumper/cardigan.
- **Christmas Parties**— (see reverse for dates) Another tradition that we keep in the Christmas party where we give each phase a few hours to dance, play games, eat snacks and generally end up very sweaty! This is also a day for party clothes but please can these be appropriate for the weather, their age and running around on a potentially wet playground (so not strappy shoes please).
- **Christmas Disco**—The party continues into the evening of the 19th when the PTA and staff run the end of term disco in the school hall. Again, party clothes are a must and we hope to see your child there.

The Importance of Reading I always try to ensure that I use this month's newsletter to remind parents and carers about the pivotal role you play in reading at home, especially as we do not see the children for two weeks and the only home learning we ask, is to read regularly.

As a school, reading has always been a strength where we achieve a higher rate of success than in writing and mathematics. This year, in Year 6, we will be aiming for almost 90% of our pupils to reach the national level in the subject, with around 50% achieving the higher level of Greater Depth. Whilst this of course reflects the strength of the teaching of reading, we are also aware that these children experienced Reception, Year 1 and 2, before COVID. At this time, pretty much every child, read regularly at night; it was a well-established habit in most homes and parental support was very much, a big part of our success.

In more recent years, we have struggled to re-establish this habit within the families of our younger children and consequently, within Year 2 assessments, reading is currently our weakest subject, with the school predicting around 70% of our children reaching the national level.

Therefore, more than ever, we need parent's and carer's help in establishing a habit that is not only a really enjoyable experience, but also arguably the most important way in which you can contribute towards your child's education.