

NEWSLETTER

‘Capturing the imagination of young minds.’

Issue 5 —December 2023

Message from Mrs O’Hara

As I move on to pastures new, I am the proudest Headteacher—proud of what we have created together, proud of the reputation that the school has developed across the city, and proud of the children and the education that they receive. Over the last two weeks, I have revisited memories of the past —some of them sad, but many more are of great joy and celebration.

I have known some families for years, and ex-pupils are now returning to school as parents, volunteers or candidates, each with their own experiences of life at POPS.

I leave behind me the most amazing children, the hardest working professionals, and a very strong and talented leadership team who will continue to serve the community with the same passion and dedication. Working with the Poppleton Community has been a pleasure and a privilege, and I thank you all for the past 16 years of support and enthusiasm. I wish Poppleton Ousebank the very best for the future—it has been a magical place to work and will always be a very special place for me.



Odd Socks



To begin our week on Antbullying, pupils and staff donned odd socks. Some were different patterns, others were short, long or purely mismatched colours, but the message was still the same—being different is ok and should be celebrated, because the world would be a very boring place if we were all the same. Kindness, and understanding the feelings of others was also discussed, as children identified options open to them, should they, or someone they know, be being bullied. We also talked about protected characteristics such as race, religion, gender, age or disability and how people are not permitted to treat others differently or unkindly because of their difference. So much discussion goes on in school about the importance of valuing other people and their views, and pupils understand the importance of this in a developing modern world.

Children in Need

In the last newsletter we acknowledged that families often donate online to Children in Need and take part in activities at work, and so we marked the occasion in school with a non-uniform day, inviting families to make a contribution if they wished. A staggering **£438.49** was sent to CIN, and we would like to thank you for making a difference to someone’s life somewhere in the world.



Tree day



It is fair to say that new staff to school have been amazed by the size of the school Christmas trees and the scale of decorations at POPS. It is a very special time of the year—festive magic, glitter and sparkle, tinged with great excitement and anticipation. As is customary, children decorated our tallest tree over the morning, and even without the lights on, it looked beautiful. The whole school came together for the official switch on, which following a tense few technical moments, was met with great cheers and whooping as the multi-coloured lights danced brightly. Many children leave their baubles behind as they move on to high school and children use these if they forget to bring a decoration on the day. This year I couldn’t believe the names of past pupils that were being hung on the tree—children who have left school and are now in full time employment! That’s why our tree is so special—it doesn’t just represent our present, but also our past. Long may it continue.



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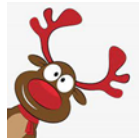
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Festive film night

Films were selected, bookings had been made and excitement was in the air throughout the afternoon, as children knew that at the end of the day, they would gather around a screen to watch a festive film with their friends—they love it! The lights were out and with snacks on hand, it really was a special evening for staff and children. There was a film for everyone, with lots of laughter and children looking through their fingers as the heroes of the movies became entangled with danger. The money raised from this event goes towards the cost of coaches for pupils attending the Young Voices concert in February—so thank you all for being part of a great evening.



Secrets room



The elves returned this year to help our pupils make difficult festive present choices for family and friends. As always, the collection of pupils from the classrooms and their personal shopping experience ran like clockwork—children had tables of gift options and there was much thought, discussion and debate before making their selection. In school we talk to pupils about the feelings of excitement and pleasure when receiving a gift, but also explain that nothing tops the feeling of giving, which is why the Secrets Room is so important. Thank you very much to our parent volunteers for organising it and making it happen.

Music at POPS

Just look at some of the wonderful music opportunities that our pupils have taken part in this term. Children have played piano in assembly, performed in rock bands or small groups and even sang in the 120 strong Young Voices choir—there is always lots of music going on.

They have also had a woodwind assembly, learning about the instruments and hearing them played by a professional performer— always very exciting.

Anyone interested in learning an instrument, should contact the school office for details.



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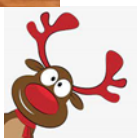
Mental Elf Festive Fun Run

Assembly was very entertaining as pupils arrived in their elf hats, outfits and headbands and we knew it was going to be a special day. The Charity Leaders had been out and about each day, reminding pupils about our Festive Fun Run and after the success of last years Reindeer Rush, we knew it would be a popular event. Mr Smith kindly volunteered to lead the children on their playground laps— safety was paramount on the damp playground and as expected, the children were in high spirits as they followed the chief elf for the day. York Mind were delighted to hear that we would be fundraising on their behalf and I am pleased to tell you that together, we raised **£2,787.00**. You absolute stars! Thank you as always for supporting your children to make a difference—they are the future and so helping them to see beyond themselves will ensure they know how to play a positive role in years to come.



Christmas shows

Four of our youngest year groups, all with their own Christmas Concert, took to the stage this week. There was much singing and dancing as the children entertained our visitors. Our pupils never disappoint and their smiles when receiving cheers and applause was just wonderful. Children love to see a familiar face in the crowd and enjoy the audience participation too. We hope you enjoyed our shows and would like to thank you for visiting.



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Young leaders

This term our Young Leaders have been amazing! The Autumn Term is always community and charity heavy and so our Charity Leaders have been kept on their toes. Eco Leaders have been out and about on the playground keeping it clear of rubbish from school snacks. Playground Rangers have kept our younger children busy on the playground and our Board Club Leaders have really stepped up to make sure that the clubs are organised and run smoothly. Pupils are determined in their positions and often use their initiative to make things happen. There is much to do in the new year—our bid for new shrubs/trees was successful and they will be arriving very soon for planting. I have set a target for our group of Year 6 Charity Leaders to follow one of our Year 2 classes who have twinned their toilets with those of a region worldwide. We take it for granted that we have somewhere to go to the toilet. But one in three people in the world don't. Without proper toilets, people get trapped in a vicious cycle. They're likely to become sick through sanitation-related diseases. Illness keeps people from working, children miss school, parents have to pay for medicines or food and fall into debt. Toilet Twinning funds hygiene education via community-led workshops and sourcing local materials for families and communities to build their own toilets. Our Year 6 children's goal will be for each class to raise £60 over the next two terms by completing jobs at home so that they can twin their toilet and fund a project in a community that helps families to build their own basic toilet, access clean water and learn about hygiene – a vital combination that saves lives.



Christmas dinner



Music played, crackers were pulled and there was much merriment and laughter as teaching staff and pupils came together to share Christmas dinner. Our catering elves created a fine feast for all and the lunchtime supervisors provided the festive cheer. Thank you everyone for making yet another activity special.



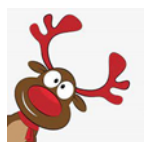
Christmas Fair

Didn't we have a wonderful time? The Fair was opened by our school choir and families quickly began to fill the school building with festive enthusiasm and cheer. Children were keen to show parents their crafts and indulge in treats and games across the school. The twinkling lights and music created the Christmas ambience that we had hoped. What a brilliant event for all our families and staff to come together before the festive season.



New playground equipment

Our playground update is finally complete and children couldn't be happier. There are opportunities for children to climb, slide, hide and also sit underneath the equipment. Children had access to it for the first time this week and they were absolutely thrilled. The weather has been particularly unpleasant and over the Christmas holidays, the playground will be cleaned so that pupils have a much cleaner playtime. Thank you very much to FRIENDS who very kindly donated £10,000 to the playground update.



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Sporting roundup

Our Girl's football team have shown amazing determination, resilience and enthusiasm this term, with many playing for the first time! The girls are always ready to play and give 100% all the way through matches, no matter the score. It has been so amazing to watch them grow in confidence both in training and matches, I couldn't be prouder.



As well as the football, 22 Year 5 and Year 6 children competed in an Indoor Athletics event on the 14th November. This is always a great experience for the children and they performed well in sprinting and obstacle relays as well as demonstrating super throwing and jumping skills.

School allotment

Last week, two volunteers from Aviva braved the cold to completely clear the overgrown allotment area to the rear of the school. This year there have been raspberries and courgettes galore, but they had completely taken over! A big thank you goes to our parent Mrs Lindsay Smith for agreeing to take on the challenge.



New Headteacher

In January, Miss Linda Collier takes up the position of Headteacher in school. Recently she spent a day at POPS and I was pleased to be able to introduce her to pupils and staff. Miss Collier is very excited about working in York and I am sure that you will make her feel very welcome. Her very first day will be spent with staff on the January INSET day and she will then be ready to welcome the pupils back to school.



Wishing all our families a magical Christmas and happy New Year.

