

Dear Parents

Welcome to our final newsletter of 2019. We have had such a busy term, jam-packed with visits, visitors, events and all manner of exciting things... September, October, November and December have just flown by I am sure you will agree. Apologies for not having been in school for the last week and a half, I am recovering at home following a minor foot operation and hope to be back on my feet once again very soon. The following information may be of interest to you...

Goodbye Mrs Metcalfe:

Our lovely Mrs Metcalfe retires at the end of this week and I am sure you will agree that she will be sorely missed. She has worked at Thingwall for the last 20 years and is one of our longest serving members of staff. During her time with us she's been a wonderful Teaching Assistant, an office admin person, a clerk to governors, Head Gardener and also the vice-chair of the Parents' Association. We have calculated that Mrs Metcalfe must have touched the hearts of almost 1000 Thingwall pupils over the years and I know all have loved her calm nature, her sense of fun and her unflappable professionalism. As both her daughters attended Thingwall she has been coming to our school for almost 30 years in total! We wish her well and hope that she has a wonderful retirement with Mr Metcalfe. Helen Durn (Lily and Jack's Mum) will be taking on her Year Five TA role for the first part of the Spring Term and we wish Ms Durn the best of luck in her new role with us.

Goodbye Mrs Cooper:

Mrs Cooper will return to her Deputy Head post at Greasby Infants at the end of this week as Mr Bettridge's term as Acting Head of Greasby Juniors is coming to an end. We will all miss Mrs Cooper very much indeed, she has quickly become part of the Thingwall team and has really got stuck into all aspects of school life very quickly, especially these last two weeks where she has been Acting Head Teacher in my absence. We will miss her enthusiasm, her total enjoyment of teaching and her complete professionalism... keep in touch, we will see you at the Year Six Leaver's Assembly as I know Year Six have invited you as you have been such an important part of their school journey. Mr Bettridge will return to us as Year Six teacher and Deputy Head in January.

Year Six Christmas Production:

Year Six treated us to a fantastic class assembly based on 'The Night Before Christmas'. It was enjoyed by staff and pupils alike and really got us into the festive mood!

Friday 20th December Cinema Visit:

If you haven't already done so, please ensure you complete the permission slip and return it to the office (together with the payment) as soon as possible. If we do not have a permission slip we will not be able to take your child and it would be such a shame to miss out on a festive whole school trip to the cinema!

Councillor Mike Collins Visit:

We had a visit at the end of November from Mike Collins, who is the councillor for our local area. Due to the general election we were unable to write about his visit earlier as this would have contravened local and national government regulations. It was a very successful visit and Mr Collins was interested to meet staff and pupils as well as listen to issues that affect our school. He is willing to help to judge our Federation Writing Competition – please pass any 200 word stories to the school office for my attention- and he was extremely interested in the issues regarding parking/speeding outside school on

Pensby Road. To this end, he has agreed to fund signage outside school to remind drivers to be safe at all times and he has also agreed to fund bumper stickers for every family to remind drivers to park safely and avoid speeding. He has also enquired about extending the silver safety barriers outside school. Thank you Mr Collins we are very grateful. Details of the Road Safety Competition will be coming in the New Year.

MP Margaret Greenwood Visit:

We have also had a visit from Margaret Greenwood, who is the Member of Parliament for our local area. Again, due to the general election we were unable to write about her visit earlier as this would have also contravened local and national government regulations. Margaret attended with Ellie, her aide, and this visit was also successful. Margaret was very pleased to meet all staff and pupils and thought our school was lovely. She was particularly interested in our approach to positive mental health and how we cater for the needs of the whole child, effectively balancing pastoral with academic. She was also fascinated by our creative approach and very pleased to find out about our class assemblies and how we promote reading in school. The School Council were able to interview her to ascertain her views on issues that affect us all. I have listed their questions below...the School Council's questions really made her think and wouldn't have been out of place on Question Time! Thank you Miss Hine for preparing the children in advance in your role as School Council Lead...

School Council Interview With Margaret Greenwood, MP 22.11.19.

Violet – How did you become a Member of Parliament?

MG - I was campaigning for more money to fund the NHS because I think they do a really good job and need more money. I became so passionate about it that I decided to apply to become a member of the Labour Party. I won the vote and I was selected and, at the moment, I am campaigning for the General Election.

Benji – How often do you visit Parliament?

MG - I visit Parliament every week except in the summer, at Christmas and at Easter. I travel down on a Sunday evening and I am in Parliament from the Monday through to the Thursday. I meet people in Wirral on the Fridays and Saturdays and talk to them lots about the area they live and their concerns.

Lottie - Why did you want to become an MP?

MG - I wanted to help and protect the NHS.

Will – How would your party raise money for our school?

MG – We raise money through taxes on working people. Those taxes pay for the Police, schools, the NHS for example.

Aimee – What can we do in our school to help to stop global warming?

MG - What an important question, you can do lots! We need to remember to switch lights off in rooms that we are not using. We need to walk to school and work when we can, rather than driving. We can also spread the word and help other people to realise that little changes can make a big difference.

Amelia – Is Jeremy Corbyn nice to work for?

MG - He's a really nice man, very kind. He's quietly humorous and always remembers to say thank you.

Kai – How do you think we can help with climate change?

MG – We can try not to drive as much where possible. We can protect the trees that we do have – they help our environment so much and we can also plant new trees. We can cut down on single use plastics as they are clogging up our oceans. We need to protect our wildlife and their habitats and our beaches need to stay clean!

Stephanie – How important is an MP's job?

MG - An MP's job is a very big honour. You have to listen to your constituents and, as laws are being decided in government it is our job to feed the constituents' ideas through to the government. You pass the ideas of the people you represent which is a very important job I think.

Isla – How would you reduce the use of single use plastic throughout all schools in the country?

MG – Well we can issue a law on it but we would need to find alternatives for people to use. We would encourage the 'Reuse, Reduce, Recycle' message. Perhaps we could set up competitions and challenges for pupils.

Daniel – How serious is global warming getting?

MG - It's really serious, we all have to help. We can all make a difference. When we all try we will see a really big change.

Jess – How can you ensure that our school has enough money to provide every pupil with a really good education?

MG - We could put more money into schools. We could train more teachers. We could get rid of SATs because they are used to measure schools and we are more interested in the pupils. We would put more money in for music, dance, drama and art subjects too. An education is so important, it's your foundation for life, especially when you are younger.

Ben – What can be done to ensure we have enough doctors, nurses and policemen to keep us healthy and safe?

MG - We would reintroduce the trainee nurse bursary – that's when we pay nurses to train on the job. We would train 5000 doctors a year, which is an increase of 1500 and we would have a recruitment drive with the Police to get more Police employed.

As you can read, our School Council asked very mature questions and ensured they covered all aspects of a child living in Thingwall and growing up in modern day Britain. Well done children we are really proud of the way you conducted yourselves.

Thingwall Elections:

Whilst the rest of the country got involved in the debates of the General Election, we decided to make full use of the polling Station voting booths and hold our own mini general elections! Each class held a mini debate and a resulting vote to decide on a classroom choice. It was a really worthwhile day and a great learning curve for our children, building on the sessions we held last year when we were allowed to borrow the Parliamentary Box for our KS2 pupils.

The children learned that...

- It is right and fair for everyone to have an opportunity to vote
- We know that we must use our vote and take it seriously
- We know that we should always cast our vote, even if we think our vote won't win
- We have to go with the majority vote, no matter what our feelings are

...great lessons for the future I am sure you'll agree!

Christmas Performance Congratulations: Well done to all staff and pupils for the most brilliant KS1 and KS2 Christmas Performances. Although I was unable to attend the infant performances due to my poorly foot (I hadn't quite mastered crutches at that point!) I am reliably informed that they were the best yet and all pupils did really well. Margaret Greenwood and Mike Collins both attended the junior performances at the church and they were bowled over by how clear and confident our pupils are. The music was simply amazing as were the choir and brass/recorder sections too. Thank you to all the staff for preparing the children so beautifully for these performances – an awful lot of hard work goes into these productions and, I am sure you'll agree, each and every individual did themselves proud. Thank you to St Michael's Church in Pensby for welcoming us back again... we look forward to the same again next year.

Smarties Challenge:

We have finally counted the money collected from the Smarties Challenge and your generosity has overwhelmed us. We raised a grand total of £482.52 which we will put towards some new outdoor benches for our new outdoor reading hubs. Many thanks to POTS for providing the Smartie tubes in the first place.

The Warren's GP Surgery:

Well done to Years Three and Five who went carol singing at the Warren's GP Surgery earlier on today. Mrs Mitchell tells me that the children sang beautifully and were great ambassadors for our school. It's a really special link that we have and we look forward to going each year. Many thanks to Dr Johnston for organising the morning and for presenting every child with a chocolate reindeer.

Thanks to POTS:

Many thanks to POTS for another term packed with wonderful things for our children to enjoy. We really do appreciate the time and the effort that goes into every event and we are very lucky to have you working with us to raise vital funds for our school community. You have been extremely generous this term and we are thrilled with our new outdoor reading sheds. Fingers crossed the bid that Harvey's Mum has helped us write for the Foyle Foundation will pay off and we will soon be able to fill them with some lovely new books. We can't wait for our subject orders to arrive too – we just couldn't have afforded those little extras such as local maps, French dictionaries, World Religion artefacts to name just a few, without your generosity so thank you – Merry Christmas and we look forward to working with you on more fundraising opportunities again in 2020.

Please see below a list of funds POTS has generated and committed/allocated this term:

Income

School disco - £430
Bags2school - £114
Christmas cards - £429
Christmas Fair - £1105.45

Committed

2 reading sheds - £765.70
Resources across all areas of the curriculum - £1900

Urenco Bid:

Many thanks to Mrs Webster (Thomas Year Three) and Emma Ferguson (CAPE) for enabling us to place a successful bid with Urenco. Urenco have agreed to match fund us up to £250 and we plan to hold a sponsored event next half term. This will enable us to buy vital science equipment to provide children with real life experiences and build their science capital, perhaps whetting their appetites for future careers in the STEM industry.

Annual Questionnaire to Parents:

The annual questionnaire will be live on our VLE in January. We will be using Survey Monkey once again as we feel it's a really effective way to quantify your responses but also to collect comments about the things you like at Thingwall and the improvements you feel we could make. As always, our questions are the same as the questions Ofsted will ask you – we are expecting a visit this academic year or early next academic year. We will send home usernames and passwords once the survey goes live. Your feedback is very important to us and this year, for the first time, we will award the class that gets the most responses with a non-uniform day!

Spring Term Diary Dates:

TERM 2A

January – On-line questionnaire to parents

06.01.20 – Back in school for staff and pupils (please note this date was originally an ISET day but we had to change it)

07.01.20 – 6pm Full Governors

22.01.20 – Local Authority Fire Audit and Health & Safety Audit

22.01.20 – Wirral's Minority Ethnic Advisory Service to visit KS2 – School of Sanctuary Refugee Awareness sessions

23.01.20 - Wirral's Minority Ethnic Advisory Service to visit KS1 - School of Sanctuary Refugee Awareness sessions

25.01.20 – Chinese New Year of the Rat

w/c 27.01.20 and 03.02.20 – Swimming fortnight for Year Four

03.02.20 – Children's Mental Health Week

06.02.20 – Pop Project – whole school music show "The Happiness Show: Walking On Sunshine" (This is funded by POTS so is free of charge to all children – Thank you POTS)

10.02.20 – Thingwall's Happy and Healthy Hearts Week – Physical Activity and Emotional Health and Well-Being activities...

	AM	PM
Monday 10.02.20	Premier Sports Sponsored Rockathon (as requested by the School Council). Match funded by Urenco. Come dressed as a rockstar and be prepared to rock on!	Bobby Singh to visit Year Four for an afternoon of Sikhism
Tuesday 11.02.20	Safer Internet Day	
Wednesday 12.02.20	Freddy Fit – Phil Breiderbach returns for a day of aerobics – parents are welcome to attend and join in if they wish – timetable to follow after Christmas	
Thursday 13.02.20	KS1 tennis sessions with Sue from Heswall Tennis Club	
	Kayte Walsh from My Concern to work with classes all day on self-esteem based activities	
Friday 14.02.20	World Thinking Day – Equity, Diversion and Inclusion 'Love is Love' All guides, brownies, rainbows, scouts, cubs and beavers are welcome to attend today wearing their club uniform if they wish.	

17.02.20 – 21.02.20 – February half term

TERM 2B

24.02.20 – Back to school for staff and pupils

02.03.20 and 03.03.20 – Year Five Residential

04.03.20 – World Maths Day

05.03.20 – World Book Day

- Year Six Federation Spelling Bee

- Year Three Visit to Philharmonic and Maritime Museum

w/c 09.03.20 – British Science Week

10.03.20 – 6pm Full Governors

12.03.20 – Year Five and Six Federation Quiz

24.03.20 and 25.03.20 – 4pm to 7pm Parent's Evening

HUGGs (or Huge, Unbelievably Great Goals)!

Emily (Year Four) – Congratulations to Emily who appeared in Elf at Liverpool's M&S Bank Arena on the 7th and 8th December, alongside actors and actresses of the TV! Impressive achievement Emily the Elf! 😊

Liam (Year Five) – Congratulations to Liam who was awarded his blue belt in karate last week – what an achievement, well done! 😊

Amber (Year Five) – Well done to Amber who won Gold at the Wirral Judo Christmas Championships on the 7th December – Congratulations! 😊

Grace (Year Five) – Congratulations to Grace who competed in her annual swimming club gala at Woodchurch Swimming Baths, winning an impressive two medals – a silver in the 25m butterfly and a gold in the 100m individual medley. Both races were in the 11 and under category and Grace was the youngest swimmer. Well done Grace! 😊

Jack (Year 5) Judo Pupil of the Year Congratulations! 😊

With Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas, a relaxing break and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

See you on 6 January 2020!

Mrs Evans