

Dear Parents

Please find below the following information, which may be of use to you...

Tenners into Treasure Enterprise Initiative:

Many thanks to all of our year groups who took part in the Year Three/Four Money Bunny Enterprise Challenge last term. The event was a huge success and we raised nearly £350 to help the following charities...

Spider-Ede Appeal - Edie is suffering with a DIPG brain tumour and her family are currently raising money for her treatment in a hospital in Mexico.

Lucy Pineapple Fund - As you will be aware from previous fundraising, Lucy is also suffering with a DIPG brain tumour and her family are also currently raising money for her treatment in a hospital in Mexico.

Birkenhead North Development Trust - We purchased 40 Easter Eggs for children of vulnerable families, building on our successful Christmas campaign when we were able to purchase 25 Christmas bags for children in the Birkenhead area.

Well done to Years Three and Four and a massive thank you to Mrs Mitchell, Mrs Holroyd and Mrs Smith for masterminding the whole process.

The class who collected the most money was Year Five and the class who filled their Money Bunny the fastest were Year Three. Both classes enjoyed a non-uniform day as their prize. Thank you to everyone who contributed for your generosity.

Easter Festival:

Thank you to all who attended last term's Easter Festival and those of you who encouraged your children to take part in the Easter Bonnet and Egg Decorating competitions. We had a lovely morning and were thrilled that Mrs Barnish from the POTS team was able to arrange for the Mayor, Ann McLachlan and her consort, Bill McLachlan to join in with all the fun. They had a marvellous time and were extremely impressed by our children's behaviour, musical talents and the school band. Well done to all our readers, technicians, action children, musicians, singers and Mrs Mitchell for organising the School Band so brilliantly.

Ann and Bill were delighted to help to judge the bonnets and decorated eggs. It was a close competition and we were all overwhelmed by the amount of high quality entries. All children who entered received a Crème Egg for their efforts and the following children were selected as winners... Poppy (FS2), Mila (FS2), Harriet (FS2), Tyler (Year One), Lily (Year Two), Isla (Year Three), Rohan (Year Three) and Heidi (Year Five).

All winners received a beautifully wrapped Easter hamper full of goodies.

Blue for Autism Awareness Day:

The final Monday of last term saw us support another successful Blue for Autism Awareness day. Thank you for all who took part by wearing blue! Although we hadn't planned it to be a fundraising day we actually ended up raising £70.92 so thank you for supporting Autism Together.

Parents' Evening:

Many thanks to those of you who were able to attend last term's Parents' Evening. If, for whatever reason, you were unable to make an appointment please contact your child's class teacher and we will arrange a telephone appointment with you. Thank you to the POTS team who ensured teas, coffees and biscuits were available throughout - this was very popular with parents and feedback has been most appreciative and very positive.

Spelling Bee:

The last week of term saw Lesedi and Sithara (our reigning champion) compete in the Deeside Champion of Champions Year Six Spelling Bee. It was a closely fought contest where both children represented us brilliantly and managed to remain super calm under the pressure. Gayton Primary eventually clinched first and second place after a nail biting final. Well done Gayton and well done to Sithara and Lesedi for doing so well on behalf of Thingwall. Thank you to Mr Bettridge for organising and hosting the event - all involved thoroughly enjoyed it!

Maths Bee:

We have had another exciting Soft Federation tournament at our school. Mr Bettridge hosted the Year Six Deeside Champion of Champions Maths Bee and this time we were ably represented by Rajeev and Jason. It was another close competition and all schools tried their hardest. However, there could only be one winner and this year the trophy and prize went to Irby.

Well done children! Thank you to Mr Bettridge for organising the event, Rajeev and Jason for taking part and to our wonderful KS2 audience who tried to take part by answering questions on their whiteboards.

Text Messages to Parents:

We appear to have had a few issues with parents receiving text messages. Please bear with us as this is not our fault. It seems the Teachers2Parents company would now like you to download their app to enable you to read the messages. We are hoping that this will solve the issue but please let us know if you are still struggling to receive communication.

New Phone Systems:

We are delighted to announce that we have had our telephone systems overhauled at long last! From Monday, when you telephone the school, you will notice several voicemail options to direct you to the right person. The system is also going to be linked to our lock down system as all UK schools are now required to have a lockdown procedure in the event of a problem. Please be assured that, although we will need to practise termly lockdown alarms with the children, we will do this in a low key manner to avoid panic. We will have two tones for lockdown - one for partial lockdown and one for full lockdown. The partial lockdown will be via a pager system into the classrooms - this will be a member of staff speaking. This will be used if we need to get the children inside and contained safely within the school. The full lockdown is an alarm tone that will sound around school. This will be used if we need to get the children inside and contained safely within the classrooms.

Parent Questionnaire Feedback:

Many thanks to all of you who responded to our questionnaire. We reported the percentages last week and would now like to share the comments made with you. As always, we try not to identify staff or pupils with these comments so reserve the right to slightly tailor what you have typed to keep individuals anonymous.

Celebrations:

Thank you for your fabulous comments, we have really enjoyed reading these.

A happy and positive school with a clear sense of togetherness.	The text messages are a great help, giving prompts and reminders of what is coming up.
A fantastic start to his education. We couldn't have asked for any more. The staff are caring and always ready to listen and help. We couldn't be more happy.	The school has a warm community feel at the same time as being well-structured and organised, which gives a fantastic balance. Staff are friendly and approachable, always happy to speak to parents.
The individual targets with points to work on at home are very helpful.	Issues are taken seriously and are dealt with very effectively. Staff are friendly and professional.
More than happy with all aspects of the school. The school is very open and gives detailed and regular information about what the children will be doing each term. My children are happy, included and valued and this shows in their confidence to do their homework and their home reading.	The school has a fantastic community and an ability to make everyone feel part of it. My children find staff approachable too.
Couldn't thank teachers enough for all their help and support!	Amazing! I am thrilled with the school and so is my son. The teachers are passionate and caring and it shows in the respect the children have for them.
Fantastic at helping with my child's dietary needs.	Approachable, friendly and warm staff.
Children are happy and well cared for. All concerns dealt with promptly. Lessons seem interesting and my child always seems happy.	Great communication from the school and making our daughter feel secure in her learning environment (especially in the transfer into school).
More variety with jacket potato fillings.	Safeguarding seems to be a high priority.
I enjoy reading the tapestry posts. The Stay and Play sessions are a nice opportunity to come into school and share some time with my child in the classroom.	The text messages are helpful and good reminders. Having the calendar online is also handy.
The selection of clubs.	We loved the Christmas play.
Head Teacher on playground in the mornings. Friendly and approachable. The office staff are also friendly and helpful.	Any queries are always answered.
POTS are friendly and approachable.	You are all doing a marvellous job, thank you.
Concerns are dealt with promptly and issue are resolved.	My son enjoys the school dinners. I like the variety of menu and that he is having a hot dinner at lunchtime.
The FS2 team are very welcoming and accommodating.	Teaching is put in a great way for the children to listen and pay attention to. The teachers do listen to the children and parents.
The school has a holistic approach with each child, allowing them to become good all-rounders.	Well organised events.
Staff easy to approach and show a genuine interest in each child at school.	POTS team are a wonderful support to the school. They always have an upcoming event which gives the children something to look forward to outside of school.
My child's time at school has been exceptional. He has thrived in	Friendly, hardworking staff. Parents made to feel welcome.

all areas, built excellent relationships with all the teachers and enjoys learning. As a parent I am reassured by the approachability of the staff and the open door policy. The school's attitude to ensuring children are happy above anything else is one I support. Regardless of their strengths and weaknesses the school is able to support each child.	Problems are dealt with quickly. Children are happy and encouraged to do their best. Plenty of before/after school activities.
Staff are on the ball and very welcoming at all times.	Tapestry and the school website. Supportive staff. Good communication between the teachers/TAs and parents.
A good variety of school dinners.	My son loves school dinners.
School is great at encouraging my son in growing, developing and learning.	Broad range of activities on offer, communication is excellent, good school values, loves the sticker chart!
Thingwall is a lovely school, all the staff seem lovely, helpful and genuinely seems to care.	Thingwall isn't all just about the school work but also what's morally right and wrong.
Head Teacher's awards, stickers etc are really good for children's confidence and they make a huge difference.	The school is well organised and I am happy with the way that it is run.
Since my child has started school I have only seen the school improve which is lovely to see.	To see my child skipping happily into school every day is what matters. Children are taught a wide variety of subjects and topics. Fantastic teachers. Just the right amount of homework. Plenty of clubs/activities. Thingwall Primary is a fantastic start to any child's education. The school menu has greatly improved so there is always something my child will eat.
My child's teacher has been very open and approachable. Friendly and helpful office staff. The school has a positive atmosphere and it feels like the children are cared for and are safe.	Thingwall is a safe, secure, nurturing and stimulating environment. He has never responded negatively about a day in school.
My son is making good progress at school due to the high standard of teaching and the high expectations of all staff.	The school provides a rounded education with events such as Enterprise Week, collections for nominated charities, expert speakers, themed weeks, trips/visits all opening their eyes of the world around them. We love the community that the school breathes.
Parents' Evenings are great to get a one to one report. Also you can chat to the teacher any time that you need to.	Lots of improvements - school website with the individual class pages, Facebook/Twitter/Whats App communications from the PA are good.
Children who need extra help are helped to catch up - staff go beyond.	The recent improvements give the school a very pleasing Ofsted report - suggests that always being reflective on practice and expecting the best at all levels pays dividends - Keep up the good work!
Overall Thingwall has a great ethos.	My children are both really happy at school and that is my main priority. They are both developing really well and enjoying learning
Thorough annual reports. Target letters at the beginning of terms are helpful.	My children are really happy and getting a wonderful education. IDL has helped my son in an area where he needed assistance. The class assemblies are fantastic. The feeling of the school is so beautiful, so welcoming and all the staff seem to have a lovely relationship with my children
Class assemblies are always great. Communication is great via text message. Teachers and staff are very friendly and approachable.	My son loves school! He is well supported and nurtured and we are happy! With all aspects of his education. Staff are always helpful and welcoming.
School is very approachable and welcoming. Thank you teachers for making the school so enjoyable. Excellent communication with targets which are very useful when completing homework. Text messages Very useful.	
Strong community links e.g. singing at The Warrens at Christmas and Harvest Festival donations going to local charities.	Everyone is working to the same end goal which is that our children are taught well so they progress and reach their full potential but also that they become confident, caring individuals
Meeting the needs of individual children is a real strength of Thingwall Primary.	The school is well led and most staff are approachable and cheerful. It is well organised and children are given a good sense of discipline. Lots of great activities pre and post school.
Good sense of belonging. Love the fact that children all know each other's names, even in different year groups.	Always kept up to date with my child's progress throughout the year. Always updated regarding school matters. Overall the school is run very efficiently and professionally.
Useful text messages.	A strong and committed set of Governors who support the school and act as a critical friend.
Great links with charities and the community.	Great open door policy and always available to answer queries which is greatly appreciated. Good opportunity to learn about other cultures and communities.
Well led and managed, approachable supportive and welcoming at all times. Thoughtful and understanding. Excellent at listening and responding, efficient and calming.	Lovely atmosphere within the school, created by the staff. Very good teaching. Everyone always friendly and welcoming. Very quick and efficient to help with anything at all. A caring, lovely environment for my children to come to every day.
I am happy with the school and would like to congratulate the staff for all their hard work.	The school has been very supportive since we arrived. The school has made us feel very welcome and warm. We are happy that our children are in safe hands.
The school is well led and managed, communication with parents is excellent.	School responds appropriately to challenging times.
The children get good encouragement in healthy living. The school works well to develop my child as a rounded individual, both in their education and in other values. For example the children have a real enthusiasm for recycling and fair trade.	As a parent there is a loss of control when the child is not having a packed lunch and a worry that they might not select a healthy balanced meal for themselves. So the ability to pick the meal for them is good.
We feel like our children are happy in school, developing well in their academic skills and also growing in their general life skills and their values as individuals.	The PA are a fantastic bunch!
They have both really enjoyed their time at school, always happy coming into school, well looked after, cared for and it has a lovely family atmosphere. What more could you want for your child? In my eyes Thingwall school is special and I am glad that my children	The Christmas Productions are marvellous, it's lovely to see the children shine and to use the local church.

have attended here.	
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Ways Forward:

Comment	Feedback
School lunches -More cheese on the pizza and chicken nuggets for lunch. -More pizza and sausages, more variance. - Quality and quantity of school dinners is inconsistent. -More variety of school dinners. -Termly changes to the menu and healthier pudding options. -A raffle where the children can receive a free meal a month as a prize. Tasters of new things might encourage hot dinner numbers. - More emphasis on fruit and vegetables in the lunches. For children to get what they order. Less high fat and high sugar foods. A chance to sample some of the dinners if the menus change.	School purchase a service level agreement with Edsential for our catering and Sheila and Mandy in the kitchen work very hard to ensure our children receive a balanced, high quality and varied diet. Because our school lunches need to be nutritionally balanced by the Food Trust (a government run agency) we do have to stick to certain meals/guidelines and we are not allowed to have too much of certain fatty foods such as pizza, nuggets and sausages and our meals have to be of a certain size. We operate the menus on a four week cycle but, for instance, Wednesday is always a roast dinner day and Fridays are always the very popular fish and chips. We survey the children at the end of every school year and ask them to vote for their favourite menus. Perhaps this year we can discuss the importance of a variety of foods, rather than similar menus each week. The idea of tasters is very appealing and something we can explore with the kitchen staff. Also the idea of a raffle every month to encourage uptake is also a good idea which we will raise with Edsential. We do have a pudding on offer every day as well as fruit salad and low fat yoghurts. If parents do not want their child to have the pudding option (usually a biscuit or a slice of cake), then we are happy to provide just the fruit or the yoghurt. I think the problem might be the on-line menu choice system does not allow parents to select the pudding choices separately as they are written with the hot/cold or deli choice of main meal. We will look at this to see if we can split the main meal and the pudding for the on-line option and, if we can, this will hopefully help parents when picking their children's meal choices. Occasionally, there have been a tiny number of incidents this year where children have not had their correct choice of meal. This sometimes happens if parents forget to choose their child's meal on-line. This is obviously not acceptable and is something we are working on with parents. <u>Please choose your child's meal on-line.</u> Unfortunately, if you do not choose a meal, your child will be allocated a basic lunch of a sandwich, a piece of fruit and a glass of water.
Events - The cost of events is too high and too frequent. With more than one child in school these costs really mount up. - The activities are expensive. - A little more notice for events. - Too much emphasis on cakes and sweets in the extra-curricular activities and events.	The cost of events is something we have been looking at, especially over Christmas when we had a lot of events. Next year the PA are thinking about offering a family ticket or one general Christmas ticket which will give entry to all events. POTS have also tried to keep prices down in last term's Easter Fair - some stalls only costs 20p for example. We try to give as much notice as we can for events (newsletters, letters, texts, website etc) but sometimes dates change for circumstances out of our control or perhaps exciting opportunities crop up that we wouldn't want to miss out on. We are currently looking at different snacks for events as we recognise it is nice to get a balance.
Homework - Too much homework and the expectations are too high for the younger children. - More homework to help my child to consolidate the work he has done in school and help him progress to the next target and achieve his targets. - It is hard to keep up to date with the homework and the on-line learning. - Challenge more able appropriately. Homework needs to be tailored to children's level and ability. More opportunities for more able children.	The even split of these four comments show just how hard it is to get a balance with homework that satisfies everybody. We have done quite a bit of work on this over the Spring Term. We have streamlined the homework provision so that the expectations and the amount of homework increase year on year and we have ensured that the homework is, in the main, closely related to the personal targets of each child and also to the National Curriculum. If you are finding the homework is too much or too little please have a word with your child's class teacher and they will be happy to help/advise.
I would like my child to be encouraged to drink his water at school.	Children are actively encouraged to drink their water through the day and we are happy to encourage/monitor certain children for medical reasons if parents would like us to.
Some guidance on which before/after school clubs to choose - it's hard to decide which club would be most suitable for my child's current development.	If you are unsure about which clubs to choose for your child please have a word with your child's class teacher and they will be happy to help/advise.
Some development of the continuous provision resources outside.	This has been something we have been working on since our May 2016 Ofsted when it was identified as an action point. To date, we have redesigned the front grassy section of school with the installation of the Viking pod, the Insect Hotel, the Growing Area and the Memorial Reading Garden. The PA also kindly fundraised enabling us to install the Trim Trail and tarmac existing muddy areas. Mrs Leyland installed the FS2 mud kitchen area last summer and we have recently ordered some exciting panelling and storage to benefit our lower years - watch this space! We have begun to purchase new benching for the KS2 playground and hope that the PA will help us purchase further outdoor furniture next year. We

	have also installed the Viking Quad in the centre of school (thanks to our revenue made from the collection of Tassimo pods and a local business donation) and we are currently saving to install an additional door in the KS2 library to enable easy access in and out of this area.
Would prefer to be informed about incidents/problems.	We would always endeavour to inform parents about important incidents during the school day. Obviously it would seem that we have fallen short on this occasion and will make sure this doesn't happen again. Please be aware though that during the school day, many minor incidents happen and we would not, as a rule, inform parents about every single incident.
Paying for school trips etc via School Money would be better than sending money into school.	This is a great idea and is something we are currently trialling. Parents tell us it is easier to pay on-line with their debit/credit card, it means children are less likely to lose money and it means that we spend less office hours counting money. We hope to launch this in the summer term.
Can more of the children's school work come home?	We tend to send work books home at the end of every academic year. However, we do like to keep three sets of books per class so we have evidence to show inspectors and school associates. We will only keep these books for the following academic year and will return them to you after this time.
The TAs and the Trainee teachers drive the lessons more than they should. Children need to be taught by their actual teacher.	In the main, teachers do teach their classes. However, occasionally we have teaching practice students who may need to teach certain classes as part of their degree. We take pride in supporting the next generation of teachers but please be assured the quality of the teaching is not affected at all.
A better synergy with CAPE.	This is an interesting point and one we will explore with Emma Ferguson, the CAPE owner/manager.
A new way of the older years doing their Christmas production.	We may consider this in the future.
A larger standing area outside the Year Three/Four classroom. The path area is very narrow and in winter the grass is muddy.	We will certainly add this to our School Development Plan for the future when funds allow.
Can you include a hyperlink on the text to link you to the newsletter?	We can explore if this is an option on the Teachers2Parents system.
A system to try and support the children who are going through a difficult time would be fantastic.	We tend to personalise our approach for individuals on an as and when required basis. We have access to CAHMs programmes of work and we will always follow the advice of specialists such as Educational Psychologists, Speech Therapists, School Nurses, Paediatricians, Family Support Workers etc. We also provide Time to Talk and Socially Speaking for children who may find certain social situations tricky for a variety of reasons. If children are experiencing friendship issues their class teachers will work through the problem with them to help find a solution. We are also trained with Next Steps cards, a Local Authority initiative which can be used with children who are going through difficult times. Often a child will select a trusted adult who they can go to in times of trouble.
A more interesting selection of free reading books (KS2).	We are delighted that POTS have agreed to help us purchase some more upper KS2 reading books to keep our books fresh and up to date. Many thanks POTS! ☺
More school sports teams.	This is an area that we have worked very hard on but admittedly the football and netball teams tend to be taken mainly from the older classes. We will try to arrange some more matches, perhaps for the younger children and we are looking forward to our annual Swimming Gala, our Netball Braddock Cup and our Football Dodd Cup later on in the summer term.
A wider choice of non-sport related clubs (But thank you for putting on more varied sports clubs this year too!)	This is something we have recognised and have begun to work on this year. So far we have had clubs for drama, chess, guitar, recorders, Philosophy for Children, magic club, gardening and reading club all with varying degrees of uptake. We will continue to try to provide a variety of clubs.

Message from Mrs Varey, Chair of POTS:

In the spring term we raised an impressive £1,383.38 with the UV disco, Mother's Day shop and Easter event. We are using this money to buy new sports storage equipment.

POTS Dates for Summer Term -

Summer Disco - Thursday 26th April

Spider-Ede cake sale on Friday 25th May.

Father's Day Shop - Friday 15th June

Summer Fair - Saturday 23rd June

Quiz and Wine Tasting - Friday 13th July

Look out for a POTS newsletter soon / follow POTS on FB and Twitter! Thank you for all your support!

Census Day:

The next school census day is on Thursday 17th May. Our school greatly depends on the number of pupils who choose a meal on this day as the budget is based on the amount of meals that are eaten. We have decided to have a themed census day this year in celebration of the 19th May Royal Wedding. We will all be eating a picnic outside (weather permitting) in an effort to hold a Royal Garden Party.

All children will be given a meal for free (unless you tell us otherwise) and each child will be entered into a free prize draw to win a £20 voucher! Please see the separate letter nearer the time from Mrs Hamel.

Celebration Corner

This section is for any out of school achievements your child may want to celebrate...

Aaron (Year Three)- Well done Aaron for gaining your Grade Two Drumming with Merit! A whopping 80% - my goodness me! ☺

Emily (Year Two) - Well done Emily for passing your Stage Five in Swimming and your Baga Six in Gymnastics - you have been busy! ☺

Rohan (Year Three) - Well done Rohan for achieving an award for your excellent football skills and winning a medal for being on the winning team in your World Cup competition. ☺

Darcie (Year Three) - Well done Darcie for achieving your privacy award in trampolining! What a tricky sport, we are very impressed. ☺

Best wishes

Miss D L Cronin