

# Head Teacher's Newsletter



@MrGarley

Irthlingborough Junior School

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## **Happy New Year**

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and I hope the new year has filled you with renewed energy for 2019. It seems such a long time ago that we were sharing our Christmas celebrations with you as parents. Speaking for the teachers and the school community, it felt like a really positive end to the autumn term. The Year 3 production of the Christmas Code was beautifully performed in the church by the children. The year 5 and 6 carol concert was well supported by parents and not to miss out on the celebrations, Year 4's carol concert hit all the right notes...

I would like to thank you all for your support over the last term. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Father John from St Peter's church for allowing us to use the building for our Christmas events.

We finished the term with a whole school assembly where we completed our book advent calendar by opening the remaining doors (early!) and then giving out the books to children. This has been a really rewarding event for staff and children and I would like to pay tribute to Mrs Meekings for organising this event which included sourcing and wrapping all the books.

All of our children brought home a book at the end of the term. If you provided a book (I know some of you gave more than one book) for our 'Book Secret Santa' then I would like to take this opportunity to thank you. It was an ambitious venture to try and collect 450 books so we had enough for each child but this was successfully achieved.

Your child may have also come home on the last day with a gold or silver attendance wrist band. Mrs Meekings and I wanted to celebrate the achievements we have made in attendance and show the children that we are grateful for their efforts in meeting our school target of 96%.

## **School Development 2019**

Our resolutions for the new year haven't changed since September. We are still working on improving the teaching of reading. If you recall in the autumn term we made time for all teachers to watch reading lessons in year 6 in order to mirror good practice across the school. In January the focus moves to year 4. All teachers will watch teaching over the course of a week and then reflect on strengths and areas for development at a staff meeting. We will also continue to promote a love of reading for

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children and we will begin our 'Drop Everything and Read' events. Further information will follow!

In writing, we are developing teachers' skills in moderating children's work so we have a really consistent view of what age related expectations look like in each year group. Mrs Drew will continue her work moderating with the Local Authority which will enable her to visit other schools to look at writing and work with colleagues from around the county.

At our training day on Friday, we talked in our senior leadership team meeting about how to improve spellings. We began to formulate a similar programme to our reading development plans so please look out for information about how to improve spellings over the next couple of weeks.

We are still on a drive to improve attendance. On Wednesday morning Mrs Meekings, Mrs Johnson and I will be outside the school entrance with tea, coffee and an attendance pledge. We would like as many parents to sign up to our pledge to meet 96% attendance over the spring term. At the end of the autumn term, all children who met the 96% target were entered into a draw for family bowling tickets. This term we have two computer tablets to give away.

## **Sport and Fitness**

Mrs Warner and Mr Mair lead the development of the PE curriculum and as part of a drive to encourage fitness in school, we are starting our version of the daily mile. You may have heard about the initiative which was started in primary schools as a way to improve the fitness, concentration and well-being of children. All the staff had a go on our training day on Friday of working a mile around our playground. We plan to start it this week and then review the successes and areas for development at a staff meeting before the February half term.

For more information, click here: <https://thedailymile.co.uk/>

## **Staffing Changes**

At the end of the term Mrs Moore resigned her role as year five teacher and will not be returning this week. The class, 5MM, will be taught by Mrs Frost who has a long association with the school. She is currently teaching in year 5 and she is responsible for the delivery of maths and English of a group of children. Mrs Frost was delighted to increase her teaching role and we are delighted to have such a professional, experienced and dedicated teacher to add to our team.

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We have also been busy over the holiday securing a teacher to take over Mrs Frost's English and Maths group. We are committed to maintaining the provision of 5 teachers for year 5 until the May half term, and again, I am delighted to inform you that Mrs Molyneux will be joining us this week to get to know the children and staff in year 5 before beginning her groups next week.

## **Development of our Culture**

The school culture is crucial to making the education of our children a success. I was privileged to visit Higham Junior School for a day just before the Christmas break. I was really impressed with the culture that has been created there including organizational elements and some of their teaching practices.

Mrs Meekings and I are visiting on Thursday morning with a view to reviewing how some of their practices can be adapted and adopted for our school community.

## **Dates for the term**

Dates and curriculum information for the term will be sent out this week. Please do not forget our Twitter feeds and our Facebook page for up to date information.

I am looking forward to seeing the children tomorrow and welcoming you back to school.

Happy new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'NPG' followed by a stylized flourish.