

SCHOOL NEWS

Last School News for this term

Snow?!?

It's getting more and more wintery by the day and we have been putting our plans in place in the event of heavy snowfall.

When deciding whether to close the school due to the weather, our first consideration is the safety of the children and ensuring the school site is fully operational and safe for the children to attend. We then need to consider how many staff can get into school from their homes which are all in a very wide radius of Heald Green.

Our first action will be to put an urgent notice on the website. This appears as a black box over the home page. To access the website after reading the message, remember to refresh the home page.

Where possible we will text parents to inform you of school closure - however, this depends on our office staff being able to access the computer text system.

Please make the website your first point of reference when enquiring about the school being open or closed.

Christmas Fair

We would like to extend huge thanks to all those who organised and assisted with the running of the school fair. It couldn't have taken place without you! We would also like to thank all those who came and supported the event. It was extremely well attended and was lovely to bring the Etchells community together.

I'm pleased to inform you that the fair raised around £1500 for the school. This will be put straight back into spending directly for the children. We are hoping that the focus for this will partly help our reading book replacement project, as well as providing an amp/microphone system for the school hall.

Last week of term

We have seen two wonderful nativities from the Early Years children this week - thank-you for your wonderful feedback and appreciation of the hard work of the staff. We look forward to KS1 performances and carol concerts next week.

On Thursday, all those who have ordered, as well as those children who normally take a hot school dinner, will be having Christmas Dinner. This will be followed in the afternoon by a whole school Christmas sing-a-long - an opportunity for us all to come together after lots of separate performances and events.

Friday is Christmas party day for ALL classes. Children can come to school in non-uniform/party clothes and remain in them for the whole day.

Please note that school closes at the normal time of 3.15pm.



Name the dog

Many children have been asking about the name of the giant dog which gathered so much attention at the Christmas Fair. On opening the envelope, it was revealed that the dog's name was PIPPIN!

Raffle

We still have some unclaimed raffle tickets from the Christmas Fair in the school office. Please check your tickets against these numbers:

Green: 191 and 510

(serial no. AR587291)

White: 132

(serial no. AB193567)

Any unclaimed prizes will be put into the next raffle.

New lunch menu

New food standards have been issued by the government and we hope to have a new menu reflecting these by the end of January. The most up to date menus are always posted on the website so please check the School Lunch Page for information in the new year.

Handwriting

- ✓ Handwriting! We will be adopting a new cursive approach to handwriting in the New Year. We are finding that children all through school are not joining or sometimes not forming their letters correctly. The new cursive style enables children to join much more quickly and from an earlier age. We will send home more information about this in January, but ask you to encourage your child to write using the cursive style.

Changes in January

As ever, we're continually driving forward changes in order to secure improvement for our school. One of our main focuses from our Post-Ofsted action plan is the development of marking in pupils' workbooks. There is an expectation that pupils are given more opportunity to respond to marking, make improvements and corrections and reflect on what they have learnt. We recognise that when this is done well it has been found to be one of the most effective ways to boost the pupils' progress. However, it must also be acknowledged that this has a significant demand on teachers workload and the time spent marking - this can involve 90 books in one day. We are determined as a school to keep developing marking but other things need to be re-thought in order to allow time for this. Here are 2 changes which will help address this issue:

- ▶ Homework is to be set on a half termly basis and will not be marked unless in the form of an assessment test e.g. for spellings, tables and maths facts. Your child will be given a sheet outlining some compulsory learning tasks e.g. spellings for the age group and maths tasks. There will also be a choice of creative tasks linked to the topic that your child can choose from. There will be opportunity to share these in the class. Please note however, that in the instance of presentations etc, that these cannot all be shown at once and may be done over the course of a few weeks.
- ▶ The number of clubs provided by teachers will be significantly reduced from next term. Clubs will largely be put on by outside providers. We are always looking for new ideas for this so please email with any suggestions if you have them. A new club list will be issued in January with details of how to book (we will not be using the previous system).

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy holiday and a good rest for all the children - they really deserve it!!

Cathy Beddows

and the Etchells staff

