

Loving, learning and flourishing in community

Message from Mr Edwards-Grundy

What a strange end to term this has been! For your children there have been many of the usual markers; celebrations, parties and of course Margarita's famous Christmas dinner. However, there have also been significant things missing; trips to St Mary's Cogges, opportunities to welcome you into school and our whole school celebrations.

This week has seen further challenges, as we have managed our first positive Covid-19 cases, resulting in us having to close a bubble.

Reflecting on this term, I have kept returning to the key message of Christmas, that of hope and light. This Christmas may not be what any of us might have hoped or longed for, but that Christian message of Christmas remains unchanged and undimmed. There is light in our darkness and hope in the hard times.

At the end of this term, I want to thank you as parents for all that you have done to bring light to our school community. Your willingness to support our arrangements, to work with us even where this has added to your own challenges and your ready adaptation to new requirements has been a great source of hope and light and hope to us as a staff team. Thank you.

In closing there is only one last thank-you and that is to your children. They bring light to this school each and every day, their joy and hope is infectious and their hard work and dedication is a credit to them. Well done to them all.

I wish you all a Christmas season filled with light and hope. God bless you all.



News from around the school

As promised, we have uploaded to You Tube a '[highlights](#)' video containing some of our Christmas activities from around the school, including excerpts from our Christmas Nativities. We hope that you enjoy watching the video as much as the children did filming it.

This week across the school children have been enjoying whole class rewards, earned as a result of their hard work through the term. Your children have more than earned these rewards, they have worked so hard. There has been a lingering smell of hot chocolate through the 'Upper Phase' as this has been the drink of choice as part of their rewards.

Our cleaners have been working even harder than usual this week as glitter, tissue paper and sparkly bits and bobs adorn every classroom.

This morning breakfast was delivered to staff in their bubbles so that the whole staff team, including those currently isolating, could join together online in saying farewell to staff who are leaving us and also in speaking a blessing together. Our bubbles mean that staff now rarely see colleagues across the school, so this was a real Christmas treat.

And around the school today an elf has been spotted, delivering Christmas presents to staff on behalf of Santa...



From see you soon to goodbye

A short time ago, we shared with you that Mrs Doland, our Deputy Head, was going to spend the remainder of the academic year serving as interim Head at St Mary's infant school in Witney. We were very much looking forward to welcoming Mrs Doland back to The Blake in September 2021.

Just last week however, Mrs Doland was successful in obtaining a new Headship at another local school!

Mrs Doland will join the St Mary's team in January 2021 and will go from there straight to her new Headship.

We are delighted for Mrs Doland and want to congratulate her on her new role, in this case not just one headship coming up, but two!

We are sorry to see Mrs Doland go and send her with all our best wishes. We know that as she will still be working within the local area, we will continue to see her at partnership events.

The Friends of The Blake ...

A huge thank to everyone for their support in all The Friends fundraising activities this term.

The Friends have found new ways of doing things and really appreciate the school staff who have had to step in to support activities as they can't come into school.

This term an amazing £3,858 has been raised!!

Already The Friends have committed to buy new specialised reading books for dyslexic children and improve reading areas in parts of the school.

Next term The Friends will have another online 'Teams' meeting to discuss future fundraising activities.

If you would like to join in discussions, please email friends@blake.oxon.sch.uk and meeting details will be shared with you in the new year.

Farewell, but not goodbye

Today, was Mrs Laithwaite's last day of paid employment at The Blake School. After 33 years working at the school, Mrs Laithwaite has decided it is time to have more time! (*Author's note - talking to Mrs Laithwaite, I think her plans mean she won't actually have much more time!*)

Mrs Laithwaite will continue to be a frequent visitor to the school and we look forward to welcoming her back whenever her time allows.

As a staff we have benefitted enormously from Mrs Laithwaite's ready and warm smile, her listening ear and her vibrant faith. During lockdown, many of you will have enjoyed seeing Mrs Laithwaite presenting Collective Worship and this term we have continued to enjoy that in school. Many children will tell you that they keep a look out for Mrs Laithwaite's cat, who often makes a guest appearance in her filming!

We will miss Mrs Laithwaite enormously; it is impossible to overestimate the impact that she has had on the generations of children that have gone through the school.



As a whole school community we are hugely encouraged to know that Mrs Laithwaite will continue to be praying for us and supporting us in the months and years ahead.



We wish you a peaceful, happy and healthy Christmas.

Christingle

As a school community we would normally make Christingles together and enjoy reflecting on the meaning of the Christingle, but the restrictions this year have stopped us doing this.

This year, if you and your children would like to continue this tradition you can join St Mary's Cogges in their Facebook Christingle this coming Sunday.

[Sign up](#) to be able to collect, from the church, all the resources that you need or stop and pick up a pack from the Langdale bridges as you walk into town tomorrow.

The event will take place on Facebook at 3.30pm on Sunday.



Back to school 2021

School will be open for next term from Tuesday 5th January 2021.

If you are travelling over the holidays, please be sure to follow the travel advice that is in place and adhere to any quarantine arrangements that are required. Please do let us know if your child will be absent from school because of quarantining.

Children have brought home with them PE kits. Please use the holidays to check that trainers and shoes still fit and that your child still has a complete PE kit. PE will continue to take place outside in January so it is essential that your children have joggers and a warm top as part of their kit.

Please also take the opportunity to top up your child's pencil case contents, pencils and rubbers are often quickly used.

Covid-19

This week we have had a number of positive Covid-19 cases (9 to date), which are all currently confined to staff who have worked within the Reception bubble, or children from that bubble.

It has always been our policy to remain open and transparent with the school community and we have therefore shared with you cases as they have been reported to us.

Over the Christmas holidays however we will only inform you of any new cases where these affect you directly, that is, if your child has been in direct contact with them and are therefore required to isolate.

Please can we remind all our Reception parents that their children must continue to self-isolate i.e. they must not leave the house until 20th December 2020.

If your child does develop any Covid-19 symptoms over the school holidays it is essential that you get them tested. You must report any positive test results to us by email as soon as possible so that we can inform any individuals who would be required to isolate. Please email the office email address – office.3600@blake.oxon.sch.uk and someone will get back in touch with you.

We wish all those who are currently unwell a full and speedy recovery, and we look forward to seeing them all back in school in January.

La Jolie Ronde French club

French lessons went online over Easter and have remained so ever since. Classes are a maximum of 12 children and take place over Zoom in blocks of ten lessons.

Children from Year 2 are welcome to join the classes and can attend the first one for free.

Contact Beverley Greenway for more details on greenwayba@yahoo.co.uk or on 07578 448039.