



Highwoods Community Primary School 'Learning for Life'



Dear parents,

Welcome to the first newsletter of the year. It has been great to get the children back in school. This is the term where I feel that we see amazing progress in the learning of the children.

I would like to thank all the children, parents and staff for a great set of Christmas performances. They were truly fabulous and really well received (see photos below).

We now have some key dates available for parents. The parents evenings for the spring term are on the 19th, 20th and 21st March. Each appointment will be 15 minutes as this meeting is so important in ensuring the progress of the children is shared and ambitions for the rest of the year are set out clearly. We have scheduled appointments over three afternoons/evenings as this significantly reduces waiting time for our families. Further details and booking times will be sent out on school ping. Our non pupil dates for 2019-2020 have also been confirmed. They are the 3rd and 4th September 2019, 4th November 2019 and the 6th January 2020. This leaves one more non pupil date to be confirmed in due course.

With the weather scheduled to start to become quite cold and with possible snow, it is a good time remind parents of the procedures for school closures due to extreme weather. We always endeavour to keep the school open but should the school have to close due to snow, we will post a message on our school website and send out a message on school ping. If there is no message on the website, then the school is open. Ensuring the school grounds are safe to walk on can take our site manager up to 2 hours so we will ensure the front of the school and side walkways are clear and gritted first. If the back of the school has not been gritted, then we will ask parents who usually enter from the back classrooms (Foundation stage, 3,5 and 1) to come in through the school in both halls, saving the need to walk around the back of the school.

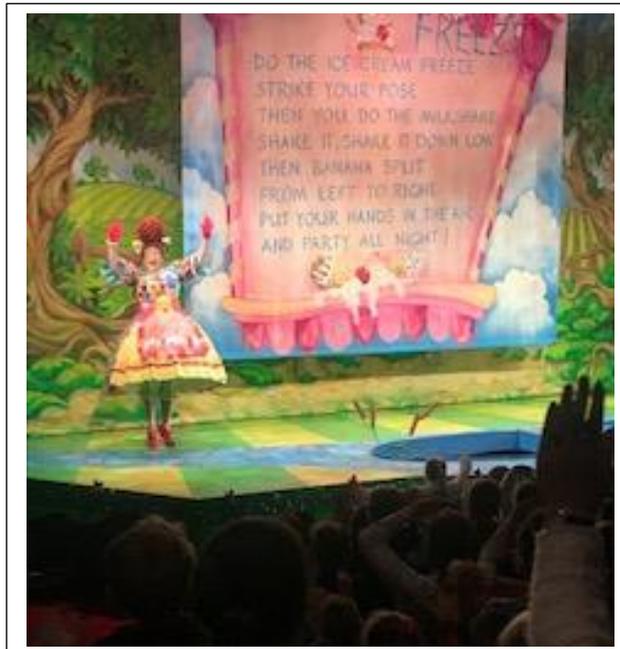
Finally, we have never seen a week of sickness like this week. We have had a lot of children off school with sickness and diarrhoea over the past 3-4 days. The most important thing is the children get better and rest up. All absences are authorised and fall under a special code for exceptional circumstances. If a child is poorly, they have to be off school for 48 hours since the last bout of sickness. This virus is particularly tough, and has left children quite exhausted and with a lack of appetite, so obviously children need to only return to school when they are fully recovered. Having taking professional advice, we are more than satisfied with the school response and measures put in place. The school has spent a considerable time deep cleaning furniture, toilets, door handles and equipment, plus added wipes and antibacterial gel into every classroom. Fingers crossed that it passes soon- indications are already that the children are returning to full health so hopefully we can get back to normal!

Yours sincerely

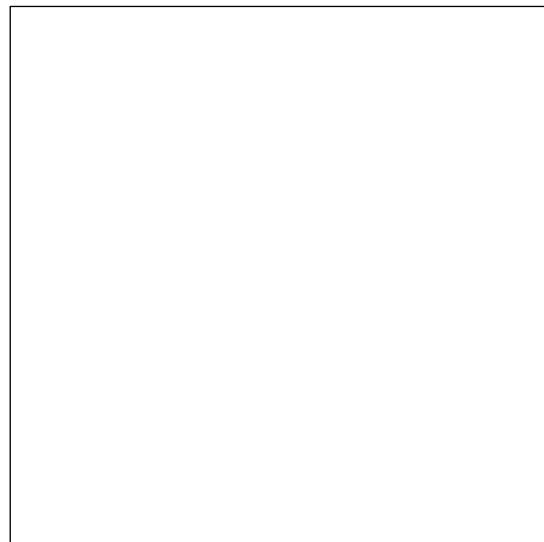
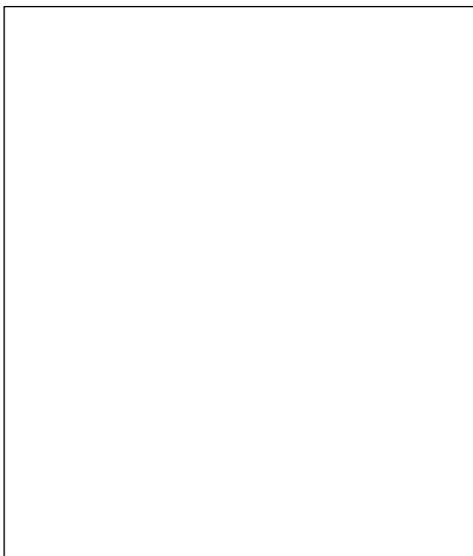
Mr Disley

He's behind you....

The children had an amazing time at the panto. Huge thank you to the wonderful PTA and all the parents who have supported events as the money raised paid for the coaches to take the children to the show. Covering the £1700 coach price reduces the cost to parents enormously!

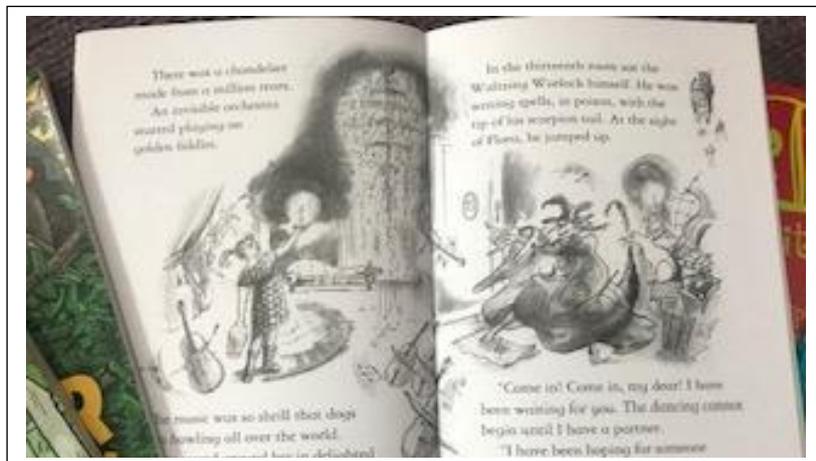


Christmas dinner lunch was a great success this year. Fabulous atmosphere and so much fun! Thanks to the catering team for their amazing work.



New books for infants and juniors

We are delighted to announce that children in infants (Foundation stage, Year 1 and 2) have lots of new books available to them. Anyone on stage books 10, 11 or 12 will see new reading books available. These books are more ambitious in vocabulary, more interesting and better quality. For children in juniors, anyone reading stage books 12-16 can now access 'free readers'. These are high quality reading books that vary in the amount of text and level of vocabulary. A free reader means that the child can choose any book that they want and does not have a stage/level. To help children in the transition from stage books to free readers, there are two book shelves in the junior library that are full of free readers which have a black label on the spine of the book. These are thinner than the majority of books on offer and are a great stepping stone to all the other books on offer because they are not as thick, meaning children can read them over a week or two. Sometimes it can be a little overwhelming to have a book that feels like it will take a month or so to read so we hope these will help. Thank you again for all the donations of books from families where children have outgrown or read hundreds of times. If they're good quality, send them our way.



Christmas performances

We were delighted with feedback on the Christmas performances this year. The Foundation Stage and infants were amazing and the new outdoor carol concert was really well received by parents. We appreciate there were a few issues with sound due to microphones breaking. Next year we are already planning to have speakers connected to microphones so everyone will be able to hear, no matter where you are in the playground. We are also going to have seating for families. Special thanks to Mr De Jose who took these amazing photographs.



Governor vacancy

We have had lots of interest about the Governor vacancies. The closing date to register interest is the 31st January 2019. Thank you if you have registered interest.

Cross country champions!

This Friday, our cross country team will receive their medals and trophies for finishing first at the local Colchester cross country championship.

We have a slight amendment to the results. Millie S in Year 4 finished 2nd (not third as previously mentioned). Well done Millie on such a wonderful performance.

Key dates:

Friday 8th February 2019 PTA magic show 3:30-4:30 4:45-5:45
February 18th -22nd 2019 Half term
26th February 2019 Year 2 Great Fire of London day/Visit
27th February 2019 Year 5 visiting London Planetarium
28th February 2019 Year 3 visiting Colchester castle
19th, 20th and 21st March 2019 Parents evenings
8th April -22nd April 2019 Easter break (back in school on the Tuesday 23rd)
29th April PTA Bake off sale (details to follow)
3rd June 2019 Class photos
26th-28th June 2019 Year 6 residential
5th July 2019 PTA summer fair
11th July 2019 Year 4 and 6 visiting Harry Potter/Warner Brothers studio
22nd July 2019 Year 6 end of year production 6:00
22nd July Year 4 Oscar film awards to parents
23rd July Year 6 leavers assembly 2:15