



# Ditton Junior School

## Newsletter December 10<sup>th</sup>

“Enriching generations to serve and flourish.”

**Christmas** is usually an exhausting but **magical time** in a Primary school and I think, if you're that age, it will still have all the excitement and anticipation even this year. Sadly, quite a few things like PTA events, singing together, nativities and shows, and things for parents to join in with are not going ahead but you will see below that the **PTA** are still trying to bring some fun back. We are also having to go full on Grinch and suggest that children don't send each other presents at school. Any gifts to staff (thankyou) will need to be dropped off on Monday so that we can isolate them for three days. However, you can do cards (but you don't have to) and these will be kept in the postboxes and then given out Friday afternoon in the last week. **No cards will be accepted after Tuesday lunchtime!** Sorry!

In addition, Miss Johnson and staff have been putting a few bits together so that we have a **film to show our prospective parents** in Infant schools. It's no blockbuster but we'll get it on the website soon. And we hope there's one more festive surprise to come!



**PTA Christmas Raffle** - This year the PTA will be running a Christmas raffle for each class as of **Monday 7th December**. Each class will have a grid of 60 squares at just 50p a square. Children can bring in and pay for as many squares as they wish to be in for a chance to win the Class Hamper. These will be available in class every day up until lunch time on **Wednesday 16th December**. The winner of each class will be chosen by an online generator and the lucky winners will then bring home their hamper. **Good Luck and thank you. The PTA Team**

Huge congratulations to our crossing patrol superstar, **Denise Bartholomew**.

She was recognised by KCC for her 25 years long service in this role although she tells me she has done it for longer! We should all raise our hats to her.

She won't raise her hat because it is too heavy now with the special badge they gave her. Thank you Denise for keeping the children safe.



**Christmas Jumper day tomorrow!** Donations are not required.

**Behind the scenes.**

Well, I have to say how proud I am of **the team**. Despite a few challenges, and some short-staffed days, they have kept going, kept putting the children first and they genuinely deserve **credit** for that. We have been hard at work as usual **planning and assessing** your children's work. Now we're working on a new **school plan** for the year. It tells everyone here what they should be doing, why and when, and the governing board can use it to check whether or not we are on track. It also details our responses to any challenges the school faces including actions in response to last year's OfStEd inspection, to Local Authority review and to surveys of staff, parents and pupils. Great leadership involves empowering, trusting and calling on others! Everyone on the team is stepping up on the plan and I'll summarise it next term, but I feel I've written too much in my first six weeks! Sorry about that. You can't see folks face to face so I've had to write to give you a strong sense of the work going on.

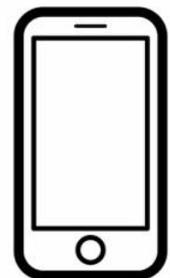
Just a very quick reminder on what happens on days of **heavy snow**. Our first worry is to see if we can get all our team in to cover the classes. For that reason you will more than likely find us operating a 10.00 opening and agreeing that parents can start picking up from 2 pm if they feel safer doing so.

If we have to close you will find this on our website or on **Kent school closures website**: [www.kentclosures.co.uk](http://www.kentclosures.co.uk) . In readiness, you can register for alerts on this website.



I'm very grateful to **Mrs Campbell** here for taking on the work to ensure that our **Reflection and prayer** room is uppermost in children's minds as we approach Christmas. Mrs Campbell has shared with all children how prayer can be a strength and support. She has also explained how to pray and stressed how powerful it could be if children here thought about prayers for others not just themselves. When the weather is better we will create a similar space outside.

Obviously we have explained to you already that we want to set a firmer position on **uniform**. I won't go over it all again here but don't forget that we are asking for **black school shoes** when you go to buy your children's next shoes. We also wrote last week to ask that any **mobile phones** brought into school are done so with parental permission and stored by us in the day. We've begun the new Behaviour **target trackers**, where we need to support a small number of children to aim higher and their parents, like all of you, are right there supporting us which is to their credit. We are also trialling Class Dojo in each year group with a view to rolling it out across school next term. To quote their strapline: **ClassDojo connects teachers with students and parents to build amazing classroom communities.**





Huge thanks to our **Y4 team, the children and parents**. I know some of you have had more than one bubble closure this year since schools returned but this was our first at Ditton Juniors. We are so grateful for your support and we really enjoyed seeing our Year 4 again. I know the team had to work hard while isolating; do let us know if there is anything we could improve. **Track and Trace** continues through the holidays and we have been advised as follows: if a child develops coronavirus symptoms on the Saturday or Sunday after the end of term and subsequently tests positive then please notify us by emailing [schooloffice@ditton-jun.kent.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@ditton-jun.kent.sch.uk). This will enable us to ParentMail the whole year group as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school. Should symptoms develop from **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December** onwards parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace. There is no need to contact the school.

As mentioned a couple of weeks ago, Ditton Juniors is a school that sits firmly in its community with a distinctive Christian ethos. We have four key values: **Respect, Empathy, Responsibility and Courage, and** a strapline that states we are here – “**Enriching generations to serve and flourish.**” For our team, you, and the children heading into our pre-christmas week, there isn't much we can give each other by way of company if we stay in lockdown, but we can remember this:

**So, whatever you wish that others would do to you do also to them ...!**

Matthew 7:8

***Or, as I tell my own kids, You get what you give in life!***



I'm sure you have heard recently of speculation regarding schools closing early for the **Christmas Holiday**. **Yesterday**, the DfE announced that schools can move a Staff Development Day and close a day early. I have been in contact with Mrs Lewer at the Infant school, and we have made the decision to continue to keep our schools open up to, and including, Friday 18th December. We have planned for the final days of term and we feel moving InSeT days just adds to challenges for parents who need childcare etc. **Our two staff development days on 4th and 5th of January will remain the same.**

For information, the NHS are building a Local Testing Site for Covid-19 in the Community Centre Car Park. The Car Park will still be open for parents dropping off/collecting children from the school but we ask that you take care, particularly whilst it is being built.

Flourishing Awards this week go to:

3JC – Indie J

3KS – Bliss R-S

4KM – Rhys L

4SM – Ethan W

5HN – Xander C

5LN – Lexi L

6AB – Oliver E

6MG – Martin S

**Richard Sutton-Smith, Interim Headteacher and the Office Team**