

Headteacher's Christmas Newsletter

Blessings at Christmas

Dear Parent/Carer/Balshavian

As we come to the end of this first term of the school year we have had concerts, Remembrance Day commemorations, an Inter-House Cross Country Challenge involving over 750 students, Public Speaking victories in both the Rotary Youth Speaks Competition and the English Speaking Union of the Commonwealth Speaking competition. Our girls' football team have enjoyed a number of victories in competition. Over 100 students have taken part in auditions for Matilda. The list goes on!

For many of us, Christmas is a time of mixed emotions. Beyond childhood (and for many, even then), most of us have mixed feelings at Christmas - there's often a sadness bubbling under the surface, and for some the unremitting joy and happiness that seems compulsory can feel overwhelming. Christmas joy is mixed with the pain of broken relationships and grief for those we mourn.

But the Biblical story of Christmas is not only one of joy and light, it's also a story of darkness and pain. There's a reason why primary school nativities add in donkeys and comedic innkeepers and skip over the massacre of the innocents! In that space where the "ho ho hos" fall silent, remember that in the darkness that we all know, we might look to the true light of the Christmas story. We are reminded of this light in our own school scripture: "Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path." (Psalm 119, vs 105)

There is a lot of important information in this newsletter including:

- Update from the UK Health Security Agency about Scarlet Fever and Strep A
- News about our Carol Services
- Feedback on the Parental Consultation on remote/face-to-face parents' evenings
- Winners of this term's House Cup Challenge
- Updates from the PTA
- The Ofsted countdown

Christmas Lessons & Carol Service



We are delighted to be hosting a special Lessons and Carols Christmas Concert on Thursday 15th December at 7pm.

This will be a wonderful evening for all the family about the meaning of Christmas.

We are asking for voluntary contributions on the door for SLEAP. SLEAP are a specific charity for young people in the South Ribble, Chorley and Preston areas to prevent homelessness and other issues and problems associated with it. You can read more about their amazing work here.

Charitable Giving

With the support of you, our students have managed to engage in a range of charitable activities linked to Christmas...

Tutor groups have been putting together shoe boxes of gifts for International Aid. You can read more about this here: International Aid Shoeboxes: <https://www.balshaws.org.uk/news/2022-12-09-international-aid-trust-shoebox-appeal>

As well as the shoeboxes, our students have also been putting together Christmas Hampers that will be distributed to those who will benefit from them across Leyland.

Service and Careers Fair

As always, a lot has happened this term. You can read about all our news in the news section of the [school website here](#).

However, here is just a flavour:

- Advent Memorial Service: <https://www.balshaws.org.uk/news/2022-11-29-advent-memorial-service>
- We held our successful annual Careers Fair: <https://www.balshaws.org.uk/news/2022-11-28-careers-fair-thursday-24th-november>
- We supported Anti-Bullying Week: <https://www.balshaws.org.uk/news/2022-11-23-anti-bullying-week-2022>

Balshaw's PTA

The PTA have raised almost £1,000 to support students at Balshaw's this term. We would like to thank all of you who took part in Trainer Day or came along to one of the events. We had great fun at our Christmas Bingo this week.

We're excited about some forthcoming events. We have not been able to hold our annual Family Fun Day for a few years, but we are now starting planning for a new and updated event: *Balfest*. We will be hosting a day of music, fun, performances food and stalls in the summer term. More information will be communicated at a later date.

Also look out for our Race Night to be held at the Lancashire FA so that there will be a bar available while you have fun following the races... This will be coming up in June. You can keep up-to-date with the PTA and their meetings by joining the Facebook page:

<https://m.facebook.com/groups/376148116307632/>

Ofsted: When will it be...?

We are the last remaining outstanding Church of England High School in the county and the last one still to be inspected by Ofsted. We have been waiting all term for the call and the inspection will be coming soon. As soon as we know, you will know.

One of the first things that will happen is that you will be asked to provide your views on the Ofsted ParentView website. You do not have to wait until the inspection to do this, you can complete the questionnaire at anytime. As always with this sort of thing, it tends to be people who want to complain that are the ones who make the effort to complete these questionnaires, so I would ask as many parents as possible to please complete this questionnaire – it is really important that if you are happy with the experience that your child has at Balshaw's that your voice is heard.

Feedback on the Parents' Evening Consultation

Earlier in the term I asked for parents views on whether parents' evenings should be online or face-to-face. There were 92 responses in the three weeks that the consultation was open and the results were almost 50/50:

The most telling aspect of the consultation was the written feedback that was provided. The strength of comment from those who had experienced face-to-face parents' evenings was very powerful in arguing against a return to long queues, parking chaos, parents over-running their appointments and putting everyone else out etc.

One other strong piece of feedback was around the length of the appointments and queries as to if they could be increased from three minutes. We are going to look at facilitating this in time for the next online parents' evening.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback for this consultation.

Forthcoming Parents' Evenings are:

- Year 11: Thursday 26th January
- Year 10: Thursday 2nd February
- Year 9: Thursday 16th March
- Year 8: Thursday 20th April

House Cup Challenges - Autumn Term

Worden are the current holders of the coveted Silver Griffin Trophy for the last academic year. However, the challenge for this year is on! Students have taken part in a range of House Cup Challenges this term.

These have included:

- Design a Poster
- Inter-House Cross Country
- Design a Christmas Card
- Treasure Hunt
- Duolingo Challenge
- Cake designing
- Raffle for commendable classwork and home learning
- And more...



The winner this term is:

Clayton House

and they will have a non-uniform day on Tuesday 13th December. Well done Clayton House.

Scarlet Fever – Information from the UK Health Security Agency

Dear Parent(s) / Carer(s),

Re: Increase in scarlet fever

We are writing to inform you of a recent increase in notifications of scarlet fever to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), above seasonal expected levels. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the signs, symptoms and the actions to be taken if you think that you or your child might have scarlet fever.

Signs and symptoms of scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is a common childhood infection caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*, or group A *Streptococcus* (GAS). It is not usually serious, but should be treated with antibiotics to reduce the risk of complications (such as pneumonia) and spread to others. The early symptoms of scarlet fever include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. After 12 to 48 hours, the characteristic red, pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, then rapidly spreading to other parts of the body, and giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture. The scarlet rash may be harder to spot on darker skin, although the 'sandpaper' feel should be present. Patients typically have flushed cheeks and be pale around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a bright red red 'strawberry' tongue.

If you think you, or your child, might have scarlet fever

- contact your GP or NHS 111 as soon as possible
- make sure that you or your child take(s) the full course of any antibiotics prescribed. Although you or your child will feel better soon after starting the course of antibiotics, you must complete the course to ensure that you do not carry the bacteria in your throat after you have recovered
- stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection

You can help stop the spread of infection through frequent hand washing and by not sharing eating utensils, clothes, bedding and towels. All contaminated tissues should be disposed of immediately.

Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)

The same bacteria which cause scarlet fever can also cause a range of other types of infection such as skin infections (impetigo) and sore throat. In very rare cases, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive group A strep (iGAS). Whilst still very uncommon, there has been an increase in iGAS cases this year, particularly in children under 10 years old. It is very rare for children with scarlet fever to develop iGAS infection.

As a parent, you should trust your own judgement.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of dehydration
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39C or higher
- your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

Stop the spread

During periods of high incidence of scarlet fever, there may also be an increase in outbreaks in schools, nurseries and other childcare settings. Children and adults with suspected scarlet fever should stay off nursery / school / work until 24 hours after the start of appropriate antibiotic treatment. Good hygiene practice such as hand washing remains the most important step in preventing and controlling spread of infection.

Resources

- [NHS – Scarlet Fever](#)
- [Scarlet fever: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment](#)
- [Health protection in education and childcare settings](#)
- [Hand hygiene resources for schools](#)

Free Holiday Activities from South Ribble Borough Council

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES



Monday 19 to Thursday 29 December

Free Christmas Pantomime Aladdin

23 December - two performances



Fun activities and a healthy meal for children on free school meals, during the Christmas Holidays, book your child's place now!

- **FREE** Activities for all children on free school meals
- **FREE** Meal with every session
- Activities include swimming, tennis, gymnastics, boxing, kick boxing, football and arts & crafts
- PLUS our incredible 'jungle and football' inflatable play zone

For children aged 4-16

To view the timetable and book your child's place, please visit the website below or email us at haf@southribble.gov.uk



southribble.gov.uk/haf

Church Services around Leyland:

St Ambrose Church:

Sunday 18th December

- 10.30 am: Nativity Service and Eucharist
(Children and adults perform the Nativity Story)
- 6.30 pm: Traditional Carol Service of 9 Lessons and Carols

Monday 19th December

- 7.00 pm: Service to remember our departed loved ones (A quiet, short service with carols. Bring a photo or memento of your loved one to put on the tree.)

Christmas Eve

- 4.00 pm: Christingle Service. An active, fun service for all the family. All most welcome
- 11.30 pm: Midnight Eucharist and the blessing of the crib

Christmas Day

- 10 am: *Christmas* Eucharist with Carols

Remember CHRIST this Christmas

Come and Worship with Us

St Ambrose Church, Moss Lane, Leyland PR25 4XA

St Andrew's Church:

st andrew's
LEYLAND Church Office ☎
01772 622964

Christmas

Sun 11th Dec Carols by Candlelight in Church at 6.30pm	Sat 17th Dec 6pm Join us for Carols by Starlight on the Church Lawn
Christmas Eve 4pm Crib Service in Church 11.15pm Midnight Communion	Christmas Day 8.30am Communion 10.30am All Age Christmas Celebration

SCAN THE CODE
FOR ALL THE
LATEST INFO

WWW.STANDREWSLEYLAND.ORG.UK



You are warmly invited to start your Christmas in style at **St Ambrose Leyland** CHRISTINGLE SERVICE Christmas Eve at **4.00pm**

 Christingle  Christingle



Come and join in the fun!!!!

Buckshaw Village Church

A family Christmas

The BVC family want to celebrate Christmas with your family this Christmas time.

BVC family Christmas events:

- 27th November - Christmas fayre and lights switch on 2:30-5:30pm
- 4th December - Christmas messy church 2-4pm
- 10th December - Christmas family film 5-7pm
- 18th December - Family Christmas Carol concert 6pm
- 24th December - Family Christmas Eve service 3pm

All services and events are at the Community Centre in Unity Place.