



The Meadows School

Christmas Newsletter 2023



Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach a very welcome Christmas break, I would like to take this opportunity to give my best wishes to you and your family for the festive season.

It has been yet another fantastic half term and our students have worked very hard and enjoyed success in so many ways. The run up to Christmas has been exceptionally busy and packed with a number of special events such as singing songs around the Christmas tree, wearing our festive jumpers on our Christmas jumper day, welcoming Santa on site, holding a very successful Christmas fair, participating in Christmas performances, enjoying Christmas dinner with all the trimmings served by Senior Leaders and most importantly celebrating togetherness and creating cherished memories for our students.

I would also like to make you aware of the following staffing updates; This week we have welcomed Mrs Samantha Forbes (Assistant Head Teacher) and Mrs Katie Broadhurst (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) who have returned from maternity. Mr Stewart Harris who has very successfully supported The Meadows School and the Senior Leadership Team as an Assistant Head teacher (maternity cover) will be resuming his teaching responsibility in the new year and is looking forward to leading class 4.4.

We will start the New Year also welcoming Mrs Pamela Meddings as the new Class Teacher in class 5.1 and Zoe Painter a new Student Support Practitioner to the Meadows team. I know you will all join me in giving our new colleagues a very warm welcome; we are confident that they will be a valuable asset to the team and we are excited to have them on board!

At The Meadows, we all feel so lucky to be leading such a wonderful school in a community with the children at the heart of everything we do. A big thank you to all staff who are fantastic and always dedicated and committed to our students and families. Also, a big thank you to all parents and carers for your commitment and continued support and to our governors who give their time freely to ensure that The Meadows School continues to develop and thrive. Most importantly a huge thank you to our children who make our school such a wonderful and special place.

On behalf of everyone at The Meadows School, I wish you all a very merry Christmas, a restful break and a happy and peaceful New Year.

Best Wishes

Theodora Papaspyrou

What's been happening?

Class 4.1

Class 4.1 have been enjoying getting out on the water canoeing at Malthouse Stables. The students have settled into their new class and love being offsite!



Class 4.5

What a busy half-term for Class 4.5, leading up to Christmas! This term, they have been out in the community using public transport to travel to The Portway Centre and Sainsbury's. They travelled on two buses to The Portway Centre to work with the West Bromwich Albion Coaches, scanning their bus passes independently and using pedestrian crossings in different locations. They travelled to Sainsbury's on the bus to undertake a survey on favourite Christmas decorations for Data Handling in maths. Their travel training skills have greatly improved! In basic cooking, they made the following dishes; cheese and potato pie, quorn curry, quorn vegetable stew and tuna pasta bake. They are looking forward to their science trip to Think Tank to consolidate their light and sound unit. They really enjoyed their Christmas lunch and handmade Christmas tree decorations to sell at the Christmas Enterprise.



WBA Christmas Festival

On Wednesday 29th November a selection of Year 7 students from Class 3.1, 3.2, 3.6 and 3.8 attended the WBA Foundation Christmas Festival. During the day, the students worked as a team and competed against other local schools in a range of multi-skill based activities. All students really enjoyed taking part and were very happy to receive their participation certificate at the end of the day.



Swimming Success

A big congratulations to four of our students who have achieved their Star 2 award at Tipton Leisure Centre for swimming this term. Well done to Lily-Ann and Dan in 3.6 and Jack and Aaron in 4.4!



Class 3.6

Class 3.6 had an amazing day at Dudley Zoo visiting Santa and all of the animals!



Christmas Card Competition

The Meadows' Student Council had a very difficult job this week when they were asked to choose a winner for the Class Christmas Card Competition. After much deliberation and voting, they chose a winner from each key stage: 3.6, 4.3 and 5.4

The Student Council then presented the winners with a luxury hot chocolate and biscuit hamper. See our creative winners in photos below, with our amazing Student Council members.



West Bromwich Albion Players Visit

As part of our ongoing links with the Albion Foundation, we were lucky enough to receive a visit from four West Bromwich Albion players. The players dipped into different classes; chatting with students and having a look at all the Christmas activities taking place in the final week.



Christmas Activities

Over the last few weeks, the school has stepped into Christmas; decking the halls and enjoying various activities. We kicked things off with Elf Day where staff and students donned their best elf or Christmas-coloured clothing and raised a grand total of £131.95 through donations and a bake sale. Classes then got stuck into creating props and practicing for their Christmas performances, before performing them in the hall for other groups. A big well done to Class 3.1, 4.1 and 5.4 who were voted the winners!



The festivities continued with all students enjoying a Christmas dinner served by SLT!



With lots of Christmas outings in between...



During this half term, classes have also been busy, planning and making items to sell at the Christmas Fair. It was so wonderful to see so many people getting into the spirit and joining us here at The Meadows. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed in purchasing items made by the classes.

Another big thank you for everyone who bought a ticket for the Christmas raffle. Class 5.6 are so pleased to share they have raised £211 for Acorns Hospice who supported our friend, Sameya. The class will be visiting the hospice in 2024 to donate



The celebrations continued into the final week. On Tuesday, Jayne and Lexi from 4.3 led carols round the tree in the Sports Hall.



The students were paid a special visit from Santa on Wednesday, with all the students receiving a present and getting to meet Mr and Mrs Claus in person. To top of such an eventful and enjoyable month, the students were treated to a disco



Safeguarding Updates

Festive Safety

The festive season is upon us and you may already have started celebrating.

If you've ever spent Christmas Eve in A&E, you'll know that the festive season can bring about more accidents than usual. Please see below for some simple safety tips to make sure everyone has a magical time.



1. We are all trying to save money amidst the current cost of living crisis and it's good value (plus good for the environment) to buy second-hand. However, toy safety is paramount and sometimes second-hand toys can lack the correct instructions or be damaged. To learn more about toy safety, you can click on the link below from RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents).
2. It's worth considering purchasing gifts that are suitable for your child's developmental age, rather than chronological age as some children with SEND may struggle to understand how to use some toys (particularly electrical ones) in a safe way.
3. Look out for small items that could pose a choking hazard to children, such as [button batteries](#), which if not caught early, can do serious damage to the gastrointestinal system. Never leave these items lying around and make sure that children know not to put them in their mouths, ears or up their noses. If your child likes to insert items, ensure these are completely out of reach.
4. Make sure you test any festive lights, and check for any broken bulbs. Turn off festive lights when you go to bed and don't overload plug sockets.
5. Do not drink and drive, and plan long journeys so you won't be driving tired.
6. You may or may not choose to drink alcohol but if booze will be around, ensure it is out of reach of your child. And check the ingredients on festive sweets, chocolates and desserts as some can have a high alcohol content!

[Toy safety - RoSPA](#)

Staying Away

If you are planning to go and stay with family or friends over the festive season, it may be worth spending some time helping your child to prepare. Some children with SEND can struggle with change and being out of routine and may find this stressful. You may wish to try some of the following:

- Tell your child ahead of time that you will be sleeping somewhere else but then coming home again. You know your child best and will be able to work out if it's best to give them lots of notice or tell them close to leaving time.
- Consider taking your child's own (not clean) bedding with them so as they sleep, there is a familiar smell.
- You could take pictures of your home and together with your child, tick off on a calendar how many days until you return.

Cost of Living Crisis

As the nights draw in and the temperature drops, you may find yourself worrying about the cost of heating your home.

You can find your local 'Warm Spaces' here: [Spaces — Warm Spaces](#)

These are free, community spaces that are open at particular times for members of the public to come and keep warm if they cannot afford to heat their homes.



Online Safety

As you have a chance to spend some more quality time together as a family, it can be a good idea to focus on online safety and make some New Years' Resolutions around internet use. A great place to start is this animated series of 3 episodes called Jessie and Friends. Designed for 4-7 year olds, this is a child-friendly, age-appropriate way of teaching children about online harms and particularly online sexual abuse.



Mental Health



A study of 2,000 people, by the National Accident Helpline showed that 1 in 4 (27%) feel more stressed than usual during the festive period, rising to nearly a third (32%) among women.

If you do feel you're struggling to cope, remember you can call any of the following numbers for support:

Samaritans 116 123

Text SHOUT to 85258

[Helplines and listening services - Mind](#)

Remember: The pastoral team at the Meadows are here to help you. If you would like some support or are concerned about your child's safety, give us a call on 0121 5697089.

Well done Shalom!

On Friday 8th December one of our students, Shalom did something remarkable. He was able to speak to the operators when a 999 call was made and he was able to summon help.

Shalom was able to keep talking to the operator until they arrived.

We are extremely proud of you Shalom, well done!



Careers

It has been a very busy term for all students. We have been lucky to secure visits to QAC for students to explore and have encounters with colleges.

We have also welcomed visits from Sandwell College and Trinity College who have shared insights into their college with the students.

Options for Life are also offering opportunities for our students to visit their training facility to enable all students to have experiences with provisions post The Meadows.

Acorns Lodge have been to visit our PMLD students, as well as us visit them for some amazing sensory experiences. The students have been able to experience sensory exploration in different settings with different people.

We visited The Westminster school to experience their careers fair. It was very exciting and we hope to welcome some new faces to The Meadows in 2024.

As you will be aware in September 2022 we moved to the Schoolcomms cashless system for payment of student meals. With this successful implementation, in September 2023 the system was rolled out to all school trips. Thank you all for your support in making this transition a success. Can I please remind all parents that from January all consent and payment for school trips will need to be made through Schoolcomms system.



Parents and Carers Coffee Mornings



Please come and join us for our coffee mornings which take place at the school on the dates listed below.

- Wednesday 17th January
- Wednesday 7th February
- Wednesday 13th March
- Wednesday 17th April
- Wednesday 15th May
- Wednesday 12th June
- Wednesday 17th July



Take a look at pictures of our latest Christmas Coffee Morning!



Please can you ensure that we have your most up-to-date contact details. If you change your address or telephone number, it is imperative that school is made aware in case we need to contact you and in case of emergency.

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