

Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School Weekly Update 18th December 2020



Key Dates:

18th December—Last day of Autumn Term

4th January 2021—Staff Training Day

5th January 2021 —Children return to school

Christmas Production: *Lights, Camel, Action!*

We have now sent the link to parents to enable you to access this joyous, wonderful festive film. We hope you will enjoy watching it as much as we enjoyed making it! If you have not been able to follow the link, please email

office@springmeadow.cambs.sch.uk

Christmas parties

A very kind and generous parent has provided snacks for the children's parties today. A huge thank you to you. Kindness is a key value at Spring Meadow and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your generosity towards our very special little people.

Christmas Break

Enjoy your time as a family. We all wish you a happy Christmas. We also hope you all keep safe and well. We look forward to seeing you when we return in the new year.



Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School

We are very pleased to have remained open since the start of September and know the children are too. They have re-established their friendships and made new ones too. They have learnt how to learn in school again and good progress is clear for many. Year 1 and Year 2 plan to send home a sample of this progress in writing so you can praise your child for what they have achieved.

From the start of the new year the whole year group of children will play together outside rather than restrict them to the small play space they have been using. This will enable friendships to grow further and permit the children to have the required space to run round and exercise more freely. Our assessments identify this as a safe approach to play for our young children.

Parent meetings for Rainbows, Year 1 and Year 2 children will take place during the week beginning 25th January 2021. These will be virtual meetings, where will be able to share more images of your child's learning. We will organise times to suit parents as soon as we return.

Changes for January 2021

Year 1 change to start and finish times

9am start—3.15pm finish for YEAR 1

We have all done so well this term with no cases of the virus within the school community. Lots of parents are wearing masks in case they come into close contact with others. This is by agreement and is not a legal or school requirement.

We are opening windows and doors to keep air flowing.

The new year will bring more changes as we endeavour to get the best learning conditions in place for the children.

Christmas Pantomime—Virtual tour!

The children in Rainbows, Year 1 and Year 2 were so excited last Friday. They watched a wonderful Christmas story via the medium of Zoom. The story was called *The Dream Catcher* and was presented by the Blue Moon Zoom Company.



Winter Grant Fund and Ely Food Bank

We have been given items from the food bank. These include toiletries as well as food. The foodbank has so many donations that they offered items to us to give to families. Please ask for Rachel in the school office if you would like a pack of items. The Winter Grant fund is in place to help if a family is in need. There is a large pot of money put aside to help families ensure they have what is needed to provide well for the children at this time. Please ask for more details from Mrs Blewett.

Santa came to school on Tuesday!

The children got to chat with Santa and ask him lots of questions.

One child asked for some flowers for her mum — so kind. A tear or two was shed at that moment.

Happy Christmas to one and all!



Nursery — Staffing Organisation for the New Year

I wrote to you a little while ago to inform you that Mrs Peachey is expecting a baby. She is keeping well and we are all very pleased for her. During the current pandemic concerns remain for many people including those expecting a baby. As a result Mrs Peachey is now working each day in school, but not in the classroom. She is planning and assessing the needs of the children along with Mrs Carter to ensure all needs are met.

Mrs Colbran stepped into the Nursery role very happily at short notice earlier in the term and has shown such a love for the children in Nursery.

Moving forward now into the new year we have been able to develop the teaching in the Nursery further. Mrs Woods, an experienced Early Years practitioner will join the Nursery team and share the role with the class teacher Mrs Carter and the support team of Mrs Adams, Mrs Ward, Mrs Norris and Mrs Ellis.

Christmas Lunch Day

Lucy, Judy, Leah and Gemma, our amazing School Catering Team triumphed again on Wednesday with a very different style of Christmas Lunch Day. In a 'normal' year, we invite all of the parents in to enjoy a special lunchtime festive feast with their child, which is a highlight of our school year! Obviously, in this global pandemic year we weren't able to do this but all the staff worked together to make it a really fun and sparkly lunchtime. Lucy's traditional Christmas lunch of roast turkey, stuffing, sausage, roast and mashed potato, roast parsnips, brussel sprouts, carrots, gravy and cranberry sauce (phew!) was absolutely delicious and was loved by the children and staff alike—as was the vegetarian option. That was followed by Lucy's famous, and equally delicious, chocolate yule log (for those who had any room left!).

As if cooking such a feast for over 200 of us on Wednesday wasn't enough, the lovely ladies then baked hundreds of tasty festive treats for a special Covid-safe Bake Sale the next day! All of the Christmas Tree cupcakes, Gingerbread People, Shortbread Stockings and Mince Pies were very well received by parents, grandparents, childminders and of course, the children.

Thank you, from the whole school community, to Lucy, Judy, Leah and Gemma for all your dedication and hard work throughout the school year and we hope that you have a jolly good rest over the holiday!

Staffing—Changes for January 2021

I wrote to all parents on Thursday 17th December to explain the staffing restructure the school has gone through. There are differing reasons for these actions of course. I would like to reiterate here that as a school I will ensure that the needs of our children and families will be met. Most of the changes made affected the afterschool and breakfast club staff because very few families now use this facility. The facility that provides extra care for working parents cannot be paid for from the budget that is given to us to educate every child every day during the school day. The funds to pay salaries come from parents who use it. If the need for club spaces increases we can look again at increasing staffing. We must also work efficiently using the very limited budget we receive from the government to balance costs needed to pay for support staff as well as the many resources we need for your children. Cambridgeshire schools are significantly underfunded compared to other local authorities and that impacts on all schools. We continue to campaign for fairer funding for schools in Cambridgeshire and I know you will all support this drive to increase funding for schools. Please do let me know if you would like to know more details about our restructure.

Free School Meals Vouchers

The Government have funded free school meals during the Christmas holidays for children whose parents are in receipt of specific financial benefits.

If you are in receipt of these benefits a £15 voucher will be sent to your email address via a company called WONDE. Please make sure we have your correct email address so the voucher comes straight to you. These vouchers are not provided for our children who receive what is termed as a universal infant free school meal.

If you need any help with obtaining your please contact the school office.

Catching –Up Funding and Extra tuition

The government have given us a small pocket of money to enable children to 'catch-up'. We know as educators of very small children that good learning takes place when children feel safe, settled and valued. I am extremely proud of your children and our staff who have all worked so hard to get back to normal life at school (well, as normal as we can make it). They have adapted and persevered with the new arrangements and socially and emotionally huge leaps have been made by all. In 2021 we will continue to use the catch up funding to extend our tutoring programme for children who will benefit from this approach. Thank you to all parents who have enabled their child to attend these extra sessions this term. Good progress is being made.