



Prior's Mill C.E. Primary School

Newsletter December 13th 2024

Welcome to the Prior's Mill Newsletter - this is shared weekly and will contain key dates and information, paper copies are available at the office 13.12.24

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Heads Up - It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas!



Christmas

It has been lovely to welcome families into school to watch Nativity performances and Carol concerts this week. It was lovely to see children in Y1/2 and Y3/4 perform to an audience -

thank you to everyone who was able to attend. i look forward to welcoming families to Nursery and Reception performances next week as well as those families with pupils in Y5/6.

We had a lovely Christmas lunch on Wednesday thanks to the Local Authority Catering Team who work in the school kitchen, Children, Staff and Governors ate together in the school hall all looking festive in Christmas Jumpers. Thank you to everyone who made a donation, we have passed over the donation to the foodbank.

Carol Singing at Hadrian Park Care Home

It was lovely to accompany pupils in Y6 , Mrs Rushden and Miss Clapp to Hadrian Park Care Home on Wednesday to sing a variety of Carols and festive favourites. It is really important that we engage and support with as many aspects of the local community as we can, I was incredibly proud of the children who behaved impeccably and represented the school with excellent behaviour. It was also lovely to see them engaging with the audience and appreciating the job done by staff at the home as well as the lives of residents based in there. The children sang some group songs but were also confident enough to sing solo / duo parts - check out the photographs below from our Singing Stars! I think my voice needs a bit of a retune!

Staffing News

Congratulations to Mrs McHale who is expecting and will be leaving us to start her maternity leave in February. Mrs Day will also start her maternity leave at the end of the term, however Mrs Casey will be returning from her maternity leave at the beginning of February. I will be contacting parents next week to provide an update for the classes that those teachers are attached to.

Message from Mr Greenwood on behalf of Staff

Dear Parents and Carers,

as we approach Christmas, we begin to look forward to spending time with family and friends by showing our appreciation and goodwill through exchanging cards and gifts. As a school, we understand that some parents extend their goodwill to staff by purchasing gifts as a show of gratitude at Christmas time. Although this is very much appreciated, it is not something we expect. If parents are considering buying a gift, it may be an opportunity to consider donating to the local foodbank or a children's charity as an alternative. Parents who wish to give a gift to a

member of staff are still free to do so, although we don't expect anything, we just wanted to highlight the good causes in our local area.

As a school, it is our privilege to support and engage with our local community and neighbours. We are reminded daily of different circumstances which surround our families and would like to do all we can to support each other during this time of giving.

Mrs Hanson is available in school if you have any worries or concerns about the festive period, please get in touch before the end of term.

Reception Open Events

Thank you to everyone who attended the Reception Open afternoon this week on Wednesday we will be repeating the experience on Saturday 11th January - please help spread the word and don't forget to book a place at the office.

Road Safety

A reminder to children and parents that as the nights are getting darker the dangers on the road intensify, please think about crossing roads safely and if you come on a bike or scooter please make sure, where possible, that you have lights, wear a helmet and can be identified by other road users. The safety of children in and out of school is our main priority.

QUICK REMINDER

Monday 16th December (AM) - KS2 Pantomime at the Forum

Monday 16th December (PM - 1:30pm) - Nursery and Reception Christmas Performance

Tuesday 17th December (AM - 9:30am) - Nursery and Reception Christmas Performance

Wednesday 18th December (10 am) - Y5/6 Carol Service for Y5 Parents

Thursday 19th December (10 am) - Y5/6 Carol Service for Y6 Parents

Friday 20th December - last school day before Christmas

Monday 6th January - School reopens for Spring Term

Christmas Party Dates

17/12 Y3 Party pm

18/12 Y5 Party pm

19/12 Y4 and KS1(Y1/2) Party pm

20/12 Y6 (pm) and Early Years Christmas Party Day

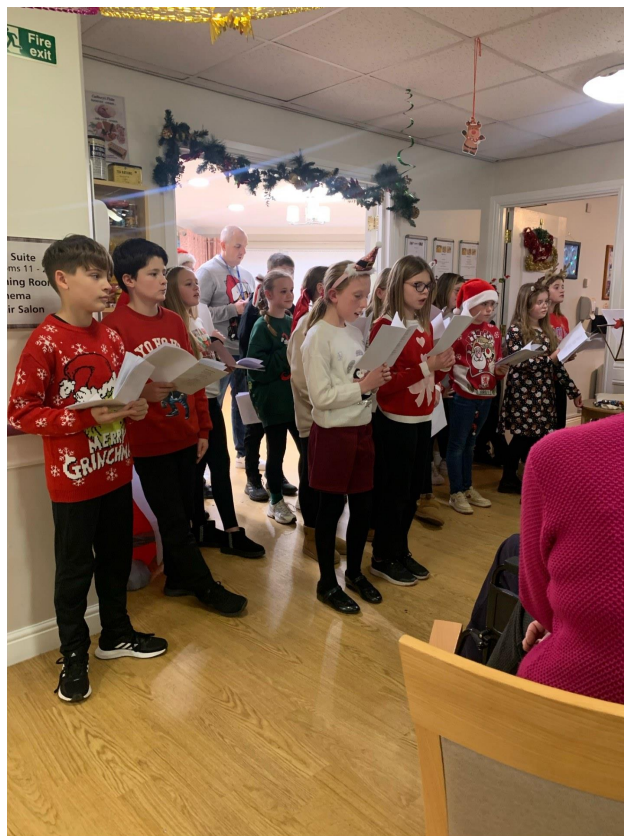
A HUGE THANKS TO OUR LOCAL SAINSBURYS FOR DONATING 450 BAGS OF CRISPS FOR THE SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTIES - I'M SURE WE'LL BE ABLE TO TASTE THE DIFFERENCE!!! A FANTASTIC GESTURE THAT IS MUCH APPRECIATED!!



1 - Festive Fun from Mrs Akerman's Class on Christmas Jumper Day!

Hadrian Park Care Home Carol Singers











Thanks to all the parents who responded to our online survey we have published the results and actions we are taking to address some of the development points that were raised.

Results taken from 128 responses:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My child feels happy at this school	50%	39%	9%	2%
My child feels safe at this school	52%	41%	6%	1%
The school makes sure pupils are well behaved	30%	60%	8%	2%
My child has been bullied and the school dealt with it quickly and effectively	9%	47%	31%	13%
The school makes me aware of what my child will learn throughout the year	18%	50%	28%	4%
When I have raised concerns with the school, they have been dealt with properly	23%	60%	14%	3%
My child has SEND and the school gives them the support they need to succeed	17%	38%	29%	16%
The school has high expectations for my child	28%	64%	6%	2%
My child does well at this school	43%	48%	8%	1%
The school lets me know how my child is doing	26%	54%	19%	1%
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school	32%	65%	3%	0%
My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school	45%	46%	7%	2%
The school supports my child's wider development	28%	56%	14%	2%

I would recommend this school to another	Yes 88%	No 12%
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Strengths, Points for Development and Actions taken from additional comments:

Strengths	Points for Development	Actions
Supportive teachers	Communication of dates well in advance	Moving forward, Worship dates will be published a year in advance and key dates for other events, a term ahead.
Teachers know the children well	Increased numbers for clubs	Expansion of Club opportunities for Summer 25.
The school keeps children safe	Advance notice of topics/themes to be covered	New Curriculum Year Group Newsletter half termly to replace Whole School Curriculum Newsletter.
My child loves school	Improved communication with general messages	New school communication system comes online in Summer 25 with a new app.
Teachers make sure the children settle well	Improved communication/opportunities to meet with teachers/SENDCo for pupils with SEND	Parent Consultations twice per year Three meetings to discuss SEND plans End of year and annual reviews for EHCPs Open door policy for concerns/issues Development of a SEND section on the school website
There are adults children can confide in	Shorter Newsletter	Review design of School Newsletter.
The school is very supportive to parents	Concerns around behaviour of some pupils	Continue to implement and evaluate United Against Bullying training with pupils and staff in line with school and Trust policies.
Active presence of the Headteacher around school		
Teachers are reassuring and encouraging		
My child is excited to learn every day		

School Council



School Council met this week again and have been asking children in their class about what equipment they would like to use on the playground. Updates on final proposals of equipment and playground markings will be shared in the next few weeks.

Thank you Mrs MacKay for organising the group.



Sporting Stars



2 - Thank you to the football coach who came from Stockton Town to work with some of our children on Friday. Check out their session for Reception and Year 1 children, Thursdays 5-6pm at the indoor Sports Hall next to Stockton Town £3 per session.

Musician of the Month



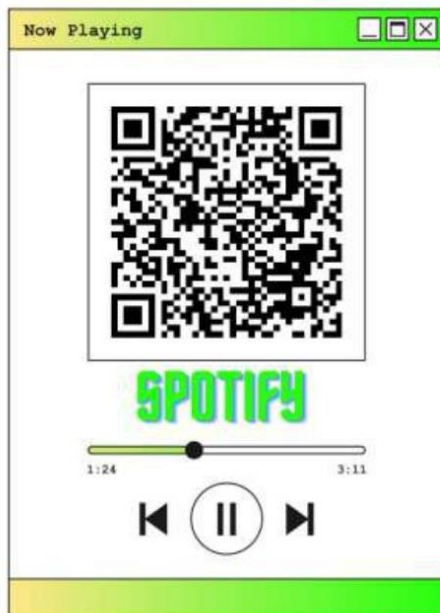
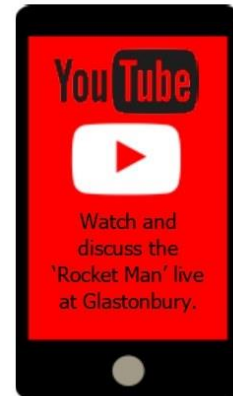


HOME INFORMATION



December's Musician of the Month

Elton John



About: Sir Elton John (born Reginald Kenneth Dwight; 25 March, 1947) is a British singer, pianist and composer. Acclaimed by critics and musicians, particularly for his work during the 1970s and for his lasting impact on the music industry, his music and showmanship have had a significant impact on popular music. His songwriting partnership with lyricist Bernie Taupin is one of the most successful in history.

Genres: R&B/Soul, Jazz

Active from: 1962 - Present

Origin: Middlesex, United Kingdom

Books to read...

If you like Elton John, try...



- Billy Joel
- Tina Turner
- Phil Collins

Digital Leaders



3 - Hugo (Y3), Felicity (Y4), Luke (Y5) and Joey (Y6) are the new school Digital Leaders.

Parent guide for this week - Safety over the festive season

If there are any apps or online sites that parents would like a fact sheet about then please get in touch and we'll try and provide one.

Any safeguarding concerns can be relayed to:

Mr Linsley - Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss Huddart - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

As a parent or carer you play a key role in keeping your child safe online. Find out more about commonly used social media platforms at

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/social-media-guides>

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON.

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

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Attendance Matters



In accordance with School and Trust Policy any unauthorised absences (that are not subject to exceptional circumstances) will be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

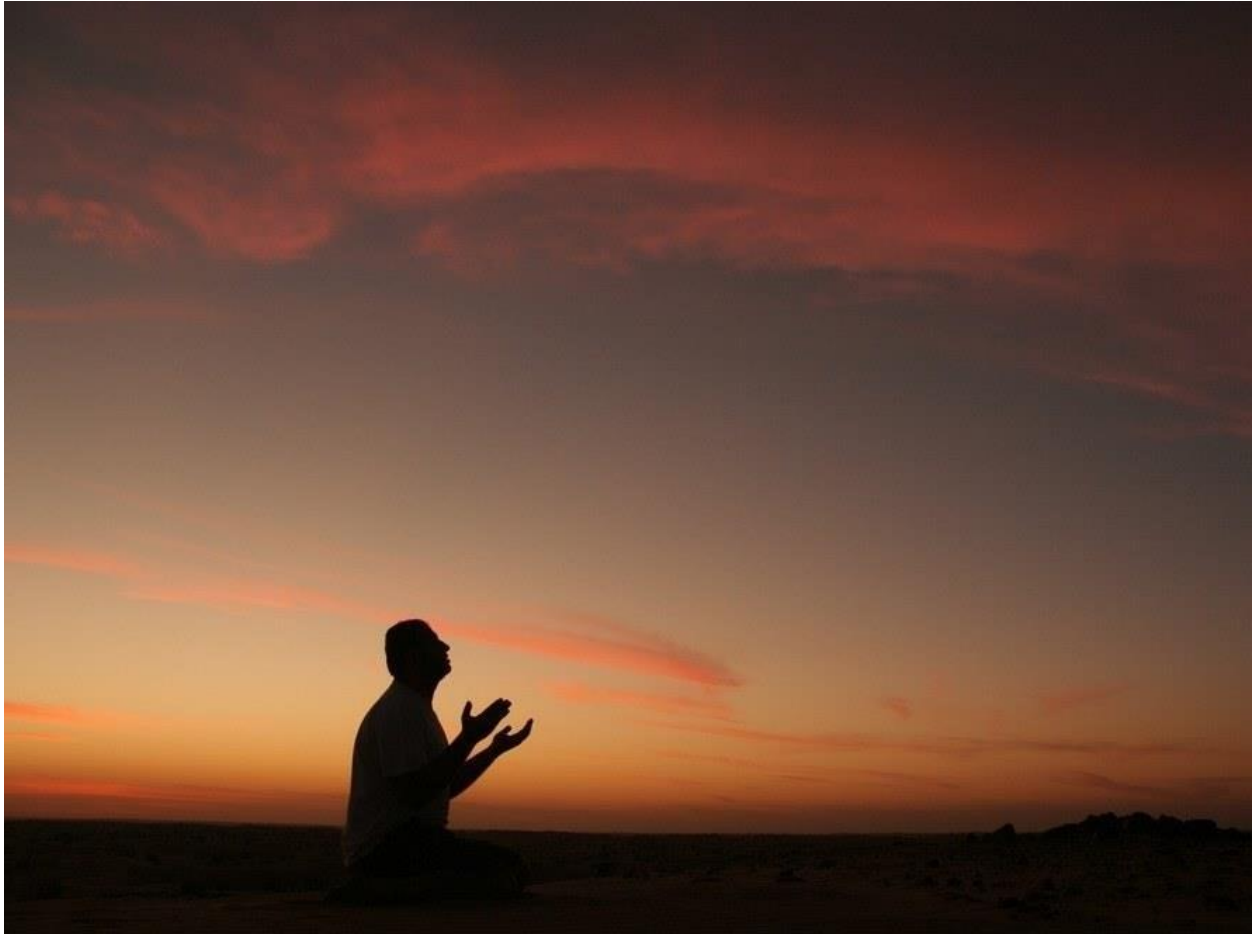
Current School Attendance is 95% this is just below the DFE target of 96%.

We strongly advise that any holiday in term time should be avoided due to the impact of lost learning time on children. Please be aware that leave of absence (holiday) during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. It is school policy to refer any unauthorised absence due to holiday to the local authority who may issue a fixed penalty notice. This is a penalty of up to £120 per child, per parent and so can add up to a significant amount. The school does not receive any revenue from fines; the money is paid to the Local Authority. In addition, we now have a new system in school for pupils who are late. Pupils must be escorted to the office in the main building and a form completed by parents/carers to sign the pupils in

and indicate the reason for the lateness. This is for our records and also to avoid pupils becoming distressed.

LATE MARKS ALSO IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON ATTENDANCE PLEASE TRY TO BE ON TIME!

Worship Theme - Advent



ADVENT: THE ONE TO COME

Isaiah 9:2

Isaiah was a prophet in the eighth century BC, working in the south of Israel. Through his writings he brings a message of warning to the people of God, because they are not living in the way they should, but he then has a message of comfort for his readers as they go through difficult times. The third part of Isaiah looks forward to the distant future when there will be a new heaven and a new earth. These different voices of the prophet correspond to three

different sections of the book, but it is the message of hope that Christians turn to during the season of Advent, as they get ready for the mystery of Christmas.

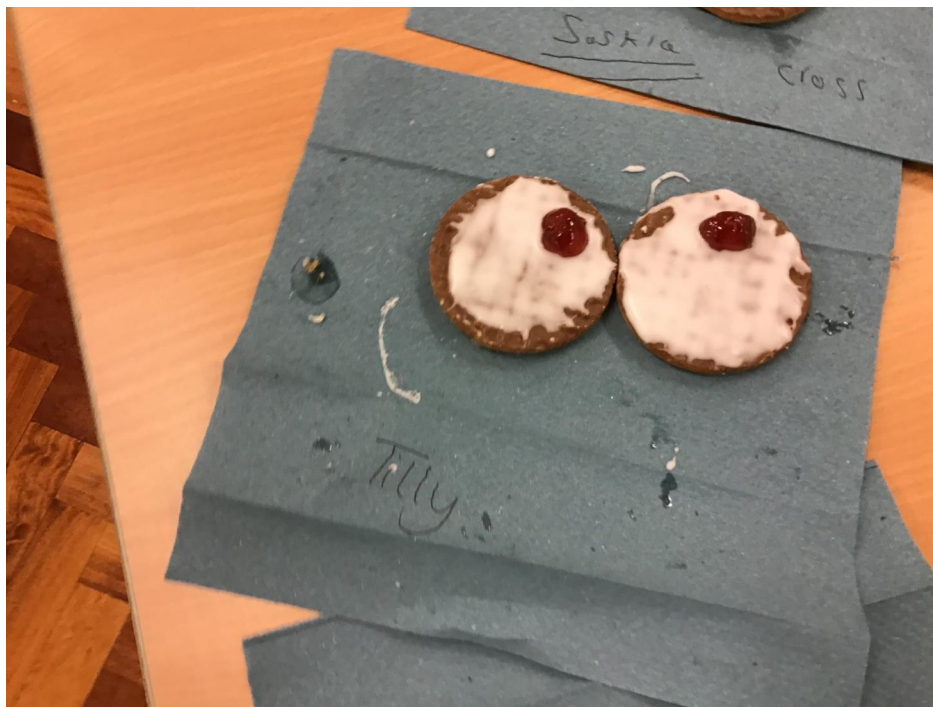
I wonder what you are looking forward to today? I wonder how you have felt when you were waiting for a special day, your birthday, or a wedding? Advent is a time of waiting and anticipation. Light a candle in the dark and think of ways to describe this. I wonder how this helps us to understand Isaiah 9:2? I wonder what the people who lived before Jesus was born were waiting for?



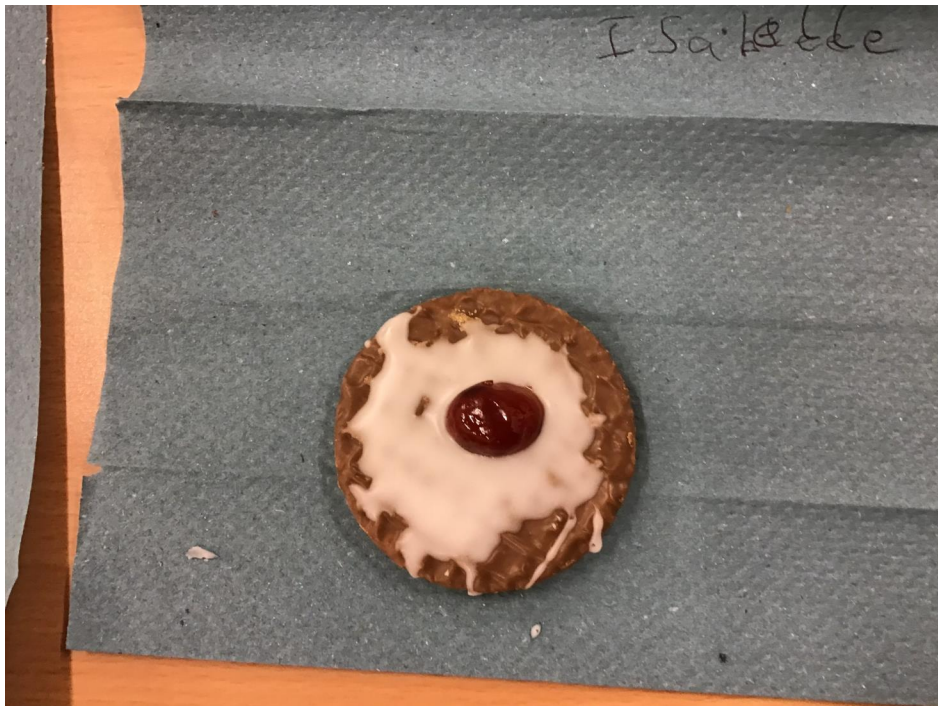
Class News



LOVELY COOKING FROM AFTERSCHOOL CLUB WHO MADE CHRISTMAS PUDDING BISCUITS!









Cool Christmas Cards -Thank You!

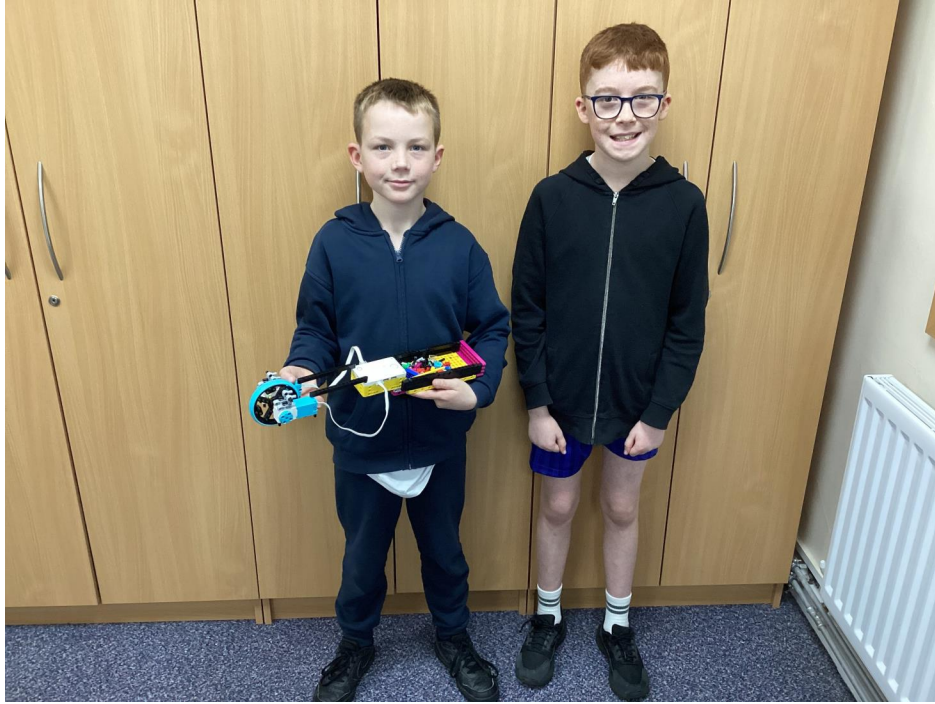




Fantastic Christmas Colouring!



Awesome Lego from Harry and Evan! Creating a Sleigh for Santa!



A big thank you from Miss Clapp to all the children who attended art club, the children really enjoyed making all their christmas crafts.





Key Dates



Half - term - Friday 25th October - last day - reopen Monday 4th November

Christmas Dates

Friday 6th Dec 9.00 am - KS1 Christmas Performance 1/3

Monday 9th December (AM) - Greediest Elf Pantomime in School for EYFS

Monday 9th December 1:30pm - KS1 Christmas Performance 2/3

Tuesday 10th Dec 1.30pm - - KS1 Christmas Performance 3/3

Tuesday 10th December (AM - 9:30am) - LKS2 (Y3/4) Christmas Service

Wednesday 11th December - Christmas Dinner and Christmas Jumper Day

Thursday 12th December (PM) - KS1 Pantomime in school (Dib and Dab) / (PM - 1:30am) - LKS2 (Y3/4) Christmas Service

Monday 16th December (AM) - KS2 Pantomime at the Forum

Monday 16th December (PM - 1:30pm) - Nursery and Reception Christmas Performance

Tuesday 17th December (AM - 9:30am) - Nursery and Reception Christmas Performance

Wednesday 18th December (10 am) - Y5/6 Carol Service for Y5 Parents

Thursday 19th December (10 am) - Y5/6 Carol Service for Y6 Parents

Friday 20th December - last school day before Christmas

Monday 6th January - School reopens for Spring Term

Picture News



2-14--collective-worship-powerpoint-2024-12-06



What's happening






in the news this week?



Let's have a look at this week's

9th – 15th December 2024

What a star!

 God	 Creation	 Fall	 People of God
 Incarnation	 Gospel	 Salvation	 Kingdom of God

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Wicked, the hugely successful Broadway musical, has recently premiered worldwide as a film. Wicked shares a different perspective of the events in the magical land featured in 'The Wizard of Oz', prior to Dorothy's arrival. It is the story of Elphaba (a misunderstood witch), who later becomes the Wicked Witch of the West, and her friendship with Glinda, who becomes the Good Witch. Karis Musongole, aged 10 from Manchester, plays the young version of Elphaba.

Think together
and talk



Think together and talk

How does looking up at the stars in the night sky make you feel?

How do you 'shine like a star'? What joy do you bring to others? What gifts can you share?

Who guides you, lights up your path and helps you on your journey through life?



What does the Bible have to say?





Over 2000 years ago, some wise men saw a very special star in the sky. They were excited as they knew this star would lead them to a new king. They arrived in Bethlehem, where they found baby Jesus, in a manger. The star guided them to the greatest 'star' of all. Jesus guides us throughout our lives and can help us all to 'shine'.

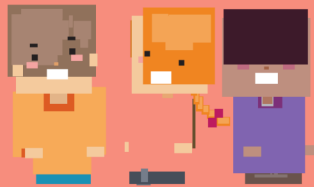


You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16



What do others think?



Look at the stars. See their
beauty. And in that beauty,
see yourself.

Draya Mooney - author

Time to be quiet
and to pray



Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for Jesus,
Thank you that he is our guiding star, he
shows us the way, he helps us all shine,
We are all stars, help us to shine our lights
on others and spread joy,
Amen

Continue thinking






Key Stage 1 class discussion

We are all stars in different ways! We might call someone a star if they do something kind, helpful or amazing!

Can you tell someone in your class why they are a star?

What makes you a star?



Key Stage 2 class discussion





This time of year brings joy and excitement for many. However, for some, it can be a difficult and dark time. Discuss why this might be.

How can you bring light and happiness and shine on others at this time of year?



Time to worship

**We Three Kings
Click here for the hymn online**



**We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following vonder star.**



O Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thv Perfect Light.



Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.



O Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thv Perfect Light.



Frankincense to offer have I
Incense owns a Deity nigh
Prayer and praising, voices raising
Worship Him. God most high





O Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thv Perfect Light.



Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume,
Breathes a life of gathering gloom,
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.



O Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thv Perfect Light.



Glorious now behold Him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice,
Heaven sings, 'Alleluia!'
'Alleluia!' the Earth replies.





O Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thv Perfect Light.



[Contact Us](#)



If you would like to contact us about anything in the newsletter or need an additional conversation then please don't hesitate to catch me outside on the yard or through making an appointment at the office.

Clifton Avenue, Billingham. Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5BX

Tel: 01642 650 426

Email: **office@priorsmill.org.uk**

Visit us on the web at <https://priorsmill.org.uk/>¹

Safeguarding

The school safeguarding policy is on the website and a paper version can also be requested from the office. Safeguarding is at the heart of all we do at Prior's Mill CE Primary School.

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mr Linsley

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - Miss Huddart

EMERGENCY HELP DURING THE WEEKEND / HOLIDAYS

During the weekend / holidays, whilst your children are playing outside with friends, we would recommend that your child knows where to go to for help if they need it. This might be a grandparent or family friend, as well as at home. It is important that your child knows how to call the emergency services for help.

We have been advised that you talk to your child about risk-taking behaviour and the potential consequences of any decisions that they make whilst away from home. Give your children the confidence to say "no" to taking part in any risky or anti-social behaviour with their peers.

Of course, we want the children to enjoy the weekend and part of that is becoming more independent from parents; however, we want all our children to return to school fit, well and safe after the weekend.

TEWV Crisis team (CAMHS & Adults) has now changed.

There is a new system and people must call 111- option 2 - this is the 111 Mental Health line & call handlers will transfer to the local crisis team appropriately.

The Children's Hub is the first point of contact for anyone who has a concern about the welfare or safety of a child or young person.

¹<https://priorsmill.org.uk/>

The Children's Hub

Stockton: 01642 130080

childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk²

Crisis support line

If someone you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

Billingham & Stockton Borough Foodbank

4-6 West Precinct

Billingham Town Centre

Billingham TS23 2NH

07583 575522

<https://billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk>

info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk³

If you have any welfare or safeguarding concerns relating to a child in school during term time, please do not hesitate to contact –

Mrs ALLISON HANSON

PUPIL WELFARE & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Prior's Mill C/E Primary School

Billingham TS225BX

01642 650426

office@priorsmill.org.uk

²<mailto:childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk>

³<mailto:info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk>

School Vision

As an inclusive Church of England primary school, we welcome children and families of all faiths and none to be part of our school family which has a distinctly Christian character and ethos. At Prior's Mill, we encourage everyone to discover, flourish and grow in their talents, nurturing their God given gifts and potential. We work with passion to foster a love of learning, a love of community and personal resilience. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we are a school where kindness, forgiveness, respect and honesty underpin our words and actions.

Biblical Narrative - The Parable of The Mustard Seed – Mark 4:30-32 (NIV)

“What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.” **School Values**

We give our best - We are kind - We are honest - We are respectful - We forgive