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Our Lady Queen of Peace RC Primary School Newsletter

December 2015



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A Fantastic Term!

We have had a wonderful term in school with the children experiencing many different learning opportunities, from singing in Durham Cathedral to visiting London, and of course, the annual residential trip to Derwent Hill.

Our special thanks go to the many volunteers and friends of the school who support all aspects of school life and give willingly of their time. We are very grateful to you as the "added extras" would not be possible without your assistance.

We are also thankful for the ongoing support our children are given with their homework and additional activities; children who are well-supported at home benefit greatly.

Advent Celebrations

Thank you for joining us for Mass during Advent and for being wonderful audiences for our nativity plays. It is always incredible to see the way in which our smallest children can proclaim the Good News in such a meaningful and thought-provoking way. Well done to everyone who took part and especially to the staff who have supported the children. Well done also to KS2 children and staff for a wonderful carol service.

Well done to the children in Year 3 who supported the parish Carol Service. We had lots of positive comments about the children's contribution and their

impeccable behaviour. Well done children, we are so proud of you!

Thank you for your financial support during Advent. The money raised on Jumper Day will be used to pay for party food and gifts. £271.10 was raised for Children in Need and we have made several donations of fresh food for people seeking asylum or refuge.

Visits

Year 4 had an interesting trip to Tesco in Chester-le-Street, where they learned how food gets from "Farm to Fork." Highlight of the visit was undoubtedly the chance to taste new foods!

Year 4 also travelled to St Robert's to take part in our deanery Handball competition, finishing in a very credible third place. They demonstrated excellent sportsmanship and lots of fun was had by all.

Our Year 6 children enjoyed their trip to Derwent Hill where they all tried new activities and overcame fears. Well done children, you were all great ambassadors for our school and we are really proud of your achievements. Thank you to Miss Askew, Mrs Duncan and Miss Robson for supporting the children in this wonderful experience.

Year 5 took part in a schools' singing festival in Durham Cathedral. This was an incredible experience, enjoyed by all. The organisers of the event informed me that in their many years of running

the event, our children were the most enthusiastic, engaged and well-behaved. How proud I was!

Year 5 were also lucky enough to visit London as part of their learning about the British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance. After a walking tour, taking in Buckingham Palace, Horse Guards Parade, St James' Park, Trafalgar Square, The Mall, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Bridge and London Eye, a visit to McDonalds was a necessity before a remarkable visit to Downing Street. This was followed by a unique opportunity to tour the Palace of Westminster and sit in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords while debates were taking place. This was followed by a workshop based on how laws are made, when we were joined by staff from Bridget Phillipson MP's constituency office. After a well-earned tea at Pizza Express we returned to Kings Cross for the return train journey home. We understand that this is the first time a primary school from our area visited Parliament and we are very thankful to Miss Caldwell, Mrs Richardson, Mrs Merrington and Mrs Ludford for accompanying the trip.

At the end of November we were visited by author, Guy Bass. Guy was incredibly funny and he gave us an insight into his inspirations for characters and his motivation to write. Our thanks go to Miss Askew for organising the visit.

Photographs

Thank you for supporting our policy by not taking photographs in school. As you are aware, we ask permission before any photos are taken and when this is not granted we are unable to allow friends and families to take images of school events. We know, however, that school memories of are highly valued and therefore will continue to publish images on the school blog. This will be updated with Christmas events soon.

Building Work

As you are all fully aware, work to extend our building has started with a vengeance! The work includes four new classrooms, a new entrance system and office suite, a new drainage system and expansion of the church car park. The work is expected to be completed by September 2016 but until that time there will continue to be restricted parking and access. Congestion on Station Road is proving to be a major concern and we have been notified of a number of "near misses" and abusive behaviour incidents. It is very difficult to overcome traffic issues and I urge you to remain patient and park with consideration. Please **do not** park in front of church or at the entrance to the car park as access is required constantly. Please do not park on the pavements as many families are experiencing difficulty when walking with pushchairs and small children. Police are



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notified when there is a traffic issue and they have informed me that they will issue penalties when necessary. The staff of the Masonic Hall have kindly offered to allow families to use their car park and therefore I urge you to consider this if you need to drive to school. Our school council are currently looking at this issue and are encouraging everyone to walk part or the whole journey to school as often as possible. Finally, whilst I do understand that mornings can be very stressful and our current situation is adding to the pressures at the start of the day, please be very mindful of your behaviour if you find yourself caught up in a traffic problem. Several children have been very distressed when they have witnessed verbal and physical abuse between adults; this is unacceptable.

Year of Mercy

Isabelle Kerr and Patrick Connelly represented the school at Mass at St Mary's Cathedral to mark the start of the Year of Mercy. This special jubilee year has been called by Pope Francis and over the coming months we will be seeking ways in which to show mercy and forgiveness. For more information please visit: <http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en.html>

Peer Support

Lunch times can be challenging but because of our Young Leaders, fun is had by all. These Year 5 volunteers

have undertaken training with Mrs Swales and now support others with games and activities to enable playtimes to be engaging. Well done children.

Some of our Year 3 children have joined the Change4Life lunchtime club when they have been learning about health and fitness. Thank you to Mrs Swales and Mrs Moore for making this possible.

Staffing

I am delighted to inform you that our new Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Elizabeth Maher, will be joining our team in January. Mrs Maher is a very experienced teacher and is coming to us from Ss Peter and Paul RC Primary, Tyne Dock. Initially she will not have a class responsibility but will be supporting learning across the whole school.

Our grateful thanks go to Mr Grant who has been with us in recent months and we wish him well in his future career.

And Finally....

On behalf of all staff I would like to thank you for your kind gifts and cards. We wish you all a peaceful Christmas and a happy holiday and look forward to seeing the children back at school, refreshed and renewed, on Wednesday 6th January.

Recommended Reading

EYFS: The Christmas Story
Ian Beck
KS1: The Christmas Story
Juliet David

KS2: The Unofficial Bible for Minecrafters - Stories from the Bible told block by block
Garret Romines

Adults: The Oxford Book of Christmas Stories
Dennis Pepper

Barbara Reilly-O'Donnell

Weekend Mass Times

Our Lady Queen of Peace Church

Sunday: 10am

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church

Sunday: 11am
6pm

St Bede's Church

Saturday: 5pm
Sunday: 8.30am

St John Boste Church

Sunday: 9.30am

Christmas Service Times

Our Lady Queen of Peace Church

Monday 21 December,
Confessions 6 - 6.45pm

Christmas Eve: 6pm
8pm

Christmas Day: 10am

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church

Christmas Eve: 5pm
Christmas Day: 10.30am

St Bede's Church

Christmas Eve: 4pm
Christmas Day: Midnight
8.30am

St John Boste Church

Christmas Eve: 7pm
Christmas Day: 9am

Prayer for the start of the Year of Mercy:

Loving Jesus

You taught us to show mercy through the story of the Good Samaritan.

You ask us to go and do the same, to be good Samaritans to others.

We promise to be your hands and feet of mercy, helping those in need through our actions.

We promise to be your eyes of mercy, looking with compassion on the world.

We promise to support our pupils to be merciful and compassionate also, so that our school can be a community of mercy, showing love to others in Your name.

Amen