Dear Parents and Carers,

On behalf of the children, staff and Governors at Ferndown First School, I’d like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thank you for your continued support of Ferndown First School.

In addition to the demands of an ambitious school curriculum, the final weeks of term have been packed full of events to mark the festive season….more details regarding these are provided below.

---

**Staff News**

**Baby News!**

Congratulations to Mrs Barnes and her husband on the safe arrival of their daughter, Esmae Rose, weighing 5lb 3oz. She’s gorgeous!

**Goodbye and Good Luck!**

After many years of committed service to our school, we have recently said farewell to Mrs Andrew, who has been a Teaching Assistant and the school’s Librarian for over 22 years as she is now retiring. We have also said farewell to two members of our cleaning team - Mrs Barnes who has been with us for over 25 years and Mrs Batchelor who leaves us after 13 years.

We thank them all very much for their unwavering dedication to our school as they leave to spend more well-earned time to rest and enjoy time with their families and friends.

---

**New Appointments.**

We are also pleased to advise that we have appointed four new cleaners to our staff. We have welcomed Mr Roik, Miss Averill, Miss Williams and Miss Goodwin. They will be a great addition to our cleaning team.
Over the past few weeks, school has been extremely busy preparing for the end of term performances, concerts, nativities and other events that are planned for this time of year:

- Yr 4 Peter Pan Performance
- Choir on Tour
- Christmas Lunch
- Bedtime Story Event
- Christmas Services at St Mary’s
- EYFS Christmas Performances
- Wear a Christmas Outfit or Festive Colours
- Christmas Jumper Day
- Christmas Carols in Ferndown

I have been so impressed by the way the children have behaved and adapted to each and every event they have taken part in. They have shown us what brilliant actors, singers, readers and dancers they are (even though some were very nervous) and I am thrilled that we have been able to provide such a variety of celebrations that parents and carers have been able to enjoy and attend.

The St Mary’s services were lovely this year with each year group performing a song. As mentioned in my closing thank you, here is a link to the article from Age UK.


I would also like to thank all the staff for their continued support and tireless commitment to ensure that these events are so successful and special for all those children who have taken part.
Donations

We are very grateful for all your generous donations to the various events that have taken place in school over the past few weeks and which have been very much appreciated:

Yr 4 Peter Pan Production - £230.37 (£115 to Great Ormond St and remainder to school fund)
Bedtime Story Event - £561
Yr 4 Choir Tour - £85 from St Mary’s Mews
EYFS Christmas Production - £119.48
Children in Need - £114.27

Donations will either be sent to the various charities concerned or will go to the school fund.

**For further information and photos about the events above and below, please see our website**

The children thoroughly enjoyed learning about the history of reindeer, how they live in our warmer climate, all about how their antlers grow, how they shed them and what they like to eat. And, of course, this busy time of the year when they pull Santa around on his sleigh!

They were so excited to see real reindeer!

Christmas Surprise!

Last week, we spent time setting the props, scenery and coordinating all the children and staff ready for a recording of a very special Christmas video which will be available to view on the school website. The children and staff have had great fun making this video and special thanks go to Mrs Lord for her hard work overseeing the filming, direction and production of this for everyone to enjoy!

Christmas Decoration
Thank you to Mrs Ellement for kindly gifting a Christmas/winter decoration for every child! It is very kind.
Other News...

Supporting the Community at Christmas

Food Parcels – Our thanks go to Mrs Hurst’s husband who is Managing Director of MVS Audio Visual, and who has very generously donated a large quantity of food to the school. Mrs Bramley has done a brilliant job dividing this up into food parcels which have been distributed to families locally.

Santa Sacks – Many thanks also to Ferndown Community Support Group who have donated a number of Santa Sacks to our school which contain a variety of gifts for those children and families locally. Thanks, again, to Mrs Bramley for coordinating the distribution of the Santa Sacks.

Developing a New Behaviour Policy

We were pleased to welcome around 60 parents to our presentations on Monday regarding the changes that we have been trialling and our new approach to developing a relational behaviour policy. Your comments were very much appreciated.

We look forward to being able to share a new draft policy with parents in the new term.

Tips for Staying Safe Online this Christmas

With a huge increase in sales of devices, it’s important to ensure that you and your children are safe when playing with new technology. To help, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP (NCA) have provided a few top tips to help keep your household safe online over the holidays. Please see the following links for further information:

https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/top-tips-for-staying-safe-online-at-christmas
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Parental-controls/

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2023

The Royal British Legion have thanked the school for its support again this year. They have advised that £15 was raised to go to the charity from your kind donations.
Adverse Weather - Information for Parents re School Closure

As the weather can become unpredictable at this time of the year, arrangements need to be in place to cope with sudden snowfalls or severe weather that may prevent staff from reaching school.

- Parents are advised that, in the event of a heavy frost, there may be occasions when site staff have to lock all access gates until gritting of key areas has been completed.
- There may be days when we have to bring children into school from doors at the front of school.
- Parents will be notified of any changes to the entry and exit arrangements but this might be at short notice, so we ask for your patience, understanding and co-operation.
- Parents must:
  - adhere to the designated, gritted pathways into school only
  - supervise their children before and after school whilst on school premises
  - ensure that their children are wearing sensible footwear and warm coats

- Please check ParentMail text messaging service and updated notices on our website.

Parents can also access information on: https://mapping.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/closedservices/Service/schools

Finally, have a lovely break and enjoy this special time with your family and friends.

We look forward to seeing the children back at school on **Tuesday 2\textsuperscript{nd} January 2024**.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Sean Watts
Headteacher