



St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School

Acorn Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP3 8DW

Tel: 01442 264835 e-mail: admin@albertthegreat.herts.sch.uk

www.albertthegreat.herts.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs K little



NEWSLETTER

15th December, 2017

Catholic Life of the School

Our KS2 children helped us celebrate the beginning of the season of Advent with a Christingle Service on Friday 1st December. It was timed perfectly as the candles started to burn out just as we finished.



Our KS1 Nativity took place on Tuesday 12th December with our Year 1 and Year 2 children demonstrating some outstanding acting and singing abilities with their performance of 'A Midwife Crisis'. We had a donkey that no one ever listens to, a very busy midwife and all of the usual characters from the Nativity story. A huge thank you to Miss Lally, Miss Wallek, Miss Baird, Mrs Smith, Mrs Krezel, Mrs Mc Donagh, Mr McIlroy and Miss Herring for helping the children learn their lines, their songs and their dances/staging. The scenery was created by Mrs McIntosh and I am sure you will agree it provided a fantastic backdrop for the whole play. Thank you to any parents who provided costumes.

At the end of the play, the children asked for a 'retiring collection' for the children of Bethlehem. This was to support the collection that took place in our local Parishes over the weekend. I am absolutely delighted to report that we raised £152 which has been taken to Dr David Toorawa who will ensure it goes to St Joseph's School and the Holy Family Children's Home in Bethlehem. Thank you for your generosity.



KS1 Nativity



'The more I learn about the world in which I live, the closer I grow to God.'



On the morning of December 12th, Mrs Oscher and I had the pleasure of accompanying the Year 4 children to Westminster Cathedral. We travelled to London with children and staff from St Rose's and St Cuthbert Mayne. When we arrived, we heard the Christmas story and joined the choir mistress in singing Christmas Carols. The actors were accompanied by a real donkey and sheep. Bishop John Sherrington led the service and it was really lovely being in such a Holy place worshipping with hundreds of other children from the Westminster Diocese.



Westminster Cathedral

We had a tremendous response to our appeal for filled sweetie jars – we had just over 200 jars donated. The winning class was the Year 4 class with a total of 34 jars donated. They will have their treat on Monday 18th December. Thank you again for supporting our PTFA appeal and we hope to see all of you on Saturday 16th December from 11:00-2:00 at our Christmas Fair.

We had our Christmas lunch on Wednesday 13th December and the children all wore their Christmas Jumpers. We managed to fit the whole school into the Hall and all of the staff served the children. Thank you to Mrs Stewart and her team in the kitchen for providing such a great meal, to Miss Baird and the Teaching Assistants who decorated the hall and the tables, and the mid-day supervisors.



On Thursday 14th of December, the children and staff from Year Reception to Year 6 all went to St Albans to see 'Aladdin' – oh yes they did! There was a lot of laughter, audience participation and an ice-cream in the interval. A very entertaining trip that was enjoyed by all! One of our former pupils – Katie Lulham was performing that day and it was lovely seeing her on the stage too.



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On Friday 15th December, our Foundation Stage children shared the Nativity Story with friends and family. Despite some technical glitches with the sound system, they performed their lines, songs, dances and movements brilliantly and gave the audience a memorable Nativity story. Thank you to Mrs Lulham, Mrs Turp, Mrs Redman, Mrs Lewis, Mrs Watts and Mrs Trnkova for all their hard work in putting this together.

We held a retiring collection for the children of Bethlehem and raised an incredible £131.16. Thank you again for your generosity at this special time of year.



Foundation Stage Nativity

Friday was also the deadline for the donations for the Christmas Appeal from the Salvation Army. You will see from the photo below that there was a tremendous response to this appeal and I am proud to be the Headteacher of a school with a community of such loving and caring families. Bless you.



Christmas Jumper Day: Many children chose to wear their Christmas Jumpers and we raised £86.62 for Save the Children. Thank you.

Staffing News

Next week we will be saying farewell to 3 members of staff – Mrs Turp who will begin her maternity leave, Mr Gibson who is leaving to go and teach at Adeyfield Secondary School, and Mrs Wickens who is the new Headteacher at Great Gaddesden school. We wish them all the best.

A very warm welcome to Mrs Ahluwalia who will be joining us as the Year 5 Teacher in January.

Staff Request

We respectfully wish to ask that if you need to speak to your child's class teacher about their learning, please make arrangements with the office so that they can schedule a specific time to meet with you. The class teachers are responsible for getting all of their children into class, settled and ready for learning so are unable to speak to parents then and give an appropriate amount of time or attention. We are very happy to meet with parents but request that you please make an appointment through the school office. Thank you.



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PTFA Christmas Fair Saturday 16th December

I encourage all families to come and do some last minute Christmas shopping as well as join us for festive fun and games. The Fair will run from 11:00-2:00. Come and grab a bargain (or two), have a go on the bottle and sweetie tombola, have some lunch and at the same time, support our PTFA in their fund-raising. I have sent out a request for Year 6 Volunteers. Thank you in advance for your support.

Curriculum News

We have been using 'Learning Powers' for just over 2 years and can see the impact this has had on our children's attitudes towards learning. One of our post-Ofsted actions is to ensure that parents understand the fully inclusive nature of our school, so this is to help provide some clarity around how we use and implement Building Learning Power. BLP, alongside our Gospel Values, underpins our whole curriculum and I thought it would be helpful if I sent out a leaflet with further information. This will enable you to help your children at home and work more closely in partnership with us at school. I will also be publishing the weekly themes and dates for the rest of this academic year to link with our Liturgical Calendar. This will be on the school website in January. The theme for the week commencing 8th January is 'Trust'. I would be grateful for your feedback and happy to answer any questions you may have. The BLP leaflet will accompany this newsletter. If you would like further information, the following website is very helpful: <https://www.buildinglearningpower.com/>



Building Learning Power

We have also been using Makaton Sign Language and you will have seen examples of this during our assemblies and our Wow Day assemblies. Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people to communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order. Some of the more common signs we use are signs for 'working as a team', 'not letting anyone down', 'doing your best' and 'listening carefully'. Mrs Wilson has been on a 2 day training course so that we can start to roll out many more signs across the whole school. From January we will be introducing a 'Sign of the Week'. Details will follow in January. We hope these will become embedded in the daily life of our school and support excellent communication from and between all of our pupils and staff. For further information please see: <https://www.makaton.org/aboutMakaton>

Communication Champion: Many of you will be aware that Mrs Rivers has been deployed as a 'Communication Champion' this year. She supports children across the whole school who have challenges with speech and language skills and her dedicated teaching time is having a very positive impact on outcomes for many of our children. As part of her work with the children in the Foundation Stage, she has introduced 'Bailey Bear' who will go home with children and they will have an opportunity to share what they have been doing as a family outside school and then talk about it when they come back to school. This is helping children develop confidence with their speech and communication skills.



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Christmas Homework

Over the past 2 years we have asked families to support us in working together to create something linked to Christmas. Two years ago the children made Christmas cribs which were placed around the whole school and last year, the children created crowns to wear for our celebration of the Feast of Epiphany. This year, we would like to ask that all of the children create a star and bring them back to school on January 4th. We invite parents to attend an assembly on Friday 5th January at 2:45 where we will celebrate the Feast of Epiphany and the children will hang their stars on some special trees.

Dates for the rest of this term

16.12.17	PTFA Christmas Fair 11-2
18.12.17	Class Parties Mr Marvel in F Stage (am) Christmas Carol Service at Our Lady's 7:00 pm
19.12.17	Term Ends 1:30 pm
3.1.18	INSET Day (School closed to children)
4.1.18	New Term begins for all children Please bring stars to school
5.1.18	Epiphany Assembly 2:45 parents welcome

Mrs K Little
Headteacher



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