

## Hello Everyone

We have made it to the end of the first term with a smile and joy and merriment in our vision of 'Together We Can'

The children have thoroughly enjoyed all of our Christmas celebrations and have truly relished in the usual "spirit of Leavening" at this time of year. Thank you for your tremendous efforts in the nativity costumes and joining us to appreciate and enjoy the fine young theatrical talent we have at Leavening.



This term has not been without its significant challenges. Poor absence due to the COVID climate and caution and worries that encompass this period, have impacted greatly on our school community. As school leaders we truly encourage improved attendance in the new year and will work determinedly to secure this. All pupils are best placed at school for their emotional health and well being and academic development. It is our combined duties to ensure this safeguarding. Let's look forward to 2022.

## School Improvement Successes

This term we have made rapid and sustained progress in the following areas of school improvement:

A successful introduction to our new early reading and phonics scheme. The staff in Early Years Foundation stage and Year One and Two are the essential elements in this marked improvement. The value of "teaching with passion" is epitomised within them and the delivery and implementation of this programme has seen rapid progress rates in early reading. Not only this, but the children love for reading is evidenced through observing their play, listening to them read and talking to them about reading. External monitoring from Local Authority agreed that we have made significant strides in this area.



## DIARY DATES (Events may be subject to change at short notice)

### JANUARY

**Mon 3rd**

**Bank Holiday**

**Tues 4th**

**Training Day**

**Weds 5th**

**First day of term for pupils.**

**Children to bring in Memory Box donations (see below)**

**Sat 15th**

**Deadline for Reception pupil applications to NYCC website**

**Tues 25th**

**First Aid Workshops (whole school inc Nursery)**

**Our topic next half term is 'Memory Box'**

**On Weds 5th Jan- children will need:**

- a toy or object that is special or meaningful to them
- a photo of when they were a baby
- a cardboard box (Acorns Nursery and Conkers children only)

Continuing with the EYFS/KS1 quality of education; the whole classroom has undergone a considerable transformation. As such, the indoor and outdoor classrooms offer rich learning opportunities designed to engage children's interests. The provision offered to all is high quality, well resourced and facilitates underinvest learning , allowing children to make meaning and connections in their learning. Again, this is down to the hard work, dedication and high standards of the team led by Mrs Bennett and Mrs Bedford.



The curriculum is in its latter stages of design this academic year. All teachers are contributing to this and as a result pupil voice tells us that our curriculum is “interesting, fun, useful and allows us to learn things for a reason”

Curriculum leaders can see that pupils are knowing more and remembering more and are building on prior knowledge.

Our pupils in KS2 are clearly developing a strong appreciation and enjoyment for reading. A new approach to teaching reading in KS2, along with rich and engaging texts to deliver the curriculum has enabled this.

All of our KS2 pupils are now trained “Well being champions” in the new term each pupil will take it in turns to hold this role within school , supporting other pupils and contributing to our harmonious and happy school.

The children have continued to be thoroughly engaged in the arts this term with Oak trees pupils learning to play a brass instrument and the choir learning their songs for young voices in January.

Leadership has strengthened with the development of Governance and introduction of a compliment of widely skilled and ambitious governors.

**Arrangements for the new term**

With the current situation and the increased spread of the omicron variant, the arrangements for the new term are left unclear at this stage. However, unless you hear otherwise, we will continue with the current arrangements we have in place with the existing drop off/collection times, children NOT in bubbles, rigorous cleaning and personal hygiene, limited visitors in school.

**Staffing**

We have a couple of changes to staffing next term. We are saying goodbye to Miss Holdsworth who has been part of our team this term. Miss Holdsworth has been a joy to work with and we would like to thank her for everything she has brought to our school. We will be saying hello to Mrs Smith who will work across Conkers and Oak Trees class next term.

Finally, on behalf of the staff and governors we would like to wish you all a very happy, safe and healthy Christmas break. We hope you enjoy the festive period and we look forward to welcoming you back on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

My very best festive wishes

*Sian Mitchell*



Christmas at Leavening School





When parents and carers finally have the chance to spend some quality time with their child over Christmas, many face a familiar struggle to prise their young one's attention away from their phone, console, tablet or computer. Fun family bonding over the festive period, however, doesn't have to exclude devices. There are sackfuls of Christmas activities and ideas online which grown-ups and children can enjoy together. We've compiled our own 'nice list' of seasonal suggestions for how to ...

# MAKE THE MOST OF THE ONLINE WORLD THIS CHRISTMAS

## 1 EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

Budding bakers will relish helping out in the kitchen with some tasty festive treats. Spend some time together researching child-friendly Christmas recipes online (the BBC Good Food site is an excellent place to start), and then you and your little elves can rustle up gingerbread santas, marshmallow snowmen or reindeer shortbread. The only thing that's more fun is eating your creations afterwards!

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WHEN THE SNOWMAN BRINGS THE SNOW...

## 2 THE OLD SONGS ARE THE BEST?

We've all had that Christmas compilation CD that was almost perfect, if it wasn't inexplicably missing one of your best-loved tracks. In this era of music streaming, however, your little helpers can assist you in compiling a definitive playlist of all your favourite seasonal songs – no more pining for The Pretenders or wishing for Wizzard.

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## 3 DECK THE HALLS

There's no such thing as 'too many' Christmas trimmings! Let your child channel their excitement into some creative crafting, and you'll make memories as well as your own DIY decorations. There are loads of step-by-step guides online (including video walkthroughs on YouTube) for seasonal showpieces like paper plate angels, handprint wreaths and cupcake wrapper Christmas trees.

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## 4 A WINTER'S TALE

Everyone enjoys a story at this time of year: after all, the whole celebration is based on an engrossing yarn. Sites such as Audible are an excellent way of entertaining excited young ones, with classics like Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and seasonal short stories by Enid Blyton alongside more contemporary Christmas tales by the likes of Tom Fletcher, JK Rowling and Ben Miller.

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## 5 BROUGHT ME SOME CORN FOR POPPIN'

Snuggling up against the winter weather with the family (and a generous helping of chocolates) to enjoy a well-loved movie is a delightful Christmas tradition. The usual streaming services have some classic candidates on offer: *Home Alone* and *The Santa Clause* are on Disney+, while Amazon Prime has *Elf* and *The Grinch*, and Netflix goes with *The Princess Switch* and *The Christmas Chronicles*.

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## 6 GUESS WHAT I FORGOT?

Friends and family pitting their wits against each other on Zoom, Teams or Skype really took off during lockdown, so why not revive the tradition over the holidays? Your questions could be on the biggest news, sport and showbiz stories of 2021, or be Christmas themed, or you could stick to classic general knowledge. Ideal for those days between Christmas and New Year.

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## 7 CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THOSE FACES

People used to express their gratitude for a thoughtful Christmas gift with a thank you card or a dutiful phone call. Not in the digital age: now your relations can see first-hand on video calls how delighted the children are with their presents – and even how they look in that slightly questionable hand-knitted pullover.

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## 8 A WORLD OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW

From turkey on the beach in Australia to roller-skating to church in Venezuela, Christmas is celebrated in a variety of ways worldwide – curious youngsters might enjoy discovering other nations' festive traditions online. Google's Santa Tracker is a brilliant (and free) starting point, with games, activities and animations to help children enjoy learning as they count down to the big day!

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## 9 THE NEAR AND THE DEAR ONES

Between time constraints, distance, the weather and Covid precautions (or a combination of all four) for many families it just won't be possible to physically spend time with everyone they'd ideally like to this Christmas. Video calling technology, of course, takes some of the sting out of the disappointment by virtually transporting loved ones into your living room.

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## 10 KIDS FROM ONE TO 92

If Santa's brought your young ones a console this year (or they already had one), it's a perfect excuse for some quality time while they gleefully trounce you at FIFA or Mario Kart. Digital versions of traditional board games like Monopoly and Cluedo are available on most platforms, too: get the whole household together for a modern take on some old-school family fun.

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