



# *Working Together for Our Children*

## *Autumn Term 4 2023/24 Newsletter*

### **Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Thanks!**

Well, we have made it to the end of this autumn term at Carr Hill and the time seems to have flown over from the start of the term back in September. It has been lovely to see just how settled all our Nursery and Reception children are in school – truly part of our big family and a very special group of children. We are immensely proud of them all already. Speaking of ‘big’ families we have never been bigger here at Carr Hill with just three spaces available across the eight year groups in school. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all, and your extended families, a wonderful holiday period! We appreciate all the support you give us and your children, on a daily basis. It makes such a difference to our pupils and the guidance we can then give your children here in school. It has been a long and challenging term but the consistency of your children and the way they behave and engage in their learning does help us here to drive up standards and will help children as they move into adulthood. As always - they are just amazing!

The last few weeks have been busy and brilliant in Carr Hill. Just this week, our children in Year 5 and 6 performed their Winter Concert to a packed-out top hall of parents and carers with some beautiful singing, drumming and ukulele playing. Year 3 and 4 shared their amazing performance just last week to parents and carers where we saw a variety of performances that reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas. The children showed us all that this should be a time when we come together, as families, to show our love for each other and to remember those who may be suffering or lonely. It was superb! Our Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 performance was amazing, and we had standing room only in the hall for this. It was lovely to see so many children involved and taking part! Finally, kicking off our Winter Celebrations were the youngest children in school - our Nursery. They were amazing and we certainly have some real stars of the future there for sure. I need to say a huge thankyou to you, our parents and carers, as you have supported this brilliantly by attending so many of these events - it means so much to the children when they can see you there for them – regardless of age!

One of the biggest highlights, at this time of year, is when we get to hear the wishes of our eldest children for their futures at St. Alban’s Church. As always, they brought our very special Rev Danie to tears! Our children spoke about praying for family members; wanting to support homeless people and looking for an end to war and intolerance. This was an incredibly thoughtful piece of work from our children - the idea for this came a few years ago from the amazing PSHE lessons our children complete each week in school.

The arts and crafts sessions in our Early Years and in Year 1 and 2 have been incredibly well attended. And over the past five days we have had children visiting the ‘Fenwick Christmas Window’, in Newcastle, with Hot Chocolate. The Santa Magic event with our Nursery children at the Deckham Children’s Centre went well and our Reception children took part in our now traditional ‘Polar Express Day’ – they certainly seemed to have a great time over the course of the day. All our children looked fantastic for their parties and enjoyed the celebrations!

Another tradition we have here at Carr Hill will involve the moving of our Christmas tree to St John’s Church, on Sherriff Hill, where it will be on display for the rest of Christmas period – a Carr Hill tradition that brings much amusement to us as we try and ‘shift’ it without everything falling off! In the last few days, we have also had a hugely successful Christmas Dinner! The food was brilliant, and the children, and adults, enjoyed the festive feed – a huge thanks to our hardworking kitchen team for this! Today, the main man, Santa, was in school to share gifts with your children and wave goodbye from the veranda at the end of the day.

Please remember that we are aware that life is challenging at the minute, and we want to be able to offer as much support as we can. Remember that a number of us in school can refer families to the Gateshead Foodbank. While we are away you can email the school for help, and we will be able to respond to these queries in the New Year. If you are really struggling the following website, set up by Gateshead Council, signposts you to support available in Gateshead now: [Help with the cost of living - Gateshead Council](#). We are also aware that Rev Danie, at St. Alban’s, has offered support and you can contact her on 0191 4422499. Once again, all children eligible for benefits related free school meals will be entitled to a £15 voucher for each child in the family per week. Two eligible children will therefore receive £60 over the two-week break.

I need to say a huge thanks to our cleaning team and Brian Blewitt, our site manager, for all their hard work keeping the school clean, warm and safe for us all. David Lee and Joyce Cheek continue to do a stellar job running our free breakfast club on a daily basis (nearly 60+ children). Stephanie Curry continues to support families and children with a huge passion and makes a difference to so many! I personally want to say a huge thanks to all our staff, teachers, support staff and the admin team for tirelessly working for all the Carr Hill children and our amazing Carr Hill Community.

We have had several of our governing body members making visits to the school recently to check on learning, children's personal development, and their attitudes to school. The governors have all commented on just how incredible the behaviour and attitudes of the majority of children are; how much progress children are making in their classes; and that the children show real empathy and understanding towards each other. They have listened to children read and spoken to them about how safe they feel in school too! The governors are also very quick to point out that the staff at Carr Hill are amazing and they highlight the huge lengths staff go to in order to support, guide and challenge the pupils – they are quick to remind me that this doesn't happen everywhere!

**Please remember that our basic school uniform consists of:**

Bordeaux coloured sweatshirt/cardigan

White polo shirt

Black or grey trousers for boys (optional for girls)

Black or grey skirt/pinafore dress for girls or a red checked gingham summer dress for the warmer months

Black shoes

**Our PE Uniform is:**

Black shorts, leggings or jogging bottoms

Plain white t-shirt or white polo shirt – remember, children wear their school jumper or cardigan to PE on that day

A pair of trainers that are safe and suitable to wear for physical education lessons (no jewellery to be worn)

*If you are struggling to meet the costs of uniform, please let us know and we can see if we can help!*

**How you can help your child at home**

Making sure they read each night. Reading is the most important skill in school—it helps unlock so much. Please encourage your children to read, even at those times when we know they might not want to! It really does make a big difference.

Work through the basics of Maths with your children – looking at key addition, subtraction and multiplication skills that are age appropriate. Our website has further information on to help with this.

Keeping a check on social media activity. Many friendship problems stem from inappropriate use of social media as children are often not mature enough to cope with the social and emotional aspects of social media. It is for this very reason that social media APPs do not allow children below the age of 13 to create an account.

**Dog Fouling**

We have noticed an increase in dog fouling on the roads/pathways round the school - and on one occasion on the fake grass in the school yard. This left us having to disinfect a whole section of the grass. We have also had dog mess walked into school. Again, this needs careful cleaning and disinfecting to make sure your children don't get poorly. As much as I love dogs, we are not allowed them on the school grounds. Please can you make sure dogs are not brought onto the school yard and when outside the school that we pick up any mess that our dogs leave behind.

**Car Parking**

Thank you for all parents and carers who have been trying to park away from the school and walk the last part of their journey to the school. We want school to be a safe place for our children when they are entering the school and leaving it. Please do not park on the zig zags or in the entrance to the school or in front of our local residents' driveways and garages. Please be considerate to our neighbours and most importantly to your children. The local Police and council are monitoring the parking situation and will be doing spot checks in the New Year.

**Final Thanks!**

On behalf of the governing body, and myself, – we would like to extend a huge thanks to all our pupils, parents/carers and staff for the continued support you all give the school on a daily basis. Have a wonderful Christmas and we hope for a healthy and safe New Year filled with endless blessings! We look forward to seeing you all on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024!