



## Newsletter

Issue No. 7  
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[www.firslower.co.uk](http://www.firslower.co.uk)

Working together to  
achieve our best.

**Chair of Governors:** Gareth Jones

**Governors:** Sue A'Court, Celia Bennett, Adam Campbell, Paul McKinney, Fran Sherry, Phillip Clarke, Jeremy Ramsden, Laura Gilson, Jon Wilson and Jason Hart

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Dear parents/carers,

### **Working together to achieve our best in reading!**

We were very excited to receive a letter from Nick Gibb MP, who is Minister of State for School Standards, congratulating The Firs for our 'outstanding' achievement in ensuring 96% of our Y1 children passed the Y1 phonics test last summer.

As a Read Write Inc. school, we are passionate about reading and are determined that all our children get a fantastic start, developing their skills and as Nick Gibb says in his letter, it means our 'pupils are developing a firm foundation in reading, from which they can become increasingly fluent and develop a lifelong love of reading'.

I was delighted to learn that, in achieving this pass mark with the vast majority of our children, it placed us in the top 7% of primary schools and I want to say a very heartfelt thank you to our dedicated and hard-working staff, who work so conscientiously for all our children at The Firs and to our parents and carers, who support children's learning so successfully at home. We have worked together as a team, to achieve the best for all our children... thank you!

### **Values education**

Our value for November has been patience.

At school, we have explained to the children that patience is about realising that some things just take time and responding to this fact of life by waiting without getting upset. Instead of getting frustrated when they face a difficult situation, patience will help them to act thoughtfully, without getting upset or losing their temper. Patience helps children to generate a positive, measured outlook and to keep going in order to overcome obstacles. We also talked about having patience with one another and that this is part of being caring.

This is a good link into our value for December which is care and compassion. Care and compassion is a value that is so important to us at The Firs. In assembly this week, we talked about how we want our community to be one, where we all care for each other, the school and the environment around us. The children thought about some of the ways we show we are caring at The Firs and those ideas will be displayed on our website and our values display in the entrance hall. Thank you to all the children for their fantastic ideas in our assembly.

### **Christmas Craft Fair**

We would like to thank the PTA for putting on a very successful and enjoyable Christmas Craft Fair, which was held in our school hall last Saturday. There were lots of fantastic craft activities, glitter tattoos, a festive café, Santa grotto, book club and a raffle. All the children, parents, carers and grandparents had a wonderful time and we would also like to thank all the parents who came to help on the day and to those who donated cakes.

### **Y4 Bikeability**

All our Y4 children took part in Bikeability last week, which ran over 3 days to ensure that all the children in Y4 were confident and safe riding a bike. This is something that takes place every year for children in Y4, before their residential trip to Grafham Water takes place. All the children have been issued with their badges and we would like to thank you for ensuring that your child was equipped with their bike, including warm

clothes on the day. The Bikeability instructor commented that all our children were impeccably well behaved, listened well and made a really good effort. We would like to say a big well done to everyone in Oak and Willow, we are very proud of you.

### Christmas Tree Festival

The Christmas tree festival takes place this Saturday and Sunday at St Andrews Church. The Firs will be making their usual entry of a Christmas tree, which the children have been making decorations for. Mrs Brady has been at St Andrews Church today, decorating our tree and we would like to thank her for all her help and to all our children for making such lovely decorations. **Please come and vote for our tree entry during the weekend!**

Our choir will also be singing at the St Andrews Church on Saturday from 1.15 – 1.30pm and letters were given out to our choir this week, detailing all the arrangements.

### Kids' Club

I am pleased to be able to let you know that Andrea Stephenson-White, who already works as a Teaching Assistant at our school will be taking on the role of Kids' Club Leader from 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2019. Heather Edwards will be staying on until the end of January to assist with the handover and all of you will be able to say goodbye to her then.

### Choir Trips to Agate House and Lavender Court

Letters were sent out with the choir this week, letting you know about a choir trip to Agate House and Lavender Court which takes place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December. Thank you to everyone who has returned their slip with an offer to accompany the children on the day. Please keep sending the slips in, if you can help – thank you for your support.

### Christmas Performances

A reminder that our Christmas performance week starts on week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> December. We would like to remind parents, that due to the very limited space in the hall for dress rehearsals, anyone wishing to attend a dress rehearsal must phone the school office and book one of the limited spaces. Currently, Y3 dress rehearsal is full and there are a few remaining spaces for YR, 1 and 2. Below is a reminder of the performance dates:-

Monday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Y1 dress rehearsal in the morning. 9.30am start For parents with younger siblings and other family members Saplings Performance to parents in the afternoon. 2.00pm start
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Pine dress rehearsal in the morning. 9.30am start For parents with younger siblings and other family members Y1 performance to parents in the afternoon. 2.00pm start Y1 Parents to attend.
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Y3 dress rehearsal in the morning. 9.30am start For Parents with younger siblings and other family members Pine performance to parents in the afternoon. 2.00pm start Pine Parents to attend
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Y2 dress rehearsal in the morning. 9.30am start For parents with younger siblings and other family members Y3 performance to parents in the afternoon. 2.00pm start Year 3 Parents to attend
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Y2 performance to parents in the afternoon. 2.00pm start

### Filming Performances

Again, this year, due to falling sales of performance DVDs, we are unable to secure a company to film all the productions without a prohibitive agreement that the school will sell a certain number or be liable for the costs. We understand, therefore, that parents may wish to record performances themselves. If parents are filming or taking photographs during the Christmas performances however, **they must only be for personal use for safeguarding reasons.** Digital video and images shared on Facebook, Youtube and other social networking sites, need the consent from the parents of children in the photos.

### Year 1 Christmas Performance

A parent will be recording the year 1 Christmas performance again this year and copies will be available either electronically by email or on a DVD. If you would like a copy, please email Iain Wilson at [ianwilson24@hotmail.com](mailto:ianwilson24@hotmail.com) from the 13th December onwards.

If you would a copy on DVD, we are asking for a £5 donation to the PTA and your copy of the DVD can be collected from the school reception.

### Christmas Parties

Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Y4 Christmas party in the afternoon	Children to come to school in party clothes.
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup>	YR Christmas party in the afternoon. Y1 Christmas party in the afternoon.	
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Y2 Christmas party in the afternoon Y3 Christmas party in the afternoon	

**The class teachers will be collecting £1 from each child so that they can purchase some party food. Please can you send in £1 with your child to their class teacher in a clearly named envelope – thank you.**

### Kids' Club Adhoc sessions

Kids' Club continues to be hugely popular and a number of sessions have waiting lists with a significant number of both morning and afternoon sessions being full. As a result, there are parents/carers on a waiting list for ad hoc spaces, should they become available, due to a cancellation. In addition, we occasionally have parents/carers requiring after school care on an urgent basis and if the school knows of cancellations, then we can help a family out. If you need to cancel a session, please speak to the Kids' Club staff directly, when you drop off/pick up, or by email or phone, at least 24 hours before your child's/children's booked session. Charges will apply for cancellations after this deadline.

For parents/carers having ad hoc or last minute sessions, we will now require parents to go online to pay on the day the session is booked. This will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> December

### Non Payment of wrap around care invoices

Unfortunately, we have recently had to chase a few parents for payment, so in future when payments are not received within one week of invoices being raised, consideration will be given to withdrawing places

### DBS Clearance

All parent helpers who come into school on a regular basis must have DBS clearance. Please ask at the school office for a form if you have not already completed one. For those of you who have, please bring your DBS certificate into school, so that we can put this on the system. We also need you to complete 2 reference forms and if you have not been given them, please pop into the office for copies. Thank you very much for supporting our children's learning by coming into help – we greatly appreciate this.

### Pokemon Cards

A lot of children are bringing Pokemon cards into school, as well as a range of small toys. We understand children wanting to bring things to school but this has caused a number of disputes between children over the ownership of cards. We would like you to support us by reminding your child not to bring cards and toys into school – thank you.

### Parent Forum

We are looking to set up a parent forum that will meet regularly, once every half term, so that we can consult a representative group of parents about aspects of our provision and so that parents can give their views and discuss topics with us. This type of feedback will be a very useful contribution to our school improvement programme.

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting is scheduled for Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January at 2.30pm and I will be writing to you again next week with a response form, so that parents can express an interest in attending. Thank you in advance for your support.

**Safety in our Staff Car park**

We are experiencing increasing difficulties with non-staff use of our car park and turning circle. Our car park is only for staff and Kids' Club drop off / pick up. We are very concerned about the safety of children who have been seen crossing the service road whilst cars are maneuvering and we need to ensure the safety of children. For this reason, we would like to inform parents that we will be operating a system of ad hoc checks of cars entering the service road. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Adam J G Campbell  
headteacher