



# Downham Preparatory School and Montessori Nursery

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## Christmas Newsletter 2020

### **Dear Parents,**

Little did we know when we sent out our Christmas letter last December, wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year, quite what 2020 had in store for us. After Christmas, the news of the Coronavirus spreading through Europe and reaching the UK gathered pace.

In March, the country went into 'Lockdown' and the Government ordered all schools to close. We spent the Easter holiday making our school Covid safe.

In April, we opened for the children of Keyworkers. We had 20 Keyworkers' children in the Prep school and some Nursery children too. We all stood outside our houses at 8.00pm every Thursday to clap and show our thanks to the NHS and other Key Workers. At school the children made a hand printed rainbow which is still on display.



In June, the Government allowed all children from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to return to school. The children were amazing! They very quickly adapted to all the new Covid rules and regulations. Soon, the singing of "Happy Birthday" whilst they washed their hands, could be heard all around the school. The weather was kind to us and we were able to take the children outside for lessons, as well as for play. The children were very happy to be back in school with their friends and teachers. Despite the worrying news and the spread of the virus, we managed to stay Covid free, safe and well, happy within our secure 'Bubbles'.

Before the term ended, we were able to invite all the children from the remaining classes to come back into school for one week.



### **Summer School**

Summer school this year was very popular and we managed to carry on with all the activities the children enjoy, with the only exception being the trips out, which were not permitted.

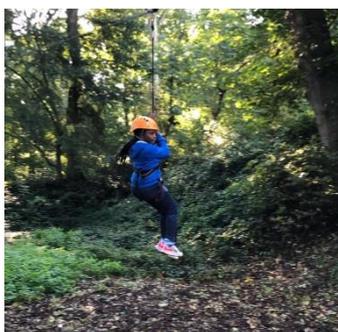


### **Christmas Term**

It was with huge relief that we were able to welcome back all the children in September.

At our staff meeting, before the start of term we discussed how we could adapt all the traditional activities the children look forward to, ensuring they could go ahead, whilst obeying Covid regulations.

Classes 5, 6 & 7 could not go on their planned residential trip to Hautbois, an outdoor activity centre, but we managed to book the centre for a day for the sole use of our school.



### **Halloween**

Halloween parties went ahead in the individual class 'Bubbles', rather than large infant and junior school parties and discos.

### **Fundraising Events**

- **Harvest** – Our Harvest collection of £194.34 was given to EACH; The East Anglia's Children's Hospices.
- **Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal** – £81.19 was raised from the sale of poppies at school.
- **Children in Need** – The children also raised £180.23 for this charity during their non-uniform day.



### **Pantomime**

As we could not take the children to the pantomime this year we arranged for classes 3 & 4 to watch a live streaming of the West End performance of The Wind in The Willows and the other classes watched an online panto.

### ***Fun in the Snow***

We had an unexpected snowfall on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December. All the children wrapped up in warm clothes and went outside to play.



### ***Christmas Shows & Carol Service***

Every year we invite parents in to school to watch the younger children's Christmas performance. Parents of the Junior school children usually join us for a traditional Carol service in the church. We know that many of you really look forward to these events and you have told us that it really does get your Christmas off to a good start. Unfortunately this year, due to Covid, we could not invite you to join us. However we had a staff meeting to decide how we could still let you share in our Christmas celebrations. The teachers have worked very hard to devise a Christmas production for each 'Bubble' that would be suitable to send home to you via Teams.

By the time you receive this letter you will have had time to watch the recording. We hope that it brings you all as much joy and pleasure as it did for the children and their teachers.



It has been an extremely difficult year for all of us and one that we hope we will never have to repeat again.

However, the many messages of support and gratitude that you sent to the school really did help to boost staff morale. They made us even more determined to provide the children with a learning environment where they felt safe and secure and could enjoy coming to school, not only to learn but to socialise and have fun with their friends and teachers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the teachers, teaching assistants, apprentices and support staff for all their enthusiasm, hard work and dedication to the school and our pupils.

On behalf of us all at the school and my family, I would like to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a happier and healthier New Year.

***Elizabeth Lafferty-Sharpe (Principal)***