

11<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents

There have been a number of slightly surreal sights in school today - from Santa suits and turkey hats to flashing lights and plenty of tinsel...! From my office window I have been able to see an almost constant Santa Dash, accompanied by loud renditions of Jingle Bells and other festive favourites. It has been absolutely wonderful to see how pupils of all ages have thrown themselves into Christmas Jumper Day and the Santa Dash – the following photographs will give you a little flavour of what school has been like today!



Mrs Goodwin wanted me to say from all of the Junior School team: *What a pleasure it was to see all of the children in Junior School dressed up in their Christmas jumpers, Santa hats and antlers enjoying our very first Polam Santa Dash. The children and staff had a great time and it was the perfect way to start our Christmas festivities.*



Mrs Hutchinson also sent me a picture of her Year 10 Health and Social Care group, who not only took part, but also produced the posters and linked the charity event to their coursework. Well done!



The Santa Dash has not been the only Christmas event today as the KS1 Nativity was also being filmed in the Liddiard Theatre this afternoon. So in amongst the Christmas Jumpers we also had some camels, three kings and the rest of the cast of Nativity characters! Mrs Mawson and Mrs Elsdon have sent me this report and photo:

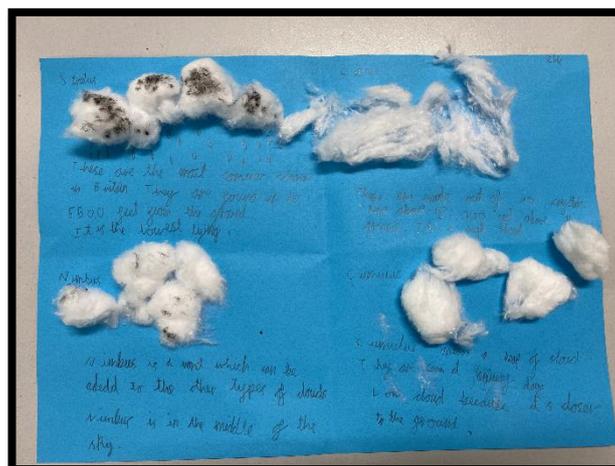
*We would like to say how proud we are of all the Year 2 children for a super performance of their Nativity show. Everyone shone like stars and delivered their lines with confidence. We would like to wish you all a happy Christmas and a huge thank you for supporting your child this term.*  
Mrs Elsdon and Mrs Mawson



I was also involved in filming in the theatre this week as we have filmed our annual Senior School Prizegiving ceremony. Usually held in September, we had hoped that we might be able to invite parents and dignitaries as we usually do, but when it became apparent that would not be possible then we made the decision to do it differently. We had to have each bubble group in separately to be awarded their prizes and then the film will cut them together – hopefully seamlessly. Ellie Ferguson played the piano beautifully for us and it was lovely to be able to award the prizes to students in person – even if without the usual excitement of the evening.

Having had several reports about Science last week, this seems to have been a week of Geography!

First, from Miss Ritchie: *This week in Geography, Year 3 have been looking at Clouds as part of the Water Cycle. From our previous lesson, the children were able to explain the formation of clouds through the process of condensation. We looked at the four main types of clouds and the different weather that they predicted. The children then went onto create the clouds out of cotton wool with explanations of each cloud. The children had to think of different ways to use the cotton wool to make it look like each of the different clouds. By the end of the lesson the children were even able to identify the clouds they could see outside, and whether Miss Ritchie and Mrs Bury needed an umbrella or not!*



Miss Patience has also sent me a report about the homework that her Year 8 class have done:

*The Year 8 homework task was 'do what you want' as long as it related to Geography. We had some sterling efforts from the following pupils.*

*Erika King gave her name in Japanese and its literal meaning*

*Aerin Green and Rubi Purewal made models representing the Big Ben tower (to scale) and the empire state building.*

*Lacie-Mai Finlay-Malcolm gave a model of two tectonic plates and how they move causing an earthquake. There were also some other good contributions from Elliot Dalton-Ayres, Thomas Batchelor Hurst, Sienna Champaneri and Eva Cherry to name but a few. Overall a very good effort from the year group who also enjoyed presenting their work.*



Mrs Jones has also asked me to commend the work of some of her students, sending me the following report:

*Francesca Silverwood and Emily Smith have been given a Concordia Crescimus in Chemistry for working out the A Level electron configurations of the first 20 elements in the periodic table. They have blown me away with their understanding of this concept, well beyond what they are expected to do at GCSE! Emily pushed herself and took the stretch and challenge task home away and taught herself the configurations, Francesca then wanted to learn how to do them in lesson and mastered it. Both girls truly deserve this recognition for working 3 years ahead of their time in Chemistry - brilliant curiosity!*

Mrs Teasdale's Anti-Bullying Ambassadors have also been busy this week. They met on Thursday morning for further online training from the Diana Award. They passed the quiz with flying colours and have started to put an action plan in place with several activities and ideas that they hope to launch in the new year!



Some of you may have seen that the fantastic work that Interact did for Feeding Families has made the news today. If you haven't read the article then it can be viewed here: <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/todayupnorth/18931938.record-result-north-east-schools-food-box-appeal/>

Next week is the final, busy week of term. On Monday the Student Leadership Team will lead the annual Candlelight Service for staff. On Wednesday we will be screening the KS1 Nativity for parents – as long as we have the finished film and the technology works! Fingers crossed... Thursday will be the usual Christmas festivities including Christmas Lunch. In Senior School we will be Zooming a version of our normal Nine Lessons and Carols service into form rooms – not from St Cuthbert's but from the Christmas Tree in the foyer of the Main Building. Juniors will be watching a virtual Pantomime rather than being in the theatre... It is still Christmas but not quite as we know it!

Have a lovely weekend – I hope the weather improves somewhat for us all

Best wishes

Kate Reid