

19th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

This term has been especially busy across all the schools but has concluded positively for all the children, staff and parents across Bridge Schools. I hope you have been able to enjoy some of the Christmas performances, carol concerts and activities in the calendar to celebrate the festive season.

Bridge Schools has seen Ofsted visits for several schools within the Trust. The staff and children from Harrowbarrow had a one-day monitoring visit which went well. Lanlivery received a one-day inspection and rightly retained their GOOD – the report has been published. Looe had the pleasure of a two-day visit; we await the final report but suffice it to say, ‘we are pleased.’ Heads and the teams pulled out all the stops to show the schools off at their very best. Staff from across the Trust were able to support, just as they do with all our schools.

Digital learning and IT investment

With recent Trust Board approval for a further investment of £158k in IT we will continue to add to provision in schools for both pupils and teachers. In terms of pupil ratio, we already provide 1:1 iPads in small schools and 1:2 in most of the medium and larger schools. With this further approved investment, we can upgrade our IT resource within the Trust.

Premises

We continue to invest in our school buildings with an extensive programme of compliance management, capital works and maintenance. 12 applications for major capital projects at 9 of our schools have just been submitted to the 25/26 Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) totalling £3.03m. Minor capital works have been completed across all sites this year totalling in excess of £161k, we always want more but are pleased with the improvements.

Financial Squeeze

Although we are still facing added pressures to school budgets with ever increasing costs, we are in the fortunate position of securing a ‘reserve’ to support the schools through any difficulties which may arise – a benefit of pooling our monies together. The reserve is used to reinvest back into premises and IT as detailed above as well as additional learning resources schools might need.

Partnerships between home and school

Many of us are encountering financial difficulties and we understand this can create pressure with keeping a family well fed, watered, warm and clothed, especially at Christmas. If you are having any challenges like this, please talk to staff at school as we can often help. We have links to many organisations that can support with food, transport, and other help. A big thank you to all families who are speaking to us regularly to keep their children attending school as much as possible. As of today, the trust wide attendance is 94% (better than this time last year) but still behind the national percentage target of 95%. We continue to review our approach to attendance and welcome you talking to us about what works best to support you.

Keeping fit and healthy

At the end of November, it was great to see our children join together for a Trust wide football tournament at Callywith College. The children could see the opportunities that may be on offer for them as possible future learners and also met some of the Callywith students who were assisting with the tournament as part of their Sports Leader Award. The children were an absolute credit to you all, showing a fantastic attitude towards fair play but still with a competitive edge. Demonstrating our Trust values in action, there were some very determined children (and adults coaching from the side-lines!) who gave it their all. A great opportunity for everyone to show off their talents.



Group games drew together for the quarter, then semi-finals, with Copper Valley Juniors vs Looe in the final. A big well done to Looe Primary for their win. All of us working collaboratively across the Trust, means we can offer the children opportunities like this to come together, have fun and enjoy some physical activity along the way. Well done everyone you are all superstars!

Central Team

Our small central team of staff support all 15 schools with all technical queries around finance, HR, IT, Premises and general enquiries around legal issues, contracts and information management for schools. John Wareham our IT Chief retires at the end of the month after 12 years of service with us. He has added so much to the Trust to provide opportunities for children and staff in the digital world for which we are all grateful. We all wish him the very best for a long and happy retirement. Hélène Weeks has been with us for 6 years working in HR. Her gentle and thoughtful manner has helped us over the years. We wish Hélène well in her new position, working for an international multi academy trust.

Christmas Festivities

All the schools in the Trust have Christmas activities well under way. There will be some very proud parents and grandparents watching the children perform nativity plays, carol concerts and open afternoons to look at the beautiful work the children have produced. Please look at your school website, Facebook page and school messaging system to go along and support when you can.

Please do visit your child's school website to view the children's latest learning, news and upcoming events.



Here's just a few highlights of festivities that have been taking place across Bridge Schools.

A few of our tiniest children at Blisland were helped by some of our biggest children to decorate the Storytellers Christmas tree as part of the St Petroc Churches Christmas tree festival. Nursery and KS2 have been busy making decorations, which are now adorning the tree! It looks spectacular, and everyone can view their tree along with over 70 other beautiful trees in St. Petroc Church.

Children from Darite (past and present) and their families proudly showed off lanterns that they had made in the after-school club at the Liskeard Lights Up Festival. The school also held a Reindeer Run with children running around the playground wearing festive antlers raising money in aid of St Luke's hospice.



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There's even been a cheeky visit from Twinkl the elf on what was a fabulous Elf Day at St Cleer in support of Alzheimer's UK.

As we near the end of another busy term children have added their contributions to this year's [Advent Calendar 2024](#) (click link to view).

End of the Autumn Term

We will close for the Christmas holidays on Friday 20th December and all schools will reopen on Tuesday 7th January 2025. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support for the schools and to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With all good wishes,

Adrian

Adrian Massey and everyone in Bridge Schools