



Ash Lea
working together to be our best



Autumn Newsletter 2021

Christmas Time is Here!



Covid challenges have remained, but as a school we have been comparatively unaffected. I know that parents and carers' diligence in testing and monitoring their children has played a significant part in keeping the school open to the vast majority of pupils. I know how challenging it is keeping children at home, but your consideration and support has been hugely appreciated.

It was wonderful to be able to see many of you at the three 'real-life' events held at school this term; the Post 16 awards evening, the fashion show, which raised over £600, the Enterprise Fair, where all classes made excellent profits on their products and ideas, and the FOALS (Friends of Ash Lea School) Christmas Fayre, which raised over £2000. FOALS arrange family events and fund equipment and activities for classes. The current Chair, Janine Birch-Horn will be retiring her position at the end of the year, therefore should anyone wish to take this over, the team would be most grateful, or should anyone wish to join the team, they would be very welcome. Please email reception if you would like your request to join to be passed on to Janine.

Many pupils have ended the year with a Christmas treat, some classes going out and others enjoying special activities. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas break with friends and family and see you all in the new year.

Kate

School Development



In spite of the challenges of Covid and its associated restrictions the school staff have continued to work on improving its provision.

Outdoor learning is a focus for the coming year and three members of staff spent a week in woodlands – beginning their journey to become 'Forest School' teachers and implementing this provision for ALL our pupils. We will be developing the school site for this purpose and are hoping to access a local area of woodland for more adventurous Forest School activities.

We have continued our journey towards Artsmark accreditation, our arts weeks have been part of this journey in bringing new art forms and artists with their ideas to support and enrich the curricular offer.

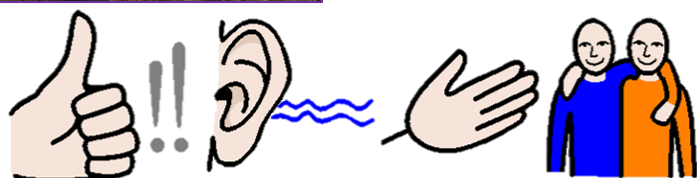
Three of our staff are now qualified swimming teachers and four others have completed their lifeguard training so that we can re-start hydrotherapy sessions using the pool at Newark Orchard school.

A representative group of staff, parents and governors have been working with architect John Mitchell, to plan for building improvements and developments to the school, given the pressure on special school places nationally and locally and to ensure that we are continuing to improve the learning offer for all our pupils. It was wonderful to see Rowan class' accessible playground finally completed over the half term break. This was partly funded by the school and the fund started in memory of former TA, Maria Thornalley by her family. This £8,000 funding support enabled the class to have the playground that they wanted.

As part of the school's review to further improve the Ash Lea curriculum, the school's INSET day on the 4th of January will be led by Peter Imray, an international expert in special education and curriculum design and implementation.



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Help others whenever we can
Always be polite and **friendly**

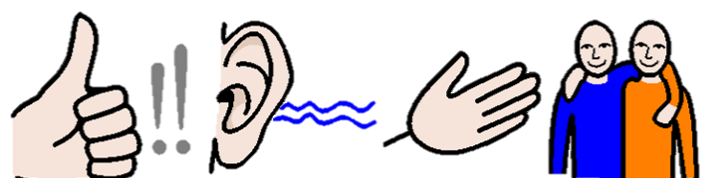




We have finished the term with a whole school Arts Week following the theme of A Christmas Carol. We have had the brilliant Handmade Theatre in again who have taken each class on a theatrical journey through the story of the Christmas carol. We have worked with Artists in Schools to produce some incredible textile art, with each class playing a role in the final product. Classes have been treated to a musical experience of Christmas carols with a band from the Music Hub and also enjoyed a dance workshop with our very own dance team, Miss.Smith and Miss.Brown.



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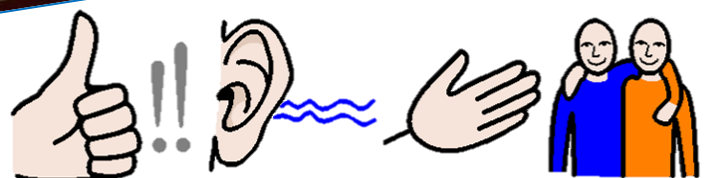
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Enterprise Week

As part of our Careers and Life After Ash Lea programme we had the school's first enterprise week. Each class were given £20 investment to plan, make and sell a product of their choice, with the idea of Christmas gifts. Every class took part and there were some incredible creations. Throughout the week the classes researched, shopped, created, made and sold their products. On Thursday we had a Dragons Den panel of business experts who the pupils presented their products to and received questions and feedback from the panel. On Friday the week ended with an enterprise Market where each class sold their products to pupils, staff and parents. We're so proud of what the pupils have achieved and how creative they can be.



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Governor Update



Dear parents, carers and staff,

It has been a year since Dawn retired as Headteacher – since that time a number of changes have occurred with regard to the senior leadership team of the school; Kate Davies has been appointed headteacher, Sandra Gell retired as assistant headteacher and Luke and Caroline have both stepped up into the vacant assistant headteacher roles. We wish them all well in their new posts. In October, we lost our much-loved Chair of Governors, Dr Alex Macdonald. Alex was a great supporter and champion of the school both as a parent and as a Governor – we know he's missed not just by the school but by the Community as a whole.

At our most recent Governor's meeting, Mags Bailey (Parent Governor) was elected as Chair for the forthcoming year. Jane Cooper (retired headteacher of Yeoman Park School) and Gordon Monaghan (Parent Governor) were elected into a shared Vice-Chair role. We also have four new governors who have joined the team, Chris Hankinson, Geoff Baker, Leon Gaughan and Jane Wood. Please feel free to contact us via the school office.

After another tough year of various restrictions due to Covid-19, Governors wanted to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their continued support and hard work. Staff have shown great resilience and have worked tirelessly to keep a semblance of normality for our students even when they themselves may have been challenged on a personal level due to Covid-19. Thank you everyone.

Governors would also like to thank all parents and carers for their continued support – no matter how big or small – from a few kind words to staff to contributing to fund raising efforts (big shout out to the FOALS committee for their amazing efforts!)

Wishing you all a relaxing Christmas break

Governors

Important Dates

Please see our **live** online diary for all important dates [Online Calendar - Ash Lea School](#)

Tuesday 4th January – **Closed for INSET**

Peter Imray: *Developing a curriculum to meet the needs of all learners*

Wednesday 5th January – **School Re-opens after Christmas**

Tuesday 11th January – **Visit to the Nottingham Playhouse for Beauty and the Beast (Pantomime)**

Friday 11th February – **Last day of half term 1**

Thursday 3rd March – **World Book Day**

Pupils are invited to bring their favourite books to school to share with the class. They can also dress up as a favourite character if they wish. More information will follow.

Friday 18th March – **Comic Relief**

This year we will be doing our bit to support Comic Relief. Pupils are welcome to wear non-uniform for a donation of £1.

Friday 1st April – **Last day of spring term**

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