



Darley Churchtown C of E Primary School
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Autumn newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

We've had a busy first half term of the year so now seems a good moment to round up some of the highlights and think about what is coming up in the months ahead.

All the children have settled into their new year groups brilliantly after the Summer break and it's fantastic to see the progress they are making at this early stage in the year – especially our early years children who started school for the first time. We hope you enjoyed seeing their work during parent meetings before the half term holiday.

During the first part of the Autumn term, we always like to think about harvest and this year was no exception. The children created some lovely artworks, poems and prayers, which are on display in Church. We also held our school harvest service and it was great that so many parents were able to come along. Some children also joined us for a community service the following Sunday.

Continuing the Church theme, we also visited Derby Cathedral for a service. Sadly we couldn't take all the children to this as there were representatives from all schools within our academy trust but the six pupils who were able to go had a great time and did a fantastic job representing our school.

Key dates for the diary

Thursday 6th November – PTA film club.

Thursday 13th November – Church service at 10.30, all welcome.

Friday 14th November – Children in Need

Thursday 20th November – Class 2 and 3 trip to Manchester Museum.

Monday 24th November – INSET day: school closed to children.

Friday 5th December – non-uniform for Christmas hamper donations

Tuesday 9th December – Class 1 nativity

Thursday 11th December – whole school pantomime trip.

Friday 12th December – Christmas jumper and craft day.

Thursday 18th December – Christmas dinner and carol service (2.30 at St Helen's – all welcome).

See the [school website](#) for all events

In other events, lots of sports got back underway. The football league resumed and we've played four great matches against other local schools. This is now on hold over the Winter but will resume in the Spring. There have also been sporting events for the children to attend. Class 1 visited All Saints Junior School for a session on invasion games and Class 3 took part in a skateboarding session.



Looking ahead

This half term is always a busy one (although it's hard to think of one that isn't!) as we move towards Christmas. There's a lot to think about before we start on the festive season though. For class 2 and 3, there's forest school starting and a trip to Manchester Museum where we will be exploring the galleries and thinking about how we can develop our aims and aspirations in line with our school vision to 'Aim high and believe, grow and succeed'. There's also Children in Need day coming up, some new clubs starting on netball and handbells and weekly sports sessions for all classes delivered by coaches from the Rural Derbyshire School Sports Partnership.

As we get into December, the Christmas events come thick and fast. Not everything would fit in the dates for the diary box (above) so please keep an eye out for messages through Arbor or check the [calendar](#) on the school website. Some particular highlights are the infant nativity on the 9th December and the whole school pantomime on the 11th December. Parents and carers are invited to join us on the afternoon of the 12th December for our Christmas craft afternoon and for our end of term carol service on the 18th December at 2.30 at St Helen's Church. The last day of term is the 19th December but please remember we also have an INSET day on the 24th November, when school will be closed.

Attendance

Ensuring children are in school on time is a key priority for any school and something we have worked particularly hard on at Darley Churchtown over the last few years. Children's attendance is celebrated with weekly rewards and we offer support through our inclusion team if parents or carers are struggling to get children to school on time. This approach is proving successful and our whole school attendance figure for the year to date is 95%, which is in line with the national average, but there is clearly still room for improvement so if you do have any concerns around attendance or would like to speak to someone from the inclusion team then please get in touch.

Wraparound care

As you are hopefully aware, Darley Churchtown offers a free breakfast club for all pupils from 8 o'clock every morning. This is being funded by the Department for Education as part of a pilot

scheme so is not something all schools are able to offer. The breakfast club is a great way for children to settle into the school day so please take advantage of it as we are very fortunate to be able to provide this without charge.

We are also investigating the possibility of running an after school club for pupils until 5 o'clock. Again, we are hoping to be able to bring in some funding so support with this and are in the process of submitting bids and will provide an update as soon as possible.

Places for September 2026

We've had a great response to our Autumn open days this year and I know some families are ready to get their applications in when these become available on Monday (10th November). The deadline for submitting applications isn't until the 15th January so please get in touch if you'd like to look round or know someone who is looking for a place for their child. We'll be offering more open days this half term but we're also always happy to book in a visit at other times. For information on how to apply see the [DCC website](#).

A great way to introduce children to the school is through our parent and toddler group, Churchtown Tots, which runs every Tuesday in term time from 9.30 to 11.00. We've got a dedicated space set aside for this and Mrs Hollis puts on lots of amazing activities for the little ones. We only ask for a small donation to cover costs and drinks and biscuits are provided along with snacks for the children.

Collective worship

Each half term we focus on a different value in school. We reflect on this through our daily collective worship, considering its importance from both a religious and secular perspective. This half term we are thinking about 'trust'. Children will also be thinking about this in class and adding to their reflection areas. At the end of term, we then bring the ideas from each of the classes together to discuss and celebrate this as a school.

Hopefully this newsletter has been useful. It's hard to cover everything but the weekly updates from the school office will continue to be sent on Fridays and our Facebook page and school website are the places to go to find out what has been going on in school. If you have any feedback on our communication or other aspects of school then we're always happy to listen and answer any questions.

Best wishes,

Tom Lloyd

Head of School