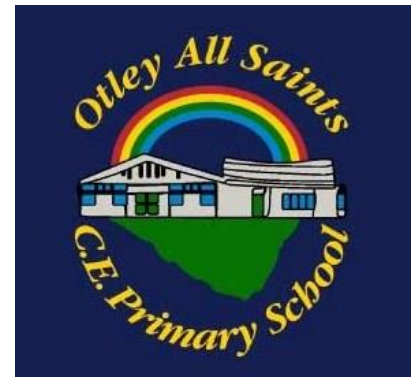


# Otley All Saints CE Primary School

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Headteacher: Ian Thomson-Smith



This half term our core Christian value is:



## Diary Dates

- Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January** – Staff training day
- Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January** – Spring term begins
- Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January** – Road Safety Training for Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6
- Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January** – PTA meeting, 7pm
- Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January** – Year 5 visit to the National Railway Museum, York
- Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February** – Road Safety Training for Year 4
- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February** – School breaks up for half term
- Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February** – Children return to school
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March** – School breaks up for Easter



The Christmas holidays are here at last! I think that this is the latest date that I can remember for schools to break up, but it has meant that we have had a number of great opportunities over the last three weeks to celebrate Christmas together, especially in our performances of the Nativity story at All Saints Church on Tuesday. Led superbly by our Drama Club under the supervision of Miss Wilson and Mrs Raybould, the songs gave each of our classes the opportunity to appear on stage, a challenge they responded to magnificently. Thank you to all the staff, to Mrs Beck on the piano, to Rev. Aaron Kennedy and Barry Milner from All Saints Church, and to all our appreciative audience members; together it made for a truly memorable occasion.

**Orchestra Performance** Well done to our musicians of the orchestra, who last Thursday showed how far they have progressed since the beginning of the year. It was wonderful to see some past pupils coming back to participate, and encouraging to see so many of the young players performing solo items. The orchestra is a rare and wonderful thing in primary schools these days, and we hope that it will continue to flourish under Mrs Nunn's guidance.

**Nursery Nativity** Our youngest children also performed for parents on Wednesday, singing brilliantly as they helped to retell the story of Jesus' birth. Thank you to Miss Wilson, Mrs Fawcett and Mrs Thomson-Smith for organising this lovely performance.

**Staff Changes** Nursery parents were very sad to say goodbye to two retiring members of staff; Mrs Thomson-Smith has shared teaching responsibility in Nursery for the last two years, while Mrs Fawcett has been a nursery nurse at the school for an incredible 24 years! It's not quite goodbye yet, though, as we are delighted that Mrs Fawcett will continue to work in school on Thursdays in both Nursery and Reception. Miss Wilson has agreed to teach full-time across the week from January, and we are delighted that Mrs Craddock, a very experienced early years practitioner, will be joining the Nursery staff in January.

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**Pupil Illness** At this time of year there are a large number of unpleasant potential infections around, and it can be very difficult to know whether or not to keep your child at home when they are complaining of feeling unwell. We do believe that every school day is important, and want our children to be in school wherever possible, but we also want to prevent sickness spreading within the close confines of a classroom. Good hygiene measures are extremely important, and we still remind children of the importance of washing hands regularly, and covering mouths with a sleeve or tissue if they cough or sneeze. However, we know that parents appreciate a little guidance in knowing what steps they should take, and so we would like to recommend careful reading of the advice on the [NHS UK website page 'Is my child too ill for school?'](#) Here there is a wealth of clear advice on common ailments, including reminders that children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours), whereas it is fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold unless they are experiencing a fever. Please remember to contact school to inform us of a child's absence; we are required to follow up any child missing at registration, and it is helpful if we are not obliged to make too many phone calls first thing.

**Parent Teacher Association** Many thanks to Miles Waring for organising the Christmas cards, mugs, cushions etc., all of which should have been received by now. The designs look terrific, and have been produced to a good standard. We hope you enjoy them; please make sure that all payments have been received. Our first PTA meeting of 2024 will be on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 7.00pm. Please attend if you can – it will be great to have new ideas and new people.

**50:50 Club** The winners of the December draw of the 50:50 club were Jane Grant (£94) and Nicola Horner (£23.50). If you would like to be included in the next draw please collect a form from the school office.

**Job Opportunities** This term we have been able to make staffing adjustments in order to ensure that we can continue to keep our lunchtimes happy and safe, but we are continuing to seek staff to work at lunchtimes. There are opportunities for daily hours, or for a smaller commitment, and it is an excellent introduction to schools for anyone considering work with children. Details can be found on our [website here](#), or contact school if you would like to discuss options.

**Thank you and goodbye** I have been extremely touched by the many kind words and messages I have received over the last few weeks. Many families will have heard the wonderful tributes from Mrs I'Anson and from Mr Boddy, our chair of governors, at All Saints Church on Tuesday, so thoughtfully and kindly expressed. I was very grateful too for the kind gifts from governors, including a lovely picture of Otley created by Martin Smith a parent of former pupils at All Saints. Yesterday morning, the staff and children had prepared a marvellous presentation, which concluded with a rousing version of 'E-N-J-O-Y', one of our favourite songs. I cannot express fully my gratitude for all the friendship and support I have received from colleagues, governors and families over the last 17 years. Otley is a wonderful place, and I am truly proud of our school and its community. I know that there are still things that can be better, and I have great confidence that Mrs Di Palma-Heath, the new headteacher, can bring these improvements about, given the right support from all those involved in the school and from government.

I have been very blessed in my 38 years of teaching to have worked in some lovely schools, in Doncaster, York and in North Yorkshire, but All Saints has to be the best of all! If I have one piece of advice to pass onto parents, it is to spend time with your children – enjoy the vanishing moments when you can help to shape the adults they are becoming. Share books and stories rather than relying on screens, and involve yourself in your children's learning wherever you can. Time is the most valuable commodity you have, and if school can claim a little of that time, maybe as a volunteer with the PTA or by helping with trips, it will make a huge difference to our children.

Wishing you, and all those you love, a blessed Christmas.

Ian Thomson-Smith

