



December 15th 2023

What a Year!

As we move towards the Christmas break, on this final newsletter of 2023, it's nice to reflect on the year and remind ourselves of some of our achievements, as well as thinking about how we develop further in 2024.

It has been such a positive year for Montalbo in terms of outside validation of what we do, beginning with Ofsted in January, which seems a lifetime away now! Our academic results in the summer were remarkable and testament to the learning behaviours of our children and the knowledge and skills of our staff. Last week we sought further validation for another area of school life and I will share more of this in the New Year.

The various school events which families can attend are always well-supported, most recently the Christmas Fayre, Nativities and the Carol Service. In the Spring we had the World Book Day gallery and the Year 3/4 Play. Summer saw Monty does the Decades which was truly spectacular. These events, plus the days at Brightwoods, the music tuition, sporting events and the after school clubs with different coaches and experts, give children a chance to shine in lots of other ways.

I also really enjoy community events such as The Meet Parade, Light Up Barney, It's a Small World Festival and Carols at the Christmas Tree Festival. Our Eco Committee attended the recent Cop 28 event for children and one area we will seek to improve on is making more national and international links. As we move into 2024, we will look to improve on other aspects of our provision further and I will expand on this in the New Year.

Although we have two days of fun planned for Monday and Tuesday, I will not write a newsletter next week. I hope that all of our families have a wonderful Christmas and wish you all the very best for 2024. We look forward to seeing the children on Thursday January 4th.

Team Monty

None of the above would be possible without our amazing staff at Team Monty! Working in a school is incredibly rewarding but is also hard work, as demonstrated by national figures on recruitment and retention of staff in education. Thank you to all of our staff for all you do for our children. Thanks also to Governors, volunteers, FOMS, families and most of all, our children, for the important role you play as part of Team Monty!

Nursery Christmas Singalong

On Monday I was able to stay for most of Nursery's Christmas Singalong. It was a lovely occasion to see our youngest children perform brilliantly with their singing and dancing in front of a large audience. Mrs Patterson and her team tried something different with the class this year and it worked superbly. Thank you to Mrs Patterson, Mrs Whelan, Miss Nicole, Miss Rudge and Mrs Thomas for their help with the singalong.

Key Stage 2 Carols at St Mary's

As I write, I am about to go to the Carol Service at St Mary's Church which is always a wonderful occasion. Thank you to Miss Richardson for her work on this and to the Year 5/6 for their narration.

Carol Singing at Abbeyfield

Earlier this week, our Year 5 children went to sing carols at Abbeyfield Care Home which was greatly appreciated by the residents and staff. Well done Year 5!

FOMS Christmas Raffle

Thank you to FOMS for their amazing work with the Christmas Raffle and to everyone who donated prizes or bought tickets. I hope that you were lucky!

Impromptu Brass Performance

This week Mr Bradshaw surprised us by asking to showcase the Year 4 children's brass skills in an assembly. The children have been learning various brass instruments each week since September and played a couple of Christmas tunes for us which we all enjoyed. Then some of our Year 5 children, who have continued with their tuition, played us two other songs and they played superbly too.

I understand that several of our children are also playing with Barnard Castle Band with the band players providing tuition and guidance. There is no charge for these sessions. If your child would be interested in joining these sessions, please email Suzanne – suzannehunter@hotmail.co.uk

Activity Clubs

Next term's activity club list have been shared for next term. We are pleased to be able to strengthen links with Barnard Castle Cricket Club. Please note the timings are slightly different for that club. Children can stay at school in the interim from the end of school to the commencement of the Cricket Club session beginning.

Year 5 Swimming

Swimming sessions for Year 5 children will resume on Thursday, January 11th.

Reception School Places

The window for applying for school places for Reception places in September 2024 is now open. To apply, please visit [here](#). Once on the site, you can apply online through the Parent Portal or if you prefer a paper application please contact Durham School Admissions on 03000265896. This process applies to children who attend our nursery already too.

Attendance

Below is a summary of attendance for this week.

Class	Attendance (%)
Reception	90.8
Year 1	91.3
Year 2	91.3
Year 3	94
Year 4	95.8
Year 5	94.2
Year 6	88.6
Whole School Weekly	92.2%
Whole School Termly	95.2%

Dates for the Diary

December 18 th	Nursery/Reception Party (am) Year 1/2 Party (pm)
December 19 th	Year 3/4 Party (am) and Year 5/6 Party (pm)
December 20 th – January 2 nd	Christmas Holidays
January 3 rd	Teacher Training Day
January 4 th	Children return to school
January 9 th	Mini Medics parent/child session (fully booked)
January 11 th	Year 5 swimming resumes

January 12 th	Y5/6 Sports Hall Athletics (no.s tbc)
January 19 th	Reception and Y1 dental checks
January 26 th	KS2 Swimming Gala (selected children)
February 6 th	Safer Internet Day
February 12 th and 13 th	Parents' Evenings
February 14 th	Year 5 Netball tournament
February 19 th -23 rd	Half Term
February 24 th	Children return to school

Mr. C Minikin
Head Teacher

Please see the QR code for the School Lottery. The more players we have, the more we raise for the school and the bigger the prize fund.

