



Dear Parents

8 December 2023

Welcome to the final weekly Newsletter of this term and a very happy Christmas to you all. The children and staff have really got into the spirit of the season and are sporting their Christmas sweaters and headwear – antlers and baubles – as I type. Thank you for helping your sons and daughters in this regard. Below are two pictures I took at the gate this morning.



The Hall is also looking very festive, and the wonderful smell from the Christmas lunch preparation is wafting into my office and is making me very hungry indeed.





Before expanding on today's event, I will first go back to Monday and Tuesday of this week. On Monday, my assembly theme was about the plight of the homeless and how we can help. It is estimated that there are approximately 300,000 people homeless in England, and about half of those are children. Of these, approximately 3000 adults and children sleep rough every night. So, I have launched the '**Priory School Black Bag Challenge**' and have asked the pupils to fill a black bin liner (or any other bag) with unwanted warm clothing, toys and toiletries and to donate it to a charity for the homeless. Moreover, if any pupil wants to go an altruistic step further, then they may use their pocket money to buy some socks and underwear for donation too. Charities such as the Salvation Army, Shelter and Crisis are desperate for help, particularly at Christmas, and Aspire in Ryde has a warm coat rail in its doorway for those in need to help themselves. And, if you can't find a charity for the homeless, then any charity will do, but please first check if they welcome donations of toiletries. Finally, if accepting the challenge, then please send in a picture of your child or children with the filled bag and we will collate the images next term. I do hope that many Priory families will get involved, and here is a picture of the Pragnell girls, Eliza and Beatrix, getting the ball rolling.





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Turning to our Tuesday Talk, we are very grateful to Mr Bennett of Clark Masts for a wonderful presentation on his company. Maya also deserves thanks for help on the IT element of the talk. Clark Masts supply telescopic masts to businesses (e.g. broadcasting), the armed forces (e.g. enemy drone detection), the emergency services (e.g. lighting) and private customers (e.g. flagpoles). Mr Bennett also brought in two of his masts and allowed the pupils to raise and lower them, both remotely and by hand pump. The talk was excellent.





So, back to the lunch. Instead of going to The Folly Inn this year – we are now too big a school – we invited Thomas Franks Catering to come into school to prepare and serve our school community a delicious and traditional Christmas meal – turkey and all the trimmings! Their trucks arrived on the Island on Tuesday afternoon, they unloaded their ovens and other equipment, and the two chefs and two assistants went off to their hotel for the evening. Bright and early the next morning (Wednesday) they returned and started cooking, as well as transforming the hall into a Priory winter wonderland! We planned for three sittings, beginning with the Junior School and moving on to S1 – S3 and finally S4 and above, the latter including a smattering of guests, such as Fr Jonathan, our School Chaplain. Pupils came in fully adorned in Christmas attire, and prizes for the best Christmas sweater were awarded to:

Junior School: Autumn

S1 – S3: Charlie and Sam

S4 – Upper Sixth: Charlotte and Harry T

(& a special prize to Adam for wearing the *worst* sweater, as judged by a lifelong Liverpool fan – he wore a Tottenham Hotspur FC Christmas jumper!!)





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The food, service and Christmas spirit were really super, and everyone had a marvellous time. In this case, I will let the pictures 'do the talking'.





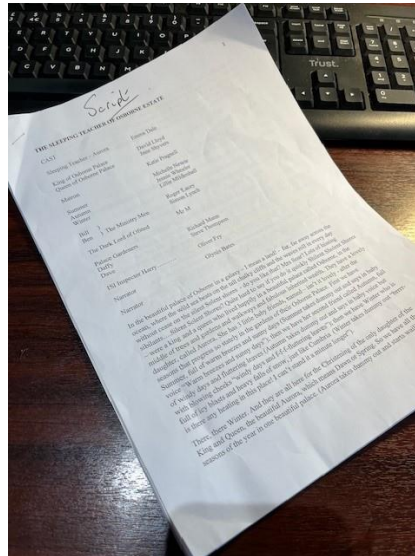
Thanks must go to Frank Bothwell and Blain Shepherd of Thomas Franks and all of the team for going the extra mile to make our day so special. I hope to see them back at Priory next Christmas too, so take note Frank and Blain!

After lunch, several members of staff performed the panto, 'The Sleeping Teacher of Osborne Estate', written and directed by our very own Steven Spielberg, Mr M! In the play the Dark Lord of Ofsted (Mr M) closes the school and puts everyone to sleep, including the beautiful princess, Aurora (Mrs Dale) and her three friends, Summer, Autumn and Winter (Mrs Newte, Miss Wheeler and Miss Mildenhall). However, the evil magic fails to put Matron (Miss Pragnell) to sleep because she is not a teacher. Matron and the Independent Schools Inspectorate thwart the Dark Lord of Ofsted by telling him – and battling him in a sword fight – that he has no authority in an independent school. ISI inspector (Mr Fry), helped by all the children, awake Aurora, her friends and everyone else at the school, and banish Ofsted, with Aurora eventually taking over Priory School. The other members of the cast were Mr Lacey and Mr Lynch as Bill and Ben, The Ministry Men, Mr Mann and Dr Thompson as Daffy and Dave, myself and Mrs Bates as the King and Queen, and Mrs White as Narrator.



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Then, on to the Christmas Fayre on Thursday afternoon, with masses of preparation by Mrs Bell and the PSPA team – thank you so much for this, and if other parents would like to be involved in future events, then please do let us know. A plethora of stalls greeted pupils, staff, parents and guests, and great fun was had by all. Thanks go to everyone that helped both before and on the day itself, Mr Fry and our choir for singing so beautifully, Father Christmas for being here at his busiest time of the year, those who so generously donated raffle prizes, and all our visitors who supported the fayre. It was a great success and long overdue after the Covid-years. I really think it's important for schools and communities to maintain or renegeise these long-held traditions – panto, fayre, nativity and more – and not lose them to the history books in the post-Covid period.



And finally, the Junior School Nativity, 'Rock Around Christmas'. The Junior School put on a wonderful performance and brought the story of the nativity to light with a modern twist. Even a temperamental Skoda car played a significant part in the play, as did 'Santa-media' (~ social media)! (The acting and delivery were first rate, and this was matched by the congregational and choir singing. For pupils so young to speak and sing with such clarity, timing, comedy and emotion is hugely impressive, and congratulations also go to Mrs Hart and her team for preparing the cast and crew so well. This event was the perfect ending to the term, and is the culmination of a series of well executed festive events – the School Panto, Christmas Lunch, Staff Panto, Christmas Fayre and finally, this wonderful service at St Mildred's Church. Thanks also go to Fr Jonathan and the team of wardens who are so welcoming and helpful each time we use the Church. Further to my Black Bag Challenge above, the retiring collection was for the Salvation Army Isle of Wight Homelessness Service. Thank you to all those who gave or will give in the future.



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A very Happy Christmas
to all our families!

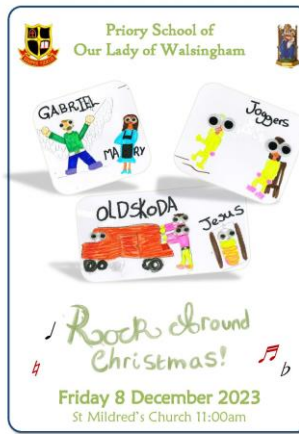


There will be a retiring collection in aid of the
Salvation Army Isle of Wight
Homelessness Service



Cover pictures: By Sarah and Ruby!

Easter Term starts:
Tuesday 9 January 2024





I have been in teaching over 3 decades, and that's quite a lot of Christmas terms, and I can say with both hands on my heart that I have never seen it done better than here at Priory School. Pupils, parents, visitors and staff have really embraced the real meaning of Christmas, whilst having fun and enjoying laughter in a traditional and wholesome way. I might be on dangerous ground by singling out any one group of people, but special mention must go to pupils in S5 who did an enormous amount of work behind the scenes for many, if not all of these events. They set the tables, cleared the tables, swept up, handed out programmes and orders of service, ran stalls, dressed up as elves and much more, and always with good manners and a smile.

Thank you, God bless and Merry Christmas.

Given it is the end of term, we will not have a separate Sports Report, so here is some news from our Sports Department.

The **Junior Sports Star of the Term** is Autumn Petitt. Autumn has worked hard on her skills across all sport and activities this term. Most notably in the winter months is role as girls' football team goal keeper, playing superbly in recent fixtures. During training she is fearless in goal, taking on older and bigger attackers with courage and determination. Autumn pushes herself to improve her fitness all of the time, and is a great example to others. Excellent work this term, Autumn.

The **Senior Sports Star of the Term** is Bella Chiverton. Bella has blossomed this term in sport. She has become a leader on the pitch and developed her hockey skills, such that she is now the hockey team captain. She has been working hard on her fitness and we have seen huge improvements. I am very proud of Bella for recently joining Island Hockey and cannot wait to see what she can do at the next level of play. It has been a great term for Bella, and I look forward to our next hockey fixture to see that 'power pass' in action again! Very well done, Bella.

Mr Byrne

S1 and S2 Girls – Netball Tournament – Cowes Enterprise College – Tuesday 5 December

Team: Lauren, Indi (C), Alicia, Alexia, Bonnie, Poppy, Evie

Result: S1 – Team A Placed 2nd out of 11

Report: On Tuesday we took 2 S1 Netball teams to Cowes for a Netball tournament against 10 other schools.

We were selected to play in Pool A, against Cowes A, B and C, Christ the King and Priory B.

Scores:

V Priory B: 6-0

V CTK: 1-1

V Cowes A: 2-0

V Cowes B: 3-0

V Cowes C: 4-0

As the scores demonstrate, this team improved drastically with each game played during this tournament. The team started very cautiously, making mistakes that allowed Christ the King to score, ending our first



game 1-1. Indi discussed with her team the importance of controlling the game and the potential the team had if they slowed down and used the game time available. This reflected in the game play after this, as we worked hard to keep a clean score sheet from then onwards.

In defence, Lauren worked hard as GK to mark the shooters, using her height to help her intercept many balls and causing turn overs in our advantage. Alicia played GD, using her high jumps and agility to help her intercept passes; she developed the skill of reading the movements of the GA and was able to use this to her advantage. Evie played WD and really stepped up in this position, she was controlled and managed to win the ball numerous times to give Priory the opportunity to attack.

In the centre court, Lexie worked calmly and strategically to move the ball up and down the court, offering support for passes and communicating well within her team. In WA, Poppy moved the ball up the court, offering passes to and from the shooters, working well to lose her defender.

Finally, in attack, Indi played GA used her height and space to her advantage, receiving high passes and making accurate shots. Indi scored almost all the goals for this team and was a key player to the success, she is a very strong shooter. Last, but not least, Bonnie was in as GS, moving around the D to get into space and making quick accurate passes in for Indi to shoot.

The team won their overall group moving onto the finals against Ryde School. The girls were nervous, but ready to give it their all. We started strong, scoring a goal to take the game to 1-0. Ryde quickly recovered making the score 1-1. Priory put the pressure on and held out almost until the very end, when Ryde managed to get a last-minute goal leaving the score 2-1. Although the girls were disappointed in the score, they really should be very proud of their performance.

Not only did the team win their group, they came second out of 11 teams; a great performance from all, and it was amazing to see their improvement throughout the afternoon. They only lost one out of 7 games and only missed 1st place by one goal – a tremendous achievement.

For this fixture, there is no player of the match. This was purely a team effort and would not have been successful without every member of the team working together. What a great representation of Priory School sport.

Miss Mildenhall





S1 and S2 Girls – Netball Tournament – Cowes Enterprise College – Tuesday 5 December

Team:

(S1) Coira (WD), Tilly (GD), Katy (WA), Violet (GK), Bonnie (WA), Florence W (C)

(S2) Florence F (GA), Emma (GS)

Report: Tuesday afternoon saw the return of the annual Year 7 Netball Tournament for Island Schools at Cowes Enterprise College. Our first game saw us take on our other Priory Team. This game was a good start to the tournament allowing both teams to familiarise themselves with a full-sized netball court and think about how we could use the court to our tactical advantage.

For our second game we were up against Cowes Enterprise A Team. The game started with Cowes as the dominant side taking an early lead to put themselves 2-0 up. With 2 minutes to go we started to get into the flow of the game. Tilly, Violet and Coira did a fantastic job in intercepting passes and distributing the ball to Florence W, who progressed the ball up the court. Florence W picked out Florence F with a cross court pass, who subsequently produced a beautiful shoulder pass over the defender's head to pick out Emma. Emma quickly composed herself and made a fine shot to cut the lead to 2 -1. Unfortunately, time wasn't on our side, meaning we were unable to draw the game level.

Player of the game: Tilly for her brilliant defensive display intercepting the ball on multiple occasions.

Cowes Enterprise C was our third game of the tournament. For this game we ventured to the outside court to play the game whilst the light was still good. From the first moment of the game, it was clear that we were the dominant side. During this game all of our attacking players saw a lot of the ball, supplying Emma and Florence F with many shooting opportunities. Our attacking intent was rewarded with two goals for the game to finish 2-0.

Player of the game: Emma for scoring both of the beautiful goals in this game.

Our penultimate game came against Christ the King. We knew that this game was very important for both our Priory teams and would impact on the playoff final we would be in. The game started off cagey with both sides surveying their opponents' strengths and weaknesses. Once both teams relaxed, chances were created at both ends of the court, however CTK were able to capitalise on their chances and ended up victorious with a 2-0 win.

Player of the game: Florence F for her lovely shoulder pass to the other side of the court and for creating shooting opportunities

Once all the games were completed it was time for the tournament organisers to collate the results and decide who was in each playoff final. The results were tallied up and we discovered that our final opponents would be Carisbrooke College in the 7th and 8th playoff final. Once the game started it became apparent that Carisbrooke were one of the strongest sides we played today, even though their position may not have reflected this. During this game we struggled to impose ourselves on the game and Carisbrooke took the lead. When the ball progressed up to our attacking end, we were very unlucky with both our shots hitting the rim of the basket. Unfortunately we were unable to get on the scoreboard, however it was a very valiant display by our girls.

The girls should be very proud of their effort during the games. They can take a lot of confidence in how they continued to improve as the game progressed. For many this was the first time they had experienced competitive school sport in senior school and have set themselves a great foundation to build from in the future. Well done to all.

Miss Mulligan



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Reports

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| 1. Tues 5 Dec | Tuesday Talk 'Clark Masts Systems' |
| 2. Tues 5 Dec | S1/S2 Girls, Netball Tournament, Cowes Enterprise College |
| 3. Wed 6 Dec | Christmas Lunch & Staff Pantomime |
| 4. Thurs 7 Dec | Christmas Fayre |
| 5. Fri 8 Dec | Nativity & Christmas Service, St Mildred's Church |
| 6. Fri 8 Dec | Christmas Term ended |
| 7. Sat 9 Dec | Mock Legal Trial, Crown Courts, Newport |
| 8. Sun 10 Dec | Choir, Christmas Service, St James' Church, East Cowes |

Future Dates & Events

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Tues 9 Jan | Easter Term begins |
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David EJJ Lloyd
Principal