

Head Teacher
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17th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we come to the end of a busy and exciting term, I just wanted to take a little time to reflect on, what has been, a special term. We have been in a unique position in Guernsey to be able to lead normal lives, and have really made the most of that this term. Staff have brought the curriculum to life with visiting speakers, trips out and about and other exciting events. If you add them up there have been about 40 special events this term, that is nearly three a week! The girls certainly do benefit from a great deal of variety during their time at school.

Out and About

Every class in Melrose has been on at least two trips this term to support their learning, with some classes having been out and about a great deal more. The Pre-Preparatory department has been to The Rocquettes Cider Farm and B & Q to select their Christmas Tree. Other trips have included the Fire Station, Reservoir, Saumarez Park Folk and Costume Museum and the Guille-Allès Library amongst many others and Form I are even squeezing in a trip today to L'Ancrese Common and Candie Museum.



Principal
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Fun at home

There has also been a great deal going on at school. Forms I and II have benefitted from our excellent Forest Schools programme, run by Miss Kinley and Junior Remove will enjoy their programme next term.

Each class, from Middle Prep to Form III has led a whole school assembly this term. These have been wonderful and varied, either celebrating the girls' learning or creating a presentation on a theme. Assemblies are an excellent way for the girls to put many of their Melrose Mindsets into practice, along with developing independent learning. Most assemblies are based on research and independent work by the girls themselves, requiring strong collaborative skills. Parents have enjoyed some of these assemblies and other classes will invite parents over the next two terms.



The Junior girls have enjoyed some House events this term, including House Rounders and the end of term House Quiz. The weekly House Point totals have been very close this term and so anyone could be House of the Term!



Visitors

As well as going out, we have been fortunate enough to allow visitors into school to support the girls' learning. Visitors have included Jo Dowding who spoke to Form III about Victorian toys, Phil Baskerville who has worked with Form II on 'Old Testament Mini' and Mrs Sharma, who took a wonderful assembly on Diwali and then spent the morning sharing her knowledge in the Pre-Preparatory Department.

In addition, we have worked with Helen from Arts for Impact on a whole school mural to celebrate Freedom. This project was originally set to take place during Liberation week to celebrate 75 years of Freedom but was postponed, due to lockdown. We were determined for this project to go ahead and so changed the brief slightly to celebrate what freedom meant for the girls following lockdown. The result has been a colourful and quite poignant piece of art work which is displayed on our fence. We are just waiting for the plaque to explain its significance and we hope that it will still be there in another 75 years time.

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Thinking of Others

We have continued to remind the girls about the importance of thinking of others. We do this in our day to day routines, PSHE work and assemblies and also in our whole school charity events. This term we have supported the Swimathon, raising the most money of any primary school, Children in Need, The Royal British Legion, and Save The Children with our Dress for Christmas day. In total we have raised nearly £4,000 for charities just this term. May I thank you all for your support by sending in donations.

However, thinking about others is not just about money and Form III have been able to resume our connection after lockdown with The Cheshire Home. They visited them with food baskets after our Harvest Festival and spent time talking to the residents and went again to sing carols.

The Melrose staff decided not to send each other Christmas cards this year and instead provided gifts to make up five present bags for those who are on their own this Christmas. This Healthspan Christmas initiative is to give gifts to the 450 Guernsey elderly residents in the local community who receive community care, and sometimes the only person they see each week is the community nurse.



PTA

Please may I say a HUGE thank you to the PTA for running some spectacular events this term. The fancy dress Halloween disco was a big hit with the Juniors and one which I am sure will be repeated, the two film nights were as popular as ever and of course the PTA stalls at the Christmas Fayre. The PTA comprises of a small team of very committed and enthusiastic individuals and we really appreciate all that they do, There is already a programme of PTA events for next term, please do contact us if you are able to help at any of these.

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Christmas Celebrations

We are so lucky to have been able to celebrate Christmas as we normally would have done. The festivities began with the Preparatory Department's 'A Midwife Crisis' Nativity, which was full of colour and energy. This was followed by a magnificent Carol Service, involving all of Melrose. The girls sung, read and performed with enthusiasm and sincerity causing the congregation to be uplifted, moved and impressed all at the same time. We then had our wonderful Melrose Christmas Fayre, which again was an amazing feat of teamwork involving nearly 200 girls, staff and parents. There was a lovely atmosphere and, as we were spread out across the whole ground floor, it didn't feel overcrowded. Thank you to the girls and staff for all the work they put in organising the stalls, the parents who helped run them, the PTA and of course, you all for putting your hands in your pockets so generously and coming to support us. I am thrilled to announce that we raised **£3,168.97**. Fantastic! The Christmas performances ended this week with a heart warming nativity put on by the Pre-Preparatory Department. It is amazing to see 2 ½ - 4 year olds up on stage singing their hearts out. Wonderful!



Christmas Treats

There have been end of term Christmas treats throughout the school. The Pre-Preparatory Department had a special Christmas lunch earlier this week, for which they prepared the vegetables themselves.

All the Junior classes had a Christmas treat with an outing to watch The Snow Queen at The Performing Arts Centre. In addition, Junior Remove and Form I went to Oaty and Joey's Playbarn for a Christmas outing and Forms II & III to a private viewing of two films at the Mallard cinema.

The Preparatory classes celebrated with a party day in school with traditional party games, food and a special appearance from Father Christmas and the Pre-Preparatory Department have had their Christmas Party today.



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Thanks

May I take this opportunity to say thank you.

Firstly, a very big thank you to Ms Jones, who leaves us at the end of this term, after covering for Mrs de la Fosse whilst she has been on maternity leave. Ms Jones has been an amazing addition to the Melrose team. She supported the girls superbly during lockdown and has really given the Junior Remove class an excellent start into the Juniors. She has had a super relationship with both girls and staff alike and her calm but warm manner will be missed by all. We wish her all the very best.

May I also thank Mrs Donnelly for her role of Acting Deputy Head in Mrs de la Fosse's absence. Mrs Donnelly has 'held the reins' admirably this year, again through the extra demands of lockdown, ensuring that the school has run smoothly on a day to day basis. We really do appreciate all that she has done.

Mrs de la Fosse will return at the start of next term in her role as Junior Remove class teacher and Deputy Head and Mrs Donnelly will continue as Wellbeing & PSHE Subject Leader, Lunch Time Co-ordinator and support teacher, primarily supporting Junior Remove and Lower Preparatory.

Thank you to all the staff for their hard work this term. The girls are very lucky to have such a supportive team behind them, striving to make the curriculum as creative and absorbing as possible and showing such commitment to the co-curricular activities that the school provides. Whilst, I don't normally single out individuals, I would like to thank Mr Waddingham for all that he does for both the staff and the girls. I liken him to 'an efficient ghost' with nothing being too much trouble.

Thank you to the girls for their enthusiasm and energy, they truly are a delight to teach.

Finally, thank you to you all for your support this term. Thank you to all who have come and helped with school events, all who have attended events and to all of you for supporting the girls generally in their learning.

May I wish you all a happy, restful Christmas and all the very best for a healthy 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Ozanne
Head Teacher