

# Weekly School News Roundup

**Withycombe Raleigh  
C of E Primary  
School**

20<sup>th</sup> December 2024



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## News from your Headteacher

We have made it to the end of term! The last couple of weeks have been plagued with illnesses, both among staff and children. I really hope that everyone can rest and recuperate over the Christmas break so we are all ready and raring to go again in January. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their hard work and dedication this term. We have really struggled at times with low levels of staff, which means other staff have had to work even harder than normal. All our staff put the children at Withycombe at the very heart of everything they do and they all deserve a well-earned holiday!

### Christmas Lunch

On Wednesday almost 600 Christmas dinners were served to children and staff! It was truly amazing how smoothly the service went and the quality of the food served was exceptional. It was a real team effort, with staff from across the school all 'mucking in' with serving, pulling crackers, washing up, wiping and clearing tables. A special thank you to our Kitchen Manager Layla and her team for their amazing skills, and for pulling off such a massive feat so calmly and effectively. All the children enjoyed their meal as well as the Christmas sing along!



### Junior Parkrun Withycombe Takeover!



On 12th January we are hoping to 'take over' the Phear Park Junior Parkrun. We need 20 volunteers to be time keepers, marshals, bar code scanners etc. If you are able to volunteer, please email the Phear Park Parkrun team ([phearparkjuniors@parkrun.com](mailto:phearparkjuniors@parkrun.com)) and let them know you would like to volunteer on 12th January.

You will need to send them your Parkrun Barcode number. If you are not registered with Parkrun, you can do so here: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register/>

Thank you to the staff who have already volunteered, but we need more if possible please!  
Volunteers need to arrive by 8:30 for a briefing.



Growing

Happy

Caring

Hearts

and

Minds





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## Library

Reading, and a love of reading, has been our main focus for a couple of years and we were delighted that OFSTED recognised the improvements we had made to our reading and phonics provision over the past 18 months. Our aim is that all children leave Withycombe in Year 6 able to read and with a love of reading. The library is a fundamental part of our reading provision and for some time now we have wanted to relocate this to a larger space in the heart of the school. This way, our library becomes a focal point for children; an inviting, calm and comfortable place to visit and enjoy books. Over the past week we have started the epic task of moving the current library across to the current staffroom space in Orcombe House. There are over 18,000 books to move as well as shelving and other pieces of furniture. Further work will be done during our INSET day on 6th January and we hope to 'unveil' the new space to children during the first few days of the Spring Term.



I would like to take this further opportunity to thank Mrs Board-Medley for all of her incredible efforts in keeping our school library so well stocked, and organised so efficiently since it was officially opened with Mr Powley in 2015! She will be very much missed in school, but we wish her well in her new school librarian job.

Have a lovely Christmas break, and we'll see you back in school on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January!  
Mrs. E Jones





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Several year groups had the Christmas treat of a cinema trip! Years 1, 2 and 3 saw Paddington in Peru and Year 4 went to see Elf! What a brilliant treat!



The KS2 quiz was, as ever, a bit of a scream! The children had great fun and really let their hair down for an 'organised chaos' event in the hall, with several rounds including music rounds, and making a snowman out of loo roll (and a Y3 volunteer!). It's great to let off some steam at the end of such a busy term!

## Sports and Achievements



After lots of hard work and their grading last week, Arthur and Ophelia were awarded their purple belts in MMA!



Tilda from Hazel Class has completed her Stage 5 in swimming, moving up to Stage 6. Well done Tilda!



On Friday 13th December we were treated to a wonderful concert from our Y4 children. Y4 have been learning the 'dood' this term as part of the Wider Opportunities scheme.



Thank you to everyone for all of the generous gifts and well wishes I have received over the last week. The photo book with drawings and messages from all the children in school is so lovely, I will treasure it for ever! I feel very privileged to be part of your journey at Withycombe Raleigh School. I have loved the last 16 years and have been very proud to work at such a fantastic place. I am very sad to leave all of the amazing children (in particular my lovely Dolphin Class), the families and my wonderful colleagues. I wish you all well.

Lots of love, Miss Lee xx

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## Christmas Wellbeing Tips



### FOR PARENTS & CARERS

#### Honesty

Try to be honest with people (and yourself!) if you're not feeling up to getting involved in everything. Don't be afraid to change plans if you're not feeling up to it.

#### Press pause

If you're someone who tends to take on too much, the demands of Christmas can make this worse. Remember you can only do so much, stop if it's becoming too much. Just try to relax and look after yourself.

#### Pyjamas!

In between all the social arrangements, make sure you have a day to hang out at home in your pyjamas!

#### Get unstuck

Make sure you're not too house-bound and spend all the time eating and drinking! A brisk walk outside is a nice way to spend time with loved ones, or a day trip somewhere. Things can get quite intense if you're stuck in the house all the time, and a bit of exercise helps too.

#### Don't believe the hype

Don't compare your Christmas with the representations of perfect Christmas moments on social media or on adverts. Remember that everyone is only sharing the good bits. Don't get sucked into measuring your experience against something that's ultimately fake.

#### Bed head

Give yourself a head start – try to go to bed early on Christmas Eve so you feel well-rested on the day itself.

#### Talk

If you are feeling overwhelmed or under pressure, talk to someone about it. Think about who can support you when needed during the festivities.

#### Give yourself a prezzie

Make sure you take some time out after Christmas to do something you really want to do, no matter how small. Think about what *you* want to get out of the Christmas break too!

### FOR OUR CHILDREN

If you think the holidays might be a difficult time for your child, below are some tips for how you can alleviate the pressure, and support their wellbeing.

#### Check in with your child

Talk to your child about what they look forward to about Christmas or anything they are worried about. You could take 20 minutes to do an activity together to create a relaxed space to start that conversation.

#### Plan ahead

Plan time together, and also time to yourselves, whether through separate activities or some unstructured down time. For children whose parents are separated, it is often helpful for adults concerned to make a joint decision on how the Christmas period runs. If planning to spend time with extended family, check out how your child feels about this.

#### Understand their needs

Understanding what each of you in the family needs is crucial to reducing stress and the risk of family arguments. Do some need more sleep than others? More space and time alone? Understanding what matters to each individual in the family, and then planning ahead, is key to reducing anxiety.

#### Get out of the house

Make sure everyone gets out of the house regularly, even if it's for a brisk walk around the block. This can help reduce tensions.

#### Look after health

Christmas can be a time of overindulgence: lots of food, late nights, and sugary treats. Having some healthy meals, more active days and earlier nights will bring a bit of balance to the holidays.

#### Do what's best for you

Often there can be talk of having the 'perfect Christmas'. But you know your child best. Make decisions to suit your children, even if this means doing things differently. That way you'll have a Christmas that's perfect for you and your family.

### Here are some mental health support agencies in case you need support:

Childline [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Free phone line 0800 1111 and text service for young people to make contact with a counsellor.

NHS Every mind Matters [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)

Offers a range of mental health advice

YoungMinds [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Provides support, advice and resources for young people on mental health.

Child Bereavement UK [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Information on how to support a young person. A helpline is also available 0800 028840.

Papyrus [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

Mental health charity dedicated to preventing young suicide.

Call 08000684141/ Text 07860039967 for any young person experiencing thoughts of suicide or for anyone who has concerns for a young person who may be in distress.

Stem4 [www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk)

Promotes positive mental health and resilience building for teenagers.

Kooth [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

Provides free mental health support with online counsellors for ages 11+.

For further information regarding support services please see our Wellbeing Page on the school website.

<https://www.wrpschool.org/wellbeing-2024>



In case you missed the Online Advent Calendar – here's a roundup of all the images behind the doors.



1. Panto Day!



2. Dolphin Class made Christmas Cards



3. Our Christingle Service



4. Jazzy Jars ready for the Xmas fair



5. We decked the halls!



6. A thank you for all your shoebox appeal donations.



7. A throwback photo to when Santa came to visit - by helicopter!



8. The Christmas Fair was excellent!



9. Getting excited for Nativity week (throwback photo)



10. The school choir performed at Holy Trinity Church



11. Y2 Nativity Play



12. Joyful Colouring Competition Winners



13. Parents joined in the y2 Nativity hug & squeeze song



14. The children enjoyed Paddington at the cinema



15. Foundation Nativity Play



16. Home made Christmas Cards



17. Music talent showcase concert



18. The ks2 quiz was lots of fun!



19. The successful and fun Christmas lunch and Xmas Jumper day



20. Our Christmas e-card - Merry Christmas...

Day 21 - Come back for the secret door - can you find it?