



Dear Parents and Carers,  
Our big focus for the past couple of weeks has been the lead up to the Christmas Bazaar, and we're all looking forward to it tomorrow. The event's success is entirely dependent on our children and their families being there – so please come along to the Downley site between 12 noon and 3 pm. We still need cakes for the day itself, but the most important thing is that you come along with your children, and all the friends and family you can get to come along too! My thanks to all the staff and parents who have been instrumental in organising this year, I am sure it will be another great success. You can read elsewhere in the newsletter everything else that's been going on in school, from a visit from a therapy dog to different groups' efforts for Children In Need. Do you know if your child may be eligible for pupil premium? This is a grant given to the school from the government to support disadvantaged pupils, and is available to any pupil who is eligible for free school meals. It enables additional money to come in to the school to fund certain activities such as horseriding, Forest School, music therapy and more. It can provide some much needed targeted support, so please do contact either school office if you think your child may be eligible – the relevant forms will come to you, and again school staff can help if any help is needed to complete them.

On another topic, the school is trying to work hard with the Local Authority to improve the quality of the children's EHCPs. We feel there is a huge disparity across the school and are striving to develop greater accuracy and consistency within the documents. We have found the advice from the Council for Disabled Children very helpful, and we'd encourage parents to read their documents to play your part. Further information in future newsletters. <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/>

Bradley Taylor (Headteacher)

## Autumn Term 2019 dates

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December  
**Other dates for Parents:**  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November - 9.15am - PPP workshop for parents at Cressex Site.  
Little Wings family event including Santa – date tbc  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Lunch for pupils  
Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December – Treetops Christmas celebration  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December – 10.00am - Woodland Christmas Assembly

On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November Doug the Therapy dog and Billi the black Labrador visited the Cressex site for their first visit. Six classes were very lucky to have some time with them and lots of fun was had by all. Some of the children overcame fears, some whispered in Doug's ears, played peepo and one child in Deer sang beautifully to the dogs. In December both dogs will be visiting the Downley site.



Therapy dogs have been active in schools for some time. Teachers and families have witnessed the effects therapy dogs have on pupils and themselves.

### The benefits of having therapy dogs in the classroom include:

**Physical benefits.** Interaction with therapy dogs has been shown to reduce blood pressure, provide physical stimulation and assist with pain management.

**Social benefits.** A visiting therapy dog promotes greater self-esteem and focused interaction with other students and teachers.

**Cognitive benefits.** It has been empirically proven that therapy dogs stimulate memory and problem-solving skills.

**Emotional and mental health benefits.** A therapy dog can lift moods in the classroom, often provoking laughter. The therapy dog is also there to offer friendship and a shoulder to lean on for students.

## News from around the school

### Rainbow

We have had a great start to the half term. Thank you for the support we have received for Children in Need and for the mufti day for the Christmas Bazaar. The children had a fantastic time when we came together within the department for Children in Need. It was a great event and something we hope to repeat again soon. PPP's are coming home this week. If you do have any questions with regards to this please contact your class teacher. We received some lovely 'wow' moments over half term, please do send any across as they happen so we can include them within the children's learning journals. Likewise with the homework books, we would love to see the things your children are doing at home with you. Have a great weekend, hope to see some of you at the Christmas Bazaar! Hannah

### Little Wings

Huge thank you to all the parents who contributed to Children in Need last Thursday. Some pupils at our school have benefited from the charities that Children in Need support, so it is a cause close to our hearts. All the class groups visited each little wings classroom over the afternoon and took part in various arts and crafts activities. The children did phenomenally well to transition from room to room and we're very proud.

Payment for the Playtrain trip are due today, so please make your contributions on Parentmail if you haven't already done so and thanks to those who already have. We're really looking forward to our first department trip! Claire

### Treetops & Coppice

Last week Coppice and Treetops joined up to raise money for Children in Need. We have been working with our buddy classes across the 2 departments to learn about Children in Need and take part in fun activities including biscuit decorating, mask making and sensory activities. It was lovely to see children from different classes having fun and interacting! The children loved the Children in Need afternoon filled with face painting and filling a giant Pudsey with change - what a great experience seeing children work together to reach an end goal! Well done to everyone for taking part - We raised £80! Salma and David

### Woodlands

Please keep your eyes open for a Christmas Assembly invitation in your child's home/school diary. This event will take place on Monday 16th December at 10am in the Downley site hall, and will be themed around 'The Snowman' book and film by Raymond Briggs. Amanda

### Gemstones

There is definitely a festive feel in the air in Gemstones this week. The children are beginning to learn the songs for our Christmas extravaganza and the school is busy preparing for the Christmas Bazaar on Saturday. Hope to see you all there! Sarah

### Support Staff

A warm welcome to Susana who joined the admin team at Cressex and has hit the ground running and already making a fantastic contribution. Lynn has been working hard helping with the Xmas Bazaar even though staffing has been challenging with sickness and no cover at Downley. Thank you to the whole of the admin team for always making it work on reception and keeping everything going even when you are short staffed. Karen is doing a sterling job, as usual, of getting all the pupils Christmas present orders through in time for the end of term activities.

Christmas lunch for the pupils has been arranged for Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December this year, please let the class teacher know if you would like your child to have a Christmas lunch on this day. The cost is £2.20. Vicky



**We raised a total of £132.67 for Children in Need. Thank you!**

## Children in Need activities from across the school



**The school council on both sites have now had their first meetings. They are very excited to be representing the school and we look forward to looking at the school vision, mission and values this year.**

### The Cressex site School Council

