



Thursday 17th December 2020

Newsletter 304

www.gillespie.islington.sch.uk



Dear Parents/Carers,

Gillespie Christmas Show A Magical Christmas Jigsaw

Thank you to all the families who joined us in our Zoom shows today. We had a fantastic turn out for both shows with almost 80 for the first viewing and 60 for the second. We apologise for the technical issues during some of this morning's show and thank the helpful parent who problem solved this for us and enabled a smoother run for the second half and this afternoons showing. We will be offering another opportunity tomorrow morning at 10:30am for the families in Nursery – Year 2 who were affected or those who couldn't make it. The link will be sent out via text at 9:00am tomorrow.

However, despite the earlier issues we hope you enjoyed the Christmas show as much as we did! I am very proud that despite the restrictions imposed on us by COVID our determined teachers led by our artistic director and film editor Sarah (Year 6 teacher) and musical director Orlando put on a great show. The purpose of producing a video was not to try and win an Oscar but to share this wonderful experience that the children have had over these last few weeks and to bring it all together so that children and parents and staff can have a shared experience. The children all watched along together at 2pm. We received lots of positive and appreciate feedback which is marvelous.

With special thanks to Orlando and Sarah who worked tirelessly to produce and direct the show with Sarah spending her evening editing the final version of the video. It was a huge task and we hope you will join us in thanking them both.

Well done to all teachers and children for their hard work. What enthusiastic and uplifting performances from each class! The children thoroughly enjoyed taking part.



Congratulations to Angela

Sending huge congratulations to Angela and family on the birth of her lovely baby boy Teddy! Both mother and baby are doing well and we wish them all the best for this new chapter.

Attendance Matters 7th – 11th December 2020

Overall school attendance for the week – 97.69%

Nursery	97.46%	Year 3	100%
Reception	100%	Year 4	96.45%
Year 1	95.67%	Year 5	98.46%
Year 2	100%	Year 6	93.45%

We have had excellent attendance this whole term and hope this can continue for the New Year.

A big thank you to all of our staff and to the many parents in our community who have been very helpful in supporting the school during this incredibly challenging term. I also want to give a special thanks to my wonderful admin staff who throughout this year have supported me and my leadership team with the administration of our COVID protocols through the term and the holidays. I am very grateful that my team are willing to continue working with me until December 23rd, again during their holidays, to support the school's track and trace duties.

I am proud and relieved that we have managed to get through a whole term without having to send any classes home and for the most part have been able to provide a full education for all of our children. We know and anticipate that things may get even more challenging in the New Year and we ask that all families do the best that you can to keep yourselves safe so that we can return refreshed and ready for the New Year. I am optimistic that by the summer term school life may begin to return to some kind of normality.

Wishing you all a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mark Owen,
Headteacher

Important reminder:

Reporting of a positive COVID result during the holidays

During the holidays, please follow the guidance to report a positive test for COVID-19:

→ **If your child gets a positive COVID test result before Wednesday 23rd**

December 2020 please email covid@gillespie.islington.sch.uk with the following information:

- **Name of child**
- **Did the child have symptoms or not?**
- **What date did symptoms start?** (this can be any feeling of being unwell, not just the three COVID symptoms)
- **Date that test swab was taken**
- **Date child was last in school**
- **Has anyone else been unwell with COVID in your household?**
- **Your contact phone number in case more information is needed**

Staff at the school will be working and responding to notifications of positive cases up to six days following the end of term.

→ **If your child gets symptoms or tests positive after Wednesday 23rd**

December 2020, schools do not need to be informed until the first day of the new term. Instead, please engage with NHS Test and Trace who will be in contact with you.

Message from Gillespie Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers,

2020 has been a year like no other for all of us. On behalf of the governors, I want to thank Mark and the staff at Gillespie for their incredibly hard work and their extraordinary dedication to our school community. I'm grateful also for the support that parents and carers have shown the school. But most importantly, thanks go to our amazing Gillespie children who've shown such resilience, enthusiasm and commitment to learning since their return to school.

Next term, we'll be holding elections for parent governors. There will be several vacancies on the Governing Board, all open to anyone with a child at Gillespie. You don't need any particular qualifications or experience – beyond a wanting to help make the school the best it can be for all the children. There'll be training in your first few months. Mentoring and other support can be offered for those who haven't done this kind of thing before.

If you'd like to know more about the role, please talk to Mark or to Sarah (Year 6 teacher) who's our staff governor, or to Lyn who was a member of our board for several years. You can also get more information from current parent governors Jodie Reed, Louise Russell, Mikel Ghebreyohannes and Rej Bangar. Or email me via governors@gillespie.islington.sch.uk and we'll arrange to chat.

Please do consider joining us next year in supporting Mark and his staff in the fantastic work they do at Gillespie. In the meantime, have a happy, peaceful and healthy holiday.

Best wishes,
Claire
Chair of Governors

Reception Learning

We have had lots of fun at Forest school this half term! This week we learnt about different birds we might see in the local environment. We used the binoculars to take a closer look! We designed our own clay birds using feathers and leaves and made bird feeders to hang outside our houses. We love playing in the mud kitchen each week and building animal homes using the mallets and natural materials.



Nursery Learning

Some Nursery families are celebrating Hanukkah this week- one child gave the children a lovely gift each of a beautiful dreidel and some Hanukkah card and stickers. The children have enjoyed learning about Hanukkah, making Hanukkah cards drawing menorahs and learning to spin and play with different sized dreidels.



Year 6 Learning

FurutreZone Poetry Competition 2020

Year 6 loved taking part in the FutureZone Poetry event this term. The theme was 'Hope' and every child produced thought-provoking poems on this theme. Please look at the competition blog to read all of our entries.

Blog link: <https://islingtongovuk.i2bloggy.com/fz2021/gillespie-competition-entries/>

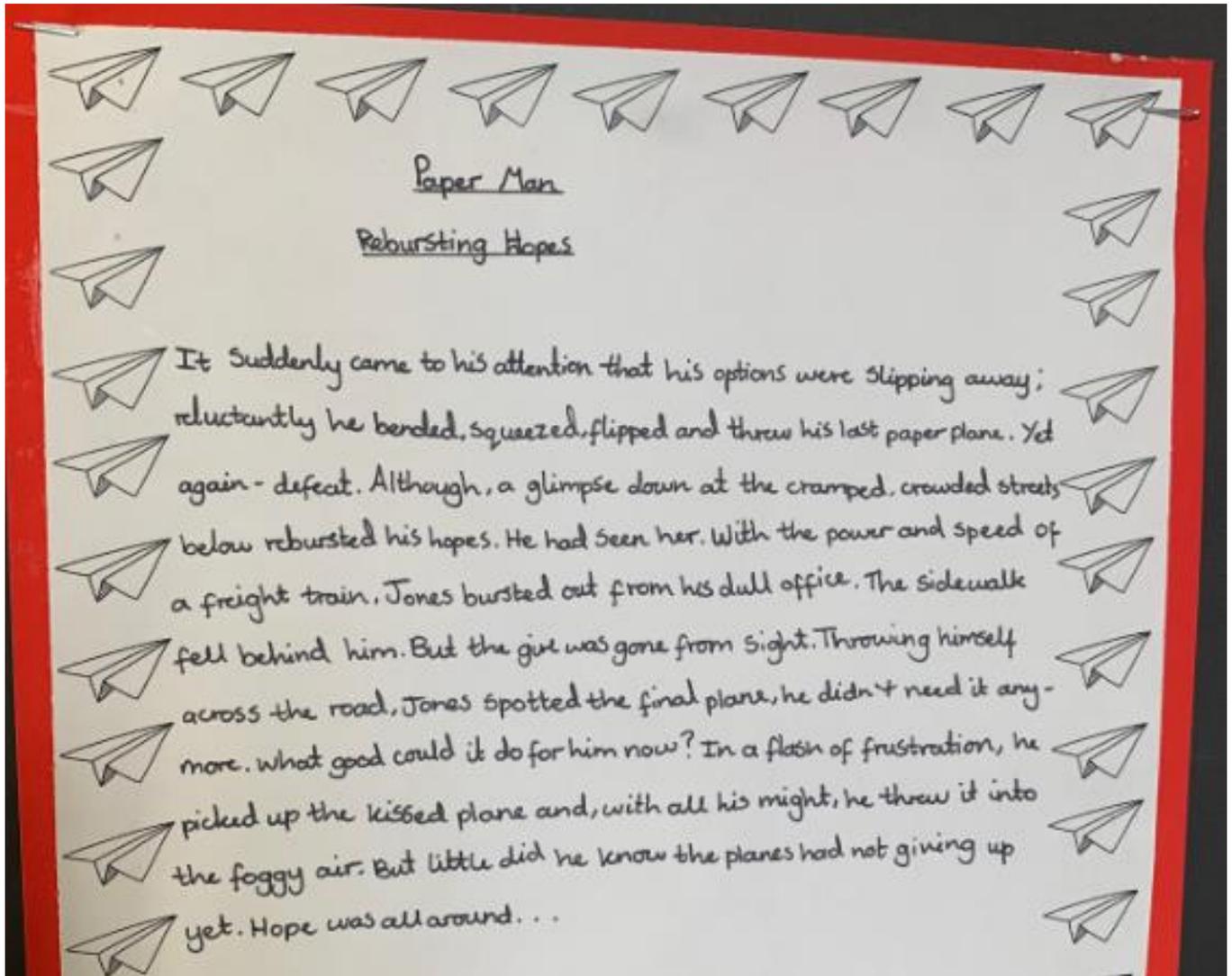
We are very proud that Esme was crowned the winner from Gillespie. Please enjoy her intelligent and carefully considered poem. Congratulations on your amazing achievement and nabbing the £10 Amazon gift voucher! We also had a notable mentions for pomes by Ruby, Amin, Rahya, and Tessa. All of the winning poems from Gillespie and schools across the borough will be published in a booklet next term.

Rewind

Watching from the beginning
The hand gropes towards the remote
The face fixed on the screen
The finger presses on the pause
The world turns to a nightmarish dream
The screen zooms in closer
Traffic lights burn bright
But nothing is there waiting
No cars or trucks; no light
The streets are empty
The houses are full
Nothing is moving
Everything is still
Happiness is gone, sadness is strong
The world is frozen in time
Getting in closer and closer
People on the streets are scarce
All bearing crestfallen faces
Things couldn't get any worse
But our angel guardians stand close
A light in the long lasting dark
They are the help we need to survive
And keep those we love in our heart
The streets are empty
The houses are full
Nothing is moving
Everything is still
But happiness is there, however faint
The light is melting the ice
And inside our soul, is a flickering flame
Small but strong in the soot
And hope is the name of this honey-coloured glow
That keeps us alive as we look
The hope is here; here to stay
And get us through the rest
It will keep us safe as we lay down for bed
Altogether in our comfy nest
By Esme Thompson

Year 6 Writing

We have immersed ourselves into the world of silent movies in Year 6 this half term. We focused on a wonderful short silent animation, Paperman in class. The children thoroughly enjoyed taking part in experience days in class where we visited New York virtually, had a paper aeroplane competition, and dabbled in being tour guides in the Big Apple! Our final pieces showed great innovation and creativity. Please read a small selection below.



The Movie of Two
The end of the end

The girl was following the planes into her own building onto her own sofa. Rishi too, in the same direction! He went up and onto a sofa. Sitting next to him, she was there. She froze. He glared. She gasped. He gazed. He slowly inserted a DVD into TV and then, pressed play. His film was on.

"As the sun's golden syrup soaked the clouds," wrote the narrator. "The city of New Delhi's busy roads switched on. Rishi was on the 6:27 train to work, tired, depressed and drained out. He was facing a pretty girl... He turned around to see her. At last. She froze. He glared. She gasped. He ~~stared~~. He slowly inserted a DVD into the TV, and then pressed play. His film was on. As the sun's golden syrup soaked the clouds..."

By Arun.

Temporary changes to urgent healthcare for children and young people to continue over Christmas



If your child needs urgent healthcare this winter, be sure to go to the right place.

So that the NHS can continue to provide safe care to all Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington residents during the pandemic, we have made some temporary changes to children and young people's services. These changes will continue throughout the Christmas period and over the winter to help ease pressure on our hospitals.

Emergency services for children and young people have temporarily closed at University College London Hospital and the Royal Free Hospital.

However, there are children and young people's emergency departments nearby at:

- Whittington Health
- Barnet Hospital
- North Middlesex University Hospital
- St Mary's Hospital
- Royal London Hospital.

These temporary arrangements allow the NHS to ensure that children and young people's services are not disrupted by increases in demand due to the pandemic.

The NHS is still here for you and your family. If you think you need A&E for your baby or child, please call NHS 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk for advice on the most appropriate and nearest service to you. If needed, NHS 111 can now book you an appointment at your local A&E or direct you to another service.

For life-threatening emergencies call 999 immediately.

Parents of children receiving ongoing or planned care will be contacted directly if there are any changes to existing arrangements.

University College London Hospitals and the Royal Free Hospital emergency departments are still open for adult patients.

Find out more at: <https://www.northlondonpartners.org.uk/ourplan/Areas-of-work/Children-and-young-people-health-services.htm>

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you to let you know that our initial advice for schools to move online until the end of term has changed following a discussion with the Department for Education.

Following the discussions with the DfE your child's school was open as usual on Wednesday 16th and Thursday 17th December. Friday will be closed as a 'Remote Learning' day in any case.

Our initial advice to schools to move to remote learning for the final few days of term was solely based on advice from Islington Council's Public Health team in light of the worryingly rapid rise in coronavirus cases across Islington and London. There is an urgent need for us to do all that we can to protect the health of local people.

We are both parents and we are all too aware of the disruption caused to you and your families over the last couple of days due to the uncertainty of your children's school opening arrangements, and we are sorry for that.

We have had to make many difficult decisions over the last nine months, but throughout the pandemic our top priority has always been to keep local people safe and supported.

From Wednesday 16 December, London moved into Tier 3, the highest level of coronavirus restrictions. This is yet another indication of how serious things have become and as we move toward the festive break, we must all do everything we can to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

Please stay at home as much as possible to help stop the virus spreading. Please avoid crowded spaces, including buses and trains, if you can, as the virus spreads more easily when people mix. Travel or shop at less busy times and follow public health advice to:

- **Make space** – stay two metres apart from people who aren't in your household or bubble - this helps stop the virus spreading between people
- **Wash your hands** - regularly and for at least 20 seconds, especially when you get home – this washes any virus off your hands and helps stop it spreading
- **Cover your nose and mouth with a face covering** to stop the virus spreading - in public places, including in shops, on public transport and at the school gate

If you have symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature, or a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste), please arrange a test, to help ensure those people that have the virus are identified and we can reduce the risk of further spreading. Getting a test is free and simple: visit [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119. Islington has two testing sites - at Sobell Leisure Centre and Finsbury Leisure Centre.

We have all worked incredibly hard to keep one another safe and we urge you to continue to work together and do all that you can to keep each other safe.

With best wishes,

Richard Watts, Leader Islington Council

Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Lead Member for Children and Families





FREE Family Learning course

Supporting Children in Nursery and Reception level 1 (online)

This free online course is for you if you want to...

- Start the journey to gain qualifications for working with children under 5.
- Discover how children learn through play and find out about the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Develop your own speaking and writing skills and much more.
- Take part in practical play activities.



Course Dates: Wednesdays 27th January to 24th March 2021

Times: 10.00 to 12.00

Venue: Online

(Recommended: laptop with good internet connection)

Assessments over the phone and online from 8th January 2021

For more information call **07769 235 790**

or email anna.stec@islington.co.uk

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