

# Hillcrest School Christmas Newsletter

# 2015



Hillcrest has been alive with Project Based Learning activities from 10th December culminating in a final exhibition day of celebration on the 17th December 2015. Project Based Learning is a concept which promotes new learning styles and engagement through practical engagement with a challenging problem or question. During the planning process and week-long activity base, students are encouraged to critique, reflect and sustain an inquiry throughout.

Questions asked and their attached projects in this term's PBL week have included:

- Why do teenagers give up on sport? (Activity link- creation of an MTB track for the engagement in a new sport and production of smoothies for a healthy breakfast choice).
- How can we use our entrepreneurial skills to improve our new learning environment?
- How can we ensure safety in our cars during winter?
- Homelessness around us- What can we do about it?
- What Wildlife lives around us?

The projects have been a great success and have resulted in further questions being asked by students and further investigation and enquiry based learning taking place alongside the main outcomes.



Mr Flynn's class visited Fenwicks window on Northumberland Street in Newcastle. In our Topic lessons this half term we are studying Festivals around the world and have been focussing on Christmas most recently. We have been looking at Christmas traditions and as Fenwicks window is a popular North Eastern tradition we thought we would all go and have a look! The class thoroughly enjoyed the morning and loved the story that the window told them. The students were extremely well behaved and represented Hillcrest brilliantly.

A great time was had by all!

## 'Make a Noise about Bullying'

Students at School celebrated National Anti-Bullying Week, whose theme this year is 'Make a Noise about Bullying', with a series of events focused on friendship and team building.

The anti-bullying campaign was especially exciting and pupils developed a poster which was highlighted in the local press.



Thanks to everyone who supported our Children in Need fundraising activities in school on November 13th.

We sold cakes & biscuits at break time and together we raised £62.20 for a very worthy cause.



As we approach the end of a very busy and successful term at Hillcrest, I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for supporting the work of the school over the last few months. A huge amount of hard work has been done by students and staff, but parents in particular play a vital role in ensuring the school moves forward with continuing momentum. It was fantastic to see so many of you at the Exhibition afternoon and Christmas Fair, where a total of £400 was raised.

Our HMI visit in October confirmed the fact that we are on our way to becoming a great school and identified that we are 'driving improvement more securely' and a 'new culture is emerging in school'. We will continue to strive for excellence so that we achieve the best possible pupil outcomes.

The end of the term sees us saying goodbye to Mrs Biggs, Mrs Brandon, Mrs Halliday, Miss Bond and Mrs Barnes. We wish them well in their new ventures. Mr Phillips takes up post as Deputy Head in January, Mrs Ashurst will continue to teach Mr Flynn's class until he returns, Mrs Walker joins as Literacy teacher and Mrs Miller,; 6<sup>th</sup> form lead starts after half term.

Finally on behalf of the pupils and staff of Hillcrest I would like to wish you a Happy Christmas and a Successful New Year.



We look forward to the start of term on the 5<sup>th</sup> January (Training Day 4<sup>th</sup> January)

## **The Base trip to Wallington Hall.**



We enjoyed a guided tour of Wallington Hall. We were allowed to sit in the chairs in the drawing room and were some of the first people to see the house decorated for Christmas.

We played on the train, the adventure playground and in the wooden fort. We were fortunate to have mild weather.

## **On Yer Bike**

We have been successful in our bid to access funds from the Community Chest from both the Town and the County Council to purchase bicycles in a range of sizes which can be used by our students to allow them to go "on yer bike." The 8, yes 8 bikes were delivered on the 17th December and came with helmets, water bottles, repair maintenance kits as we intend to offer the students the opportunity to learn how to maintain & fix their bicycles. This is a great opportunity for students to enjoy a healthy outdoor activity and we are grateful to both the Town and the County Council for supporting us in this venture.