



Little Phoenix



The Newsletter of Yarm Pre-Prep

Mrs Speight's message ...

Number 442

13th December 2024

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We have reached the end of term, where does the time go? Writing the last newsletter of term and 2024 allows me a little time for reflection and thinking about how much the children have grown since September. 'Being in the moment' was something I mentioned at the nativity last week and I was pleased to read Tooled Up's Wednesday Wisdom, [Christmas Present](#). Please do take a moment to read this, I've included it in this edition. As always, The Mental Elf Run and Christmas Jumper day have been a great finale. Thanks for all of your generosity raising money for Mind. Thank you also to the wonderful Pre-Prep team for their hard work, dedication, commitment and enthusiasm. Every day is a fun day in school, filled with laughter and learning. Have a relaxing holiday with family and friends. Warmest wishes,

Jeanne Speight



Nursery

What a fun filled final week the Nursery children have had. It has been a hive of activity to finish all of our Christmas crafts to take home. We were so excited to have a visit from Santa too. We hope you all have a lovely time over the Christmas holidays.



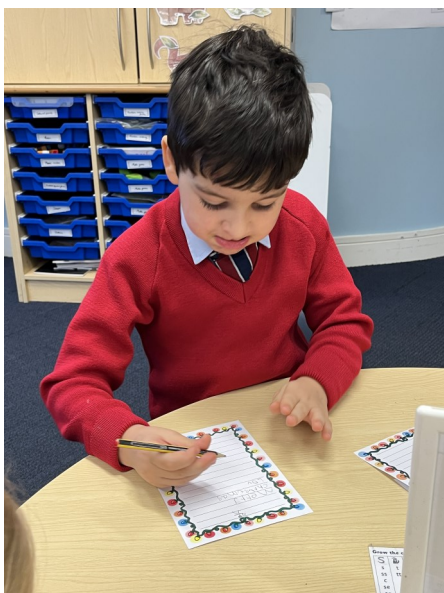
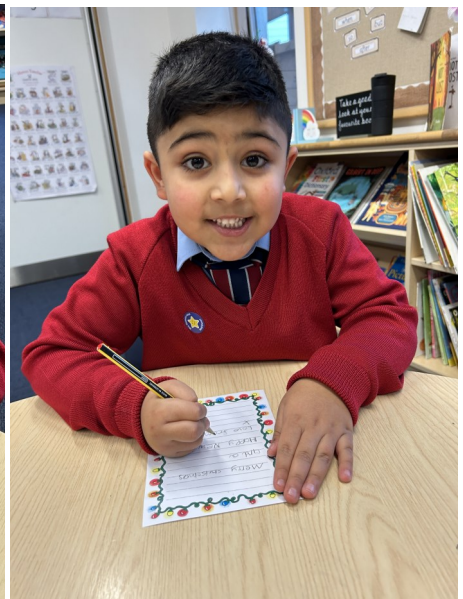
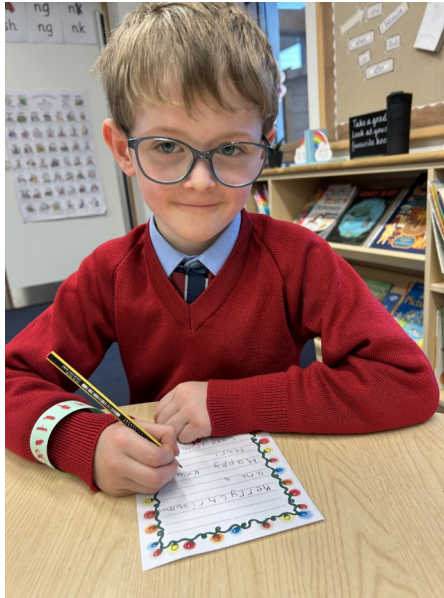
Christmas Fun!

We have been busy preparing for Christmas; making gingerbread, wrapping presents and exploring festive scents and traditions.



Christmas Cards

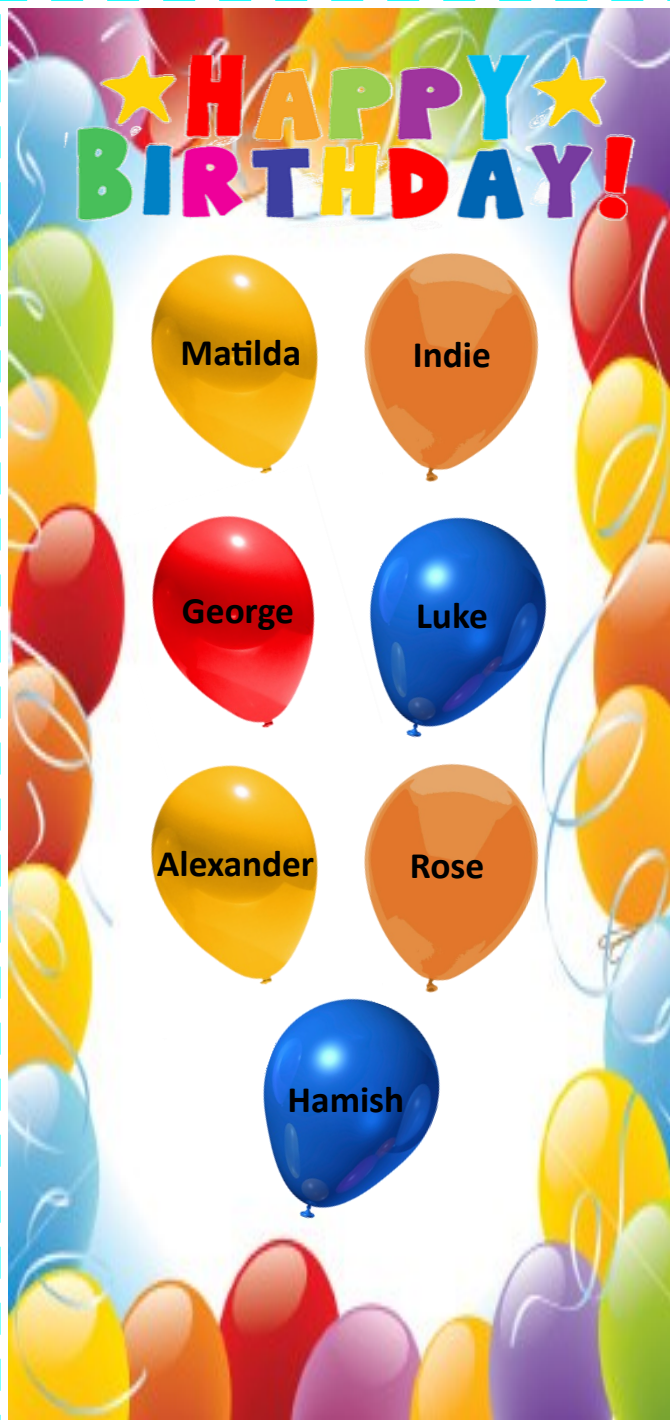
The Year 1 children have enjoyed making Christmas cards for their loved ones. They took lots of time to write their messages, thinking about the size and spacing of their words. The cards depict a snowy woodland scene and as you will see, their creativity shines through.



Winter Wonderland

The children in Year 2 have enjoyed a winter wonderland in the woodlands. They sang festive songs, built dens and even climbed 'Mount Everest.'

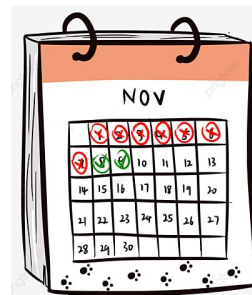




Term Dates

Spring Term, 2025	
Pupils Return	Monday, 6th January 2025
Half Term Begins	Thursday, 20th February 2025 (after school)
INSET	Friday, 21st February 2025
Pupils Return	Monday, 3rd March 2025
Finish	Friday, 4th April 2025 (after school)
Summer Term, 2025	
Pupils Return	Wednesday, 23rd April 2025
Bank Holiday	Monday, 5th May 2025
Half Term Begins	Thursday, 22nd May 2025 (after school)
Pupils Return	Monday, 2nd June 2025
Finish	Thursday, 3rd July 2025 (after Prize Giving)

[You can find the Yarm School Calendar by clicking here](#)



Notice from First Aid Lead Lyndsey

Please be reminded that as a school we follow the Department of Health Guidance on Infection Control in schools. This guidance states that the recommended period of time to be kept away from school for diarrhoea and/or vomiting is 48 hours from the last episode.

Your support in this area will help to reduce the spread of Infection in school.



Holiday School Dates 2024/25

Christmas—16th to 20th December (5 days)

Easter—7th to 11th April (5 days)

Summer—14th July to 1st August (15 days)



Christmas Present

Reflect

I was born in the early 80s, and whilst we actually had quite a few 'modern' gadgets at home (a gigantic mobile phone in what can only be described as a briefcase is an early memory), we never had a camcorder.

One year, my parents borrowed one from a friend. They used the bulky machine to video my 6th birthday party. I've come across the grainy footage a few times since then. As a teen, it was incredibly embarrassing to see younger me in a cute velvet party dress, and hear the sound of my childish voice slightly precociously telling a friend 'not to worry', that I'd mop up her spilled drink. Viewing as an adult, it's amusing to watch my little brother sneakily swipe icing from my birthday cake and gobble up multiple cupcakes when he thought no eyes were on him. It's a very rare visual snippet of family life in my younger years.

Cut to now. Most of us walk around with video cameras in our pockets that are many times more powerful than the camcorders of old. That video from my childhood feels like a rare and precious artefact. Today, the photo and video albums on my phone are almost endless and the thought of locating one photo, or even one holiday or experience from within its vast depths, is almost overwhelming. For our children, watching themselves on screen isn't something that makes them feel squeamish. It's a fact of everyday life. I dread to think how many hours of footage I have of my kids, and I wonder if it will ever be watched or truly remembered. Snippets of ballet classes, swimming galas, diving competitions, school plays, music performances, trips to the zoo, birthday parties, family outings, messing around at home, playing with the cats... you name it, it's probably on my phone (or more to the point, in the cloud, where I'm paying to store it).

Some of these videos are undoubtedly precious. In one, my then toddlers are looking out of the window on a dark evening talking to the 'banana moon'. Hearing their little high-pitched voices chatting away to me and the night sky is incredibly evocative, taking me back to a time before they were bickering, albeit lovely, teens. But do I really need the vast amount of footage that I have? With thousands of memories at our fingertips, will I, or they, ever watch most of them? Has the ease with which we document our daily lives left us feeling less connected to the memories we are recording in the moment? How many of these experiences do we remember, not because we see them through our screens, but because we actually lived them?

Particularly at this festive time of year, there are numerous opportunities and events where it might feel natural to pull out our phones, press record and watch the unfolding events not through our eyes, but via the intermediary medium of a screen. Whether it's the school nativity or family festivities, it can (if permitted) be lovely to record some short snippets. But do we need to document the whole thing through a lens? My challenge to myself this coming year and over the festive break is to strike a balance between capturing memories and living them, put my phone down a bit more, and be more immersed in the present.

Recently, I sat down with my children to create our 2024 wrapped album. It's something we do annually, picking out one photo for each month of the year and turning the results into a gift for relatives. When we select one single moment from an entire month, pulling out a favourite memory that captures an experience and talk about what we were doing at the time, it gives the snapshot meaning beyond its pixels. For me, it's a reminder that not all memories need to be stored in infinite quantities.

As parents, we are often the people behind the camera, and maybe we feel the pressure to document every moment as our children grow, particularly the 'big' ones. But perhaps sometimes, when we do it to excess, recording experiences can rob both us and them of simply living and feeling them. In 2025, maybe it's time for us to focus a little bit more on making more memories, not just storing them?

Christmas Present

Motivate

Talking of storing, and given my unhealthy iCloud habit, I was pretty appalled to learn that storing one terabyte of data in the cloud has a carbon footprint of two tonnes per year. An average person is said to accumulate 500GB of data.

One study took the average person's online storage and calculated how much physical space it would take up if this data was printed out, using the standard size of a photo, CD case and A4 paper. Turns out, it's three times the height of the Eiffel Tower. Apparently, the Amazon Rainforest would need to be cut down twice to print out all of Europe's data! But the cloud also has significant environmental impact, with a carbon footprint that now surpasses that of the global airline industry, amounting to 2% of global carbon emissions. Taking a few less photos isn't going to make a huge dent into this vast issue, but every little helps?

For those who celebrate, Christmas is often a time of indulgence - whether that's in the form of food, gifts, decorations, or even energy use. The pressure and desire to give, to celebrate, and to create picture-perfect moments can lead us to make choices that, while well-intentioned, have a lasting impact on the planet. Did you know that 500 tonnes of fairy lights are thrown away each year and that, in the UK, we generate the weight of 3.3 million emperor penguins in plastic waste every Christmas? Or that around 227,000 miles of wrapping paper are thrown away each year? That's 108 million rolls which requires around 50,000 trees to make. According to the Stockholm Environment Institute, our average consumption and spending on food, travel, lighting and gifts over three days of Christmas festivities could result in as much as 650kg of carbon dioxide emissions per person - equivalent to the weight of 1,000 Christmas puddings, and a whopping 5.5% of our total annual average carbon footprint.

Over the last couple of years at Tooled Up, we've worked with some inspiring experts in the areas of environmental education, and they've been kind enough to give us some top tips on getting through the holidays with a slightly smaller footprint. If we can't have a white Christmas - given the current weather here, it's likely to be wet and grey - perhaps we can aim for a green one? Thanks to Dr Verity Jones (Associate Professor in Education who focuses on sustainable futures), Professor Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas (an award-winning expert in sustainable fashion and education for sustainable development) and Jen Gale (founder of Sustainable(ish)), we've got a few simple suggestions that will allow us to celebrate sustainably, in style.

We could all consider greening our gift wrap by using tissue paper or brown parcel paper (which can be recycled), or by opting for Dr Jones's top tip and trying out Furoshiki, a traditional Japanese style of wrapping with beautiful cloth that can be used again and again (for instructions and inspiration, check out About Furoshiki - Furoshiki Wrap Company). Try paper or washi tape rather than plastic, invest in reusable Christmas crackers, and whilst it might sound a bit 'Blue Peter', turning old Christmas cards into gift tags is another easy win.

I know that I'm sometimes guilty of buying food that doesn't get eaten, wasting both food resources and money. I'm not alone. In fact, Dr Jones told me that food waste at Christmas is equivalent to two million turkeys, five million Christmas puddings, 74 million mince pies and £67,000,000 worth of oranges! The BBC's Christmas portion planner is a great resource to help us work out how much we will need when catering for friends and family. If we do have left overs (it's almost inevitable), we could try to get creative and make a new family favourite from some of Love Food Hate Waste's recipes.

Snow White Panto

Thursday 12th—24th December—Various times

Limited availability on some shows.

Tom Rolfe Productions are delighted to be back with a brand new production bursting with dazzling costumes, hilarious comedy, sensational singing, beautiful scenery and the coolest Magnificent Seven ever!

<https://www.thepaaonline.org/whats-on/snow-white/>



Santa and the Race to Save Christmas

Saturday 14th December, 9.30am and Sunday 15th December, 10am

Fantastic short performance for those little ones.

All is going well in Santa's workshop as Mrs Claus and the elves busily prepare for the big night. The presents are wrapped and the reindeers have completed their training then suddenly disaster strikes! Will Santa and the gang manage to find a solution in order for the sleigh to set off in time for Christmas eve?

<https://www.thepaaonline.org/whats-on/rudolph/>



2025 Panto—Jack and the Beanstalk

On sale Thursday 12th December

Early bird tickets are available on all seats until Wednesday 23rd April 2025!

<https://www.thepaaonline.org/whats-on/jack-and-the-beanstalk-3/>

