



DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to December's Newsletter. This month has been very busy indeed, including visits in the community and visitors to our school, the traditional KS2 trip to the Pantomime at the Theatre Royal in Newcastle, not to mention the class Christmas parties, our 'new for this year' Christmas Extravaganza last Friday afternoon and our wonderful Christmas Show yesterday. As the school closes for the Christmas holidays, a word of thanks goes to all the dedicated and amazing staff at Riverside who have worked hard to make sure our children have had the most memorable festive experiences. I am sure they will be looking forward to having a rest and spending time with their own children and families.

Classroom News

Nursery - Nursery has had lots of visitors this month. First we had 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' who got up to a lot of mischief in our classroom, but we were kind and made jam sandwiches to share. Then, when the tiger went back to the jungle, 'the Elf' arrived and he was a very cheeky elf! He ate the chocolates out of our calendar, climbed on the tinsel, and even made a bed out of toast! Then we had Ms Frith from the church come in and tell us all about the special story of Jesus being born. We have been very busy and are ready for a lovely Christmas as we have all been good!

Reception – Reception have thoroughly enjoyed our Christmas classroom and they even helped set up the outside area, decorating it with tinsel and ribbon. We have loved using Santa's grotto as well. Our highlight this term has been our visit to Newcastle Airport. We travelled on lots of metros, went up and down escalators and explored the airport, identifying all of the people who help us. We even went as far as the security area upstairs! We met Jet2 staff who gave us teddy bear passports and stickers and we also met cabin crew and pilots who worked for Emirates! We loved having a Greggs at the airport too and practised asking for food and handing money over and taking the change! We were shocked, when we looked at photographs when we got back, that our naughty elf had snuck onto our trip and travelled with us to the airport!

Year 1 – December has been a busy and festive month in Year 1! Each morning has brought excitement as we discovered what our naughty elf, Snowflake, had been up to, bringing lots of smiles and laughter to the classroom. The children thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing for the Christmas performance and practising their beautiful singing. We have had lots of fun doing Christmas crafts, creating cards and decorations for the children to bring home. We also loved welcoming parents in to the classroom to make calendars together.

Year 2 – Year 2 have had a fun and magical December! They had a brilliant time at NUcastle for a skipping festival where they represented Riverside well. In DT, they designed and made their own puppets, in one day!! They all worked incredibly hard, either gluing or sewing their puppets together. They are currently writing a non-fiction report based on The Great Fire of London. They are continuing to amaze Miss Beattie with their knowledge of adverbs, adjectives, nouns, commas and co-ordination. In Maths, they have been learning about fractions. They had so much fun at their Christmas party and are also enjoying making Christmas cards and calendars. They were very excited to perform the Christmas story in the Christmas Show yesterday!

The Butterfly Room - We have loved December! Lots of Christmas activities, crafts and even cooking. We have explored the Smyths catalogue, written letters to Santa, made many glittery crafts and of course baked Christmas cookies. We have enjoyed our Christmas parties and also Christmas lunch. The Polar Express Day was lots of fun - dressing in PJs and tasting hot chocolate aboard the train. Merry Christmas everyone, from the Butterflies!

Year 3 - Year 3 have enjoyed working with both Miss Bates and Mr Shaw this month. We have enjoyed finding out about the skeleton, its functions and how to look after it and taking on the challenge to create their own skeleton out of straws. We have learned all about volcanoes and the impact - good and bad - of living near to one. In computing, we have learned to use the drive and create shared documents, working collaboratively. The children created some amazing story books, complete with a moving animation. The children have enjoyed singing in music lessons, singing in more than one part and composing their own accompaniments using body percussion, boom whackers and chime bars.

Year 4 - In Year 4, the children have thoroughly enjoyed the exciting lead-up to Christmas. The children have enjoyed their Christmas party, making their Christmas cards, and calendars for the New Year. We had a special visit from Santa Claus and the children were very excited to receive their chocolate selection box. Finally, the children have particularly enjoyed their cricket sessions, where they listened carefully to instructions and worked hard to develop their skills and teamwork. The coach was very impressed! We hope everyone has a lovely Christmas!

Year 5 – Year 5 have worked tremendously hard this month and have shown enthusiasm about all topic areas. In particular, the children have enjoyed learning about the Alps in Geography and have compared what life is like in the Alps in different European countries to life in our local area. In PE, we have been fortunate to have had a cricket coach in school and all children have shown perseverance and a ‘can do’ attitude. Last week, we concluded our swimming lessons at Tynemouth pool and all children have made good progress and should be proud of their efforts this term. Year 5 have also been very keen on ‘Lego League’, which has been our topic in computing and the children have worked really hard to develop and program robots constructed with Lego.

Year 6 – Year 6 had a session with some volunteers from the church explaining the 'Posada' tradition of passing around some figures for the nativity scene under the tree. We have continued our 'Friends Resilience' sessions where our visitor has helped children understand how to make friendships work.

We have had sessions with Phil from the NUFC Foundation to support our English and maths works towards next year's SATs. We have now finished our work on King Kong which was an enjoyable unit of work based on a book of the black and white film which can be seen on BBC IPlayer. The children have been excited about starting a 'chess ladder' and have shown great concentration to help each other learn the rules.

Staffing News

Mrs O'Malley, who has been absent from work since September, has decided to leave Riverside Primary School and will not be returning. We wish her the very best for the future. The Year 5 class, who have been taught by Mr Newsome since September, will continue to be taught by Mr Newsome for the rest of this academic year. We would also like to welcome Mr Shaw to our teaching team here at Riverside. Mr Shaw has been with us since 3rd November on a temporary basis but will now remain at Riverside until the end of this academic year.

Christmas Dinner Day

Lea, our temporary school cook (Christine, our usual cook, has been on jury service for two weeks) and the team put on a tasty traditional Christmas Lunch for us all on Wednesday. We ate roast turkey and gravy with all the trimmings, including pigs in blankets, followed by a delicious double chocolate chip cookie for dessert! All the staff ate their lunch in the hall amongst the children and, with festive jumpers and Christmas songs playing, it was a truly magical experience. The food was absolutely delicious!

KS2 Trip to 'Aladdin' Pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle

KS2 children enjoyed their annual visit to Newcastle Theatre Royal to watch a performance of 'Aladdin' pantomime. There were the usual funny jokes and gags and slapstick comedy where members of the audience got wet when water was sprayed on them – all in good fun, of course! Then there were the amazing special effects where Danny Adams appeared to float out over the heads of the audience on a flying carpet! This year we had a number of spare tickets and were delighted to welcome some parents along who paid for a ticket to enjoy the whole pantomime experience with their child.

Class Christmas Parties

We held our Christmas parties last week. The children took part in party games in the hall, where they also enjoyed their Festive Tea Party of treats and snacks. The party outfits were amazing and there was lots of hats, reindeer antlers and fur this year! All of the class parties were fully financed by our School Fund (your voluntary donations). We would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their regular contributions to our School Fund throughout the year as it enables us to provide all our children with these wonderful experiences, not only at Christmas, but across the year.

Christmas Extravaganza Event

We were delighted to welcome so many parents and friends to our very first Christmas Extravaganza event last Friday. We hoped you enjoyed listening to our wonderful children's choir and looking at all the amazing festive artwork on display in the Christmas Gallery. We hope you enjoyed trying your luck on the tombola and shopping at our Christmas Market. Of course, the highlight was being able to spend time in the classrooms completing festive craft activities alongside your children. It was such a successful event that we would hope to hold this every year. Thank you for all your positive comments and overall feedback. This is always welcomed and appreciated.

Children's Christmas Gallery

For the last two weeks, we have had our children's Christmas artwork on display in the main entrance and I am sure you will agree that their artwork is creative and amazing. I had the great pleasure, but also very difficult decision, to choose the artist of the best artwork from each class, but I managed! So here are the list of the winners: Nursery – Rebecca; Reception – Kaiyden; Year 1 – Jax; Year 2 – Alaia; Year 3 – Thea; Year 4 – Poppy; Year 5 - Carter; Year 6 – Emily. Congratulations to all winners who received a Cadbury's chocolate Santa as their prize!

Riverside's Christmas Show

We hope you were all thoroughly entertained at the two performances of our Christmas Show yesterday. The children sang beautifully and with such enthusiasm. Our narrators spoke clearly and with confidence and their timing was perfect. A particular 'well done' must go to the younger children who had non-speaking acting parts and knew exactly what to do and when! And a very special mention must go to our Butterflies who joined Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to sing 'The First Christmas Day' as the opening song. Thank you very much for your donations made when obtaining tickets for the shows and for putting monies into the collection tins on the day. Your generosity amounted to £200.00 which will be paid into our School Fund.

A Very Special Visitor

On Wednesday, we welcomed a very special visitor to Riverside – Santa Claus, himself!! Santa visited every classroom and presented every child with a selection box. We were extremely lucky he was able to fit us into his busy schedule this year but he told me he will always make time to visit the children of Riverside at Christmas as they are ALL amazing! A range of photographs was posted on the app of his whistle-stop visit!

Attendance and Punctuality Awards

At our end of term assembly this morning, I presented a number of children with a certificate and an Amazon voucher in recognition of having 100% attendance **and arriving at school on time for 8.50am EVERY DAY** for the whole of the autumn term! Well done to those children! This is an amazing accomplishment, given that we were plagued with a serious sickness bug as well as colds and flu for most of September!

The class with the highest attendance for the Autumn term is Year 5 with an attendance of 94.1%. What a great achievement! This class will enjoy their class reward (as decided by them) in the Spring Term.

Sunshine Award

Today, as part of our 'mega' awards and celebration assembly, Miss Cameron presented certificates and 'sun' pin badges to those pupils who have had their name always 'around the sun' since 2nd September!! This is an *outstanding* achievement as it recognises those pupils who have followed the Riverside Rules at all times, every day for a full 15 weeks (or 74 days!!) For those children who didn't receive an award, it 'resets' in January and so if they can ensure their name stays around the sun every day until Easter, by always showing they follow our rules, then they'll be presented with a Sunshine Award on Thursday 2nd April.

Homework Award

This morning, we also presented one child from each year group with a certificate for the most exceptional homework for Autumn 2. As you are aware, children are given a menu of tasks to compete over the half term which includes activities related to topics for the term. The children were nominated by their teachers. Congratulations to those children who were presented with a certificate: Year 1 – Aria, Year 2- Sebastian, Year 3 – Kian, Year 4 – Poppy, Year 5 – George, Year 6- Jake.

Christmas Gifts for Every Riverside Child...

We were delighted that we were able to give each and every child in our school a sack of gifts and toys to take home today and enjoy over Christmas. We know how Christmas can be an expensive time for families and we hope that our gifts brought them great joy and happiness (and supported our families too).

Christmas Christingle Gifts

We were overwhelmed with the generosity and kindness of the community of St Johns Church at Percy Main who delivered a Christingle Gift bag for EVERY CHILD at Riverside on Wednesday morning and these were given to children to take home on Wednesday after school. The gift bags contained selection boxes, a Christingle (traditional decorated orange), things to colour and read and a set of felt-tip pens amongst other things. A huge thanks to Reverend Lee and the church for their very kind donation to the children of Riverside!

Forward dates for January

Monday 5th January	School reopens for pupils at 8.50am
w/c 12th January	Class Curriculum Information Leaflets uploaded to website
Monday 12th January	Year 6 at Safety Works (afternoon)
Monday 19th January	Year 5 Multi-skills event at NUCastle (morning)
Monday 26th January	Year 6 Multi-skills event at NUCastle (morning)
Friday 30th January	January's Newsletter published

Finally...

We close for the Christmas holidays today at 3.20pm. School reopens at 8.50am on Monday 5th January, 2026. On behalf of all of the staff, we send you our very best wishes for a peaceful and fun Christmas season and look forward to our continued successful partnership when we return.