



Newsletter Christmas 2020



A message from the CEO

As term 2 draws to a close, we take a moment to pause and to reflect on what the term has brought us.

Equa schools have managed extremely well, keeping children safe and happy and learning well since September. We are very fortunate, given the disruption in surrounding schools, that we have only seen one bubble collapse during this time. When this did happen, high quality remote learning and pastoral care was quickly put in place. We have excellent staff and we thank them for all they have done since returning to school, to make the new normality a positive experience for all.

Together, we are stronger and this has never been more evident than in 2020.

We are so fortunate that our Equa family of schools are all in beautiful settings, with children accessing outdoors and nature as part of daily activities. This has really helped with the return to school and wellbeing.

Staff have been incredibly creative and innovative ensuring our children have had a sprinkling of Christmas magic and some engaging events this term. I hope this newsletter gives a brief insight into some of the lovely things which have been happening.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and a well-deserved break, and that in 2021 brings wider possibilities for our whole community.





A message from the Chair of Trustees

I think it is fair to say that by any standards, 2020 has been a challenging year for society as a whole and for the education sector in particular. We have all had to come to terms with new concepts such as lock-downs, social distancing, shielding, self-isolation and teaching bubbles. We have also had to learn to embrace the joys of the face mask (a considerable nuisance for those of us who have to wear spectacles) and hand-sanitiser.

In this context it has been inspirational to observe the hard work, commitment and enthusiasm of everyone in the Equa community which has enabled our schools to operate so effectively since they fully re-opened at the beginning of September. We are all grateful for the superhuman efforts of all our staff to maintain a full teaching schedule, to make sure everybody is properly fed, and to keep our schools safe. The children and young people in our care have voted with their feet by returning to school with real enthusiasm and maintaining attendance levels at even higher levels than normal. Well done and thank you to everybody.

On a more sombre note, we were very saddened to learn in the summer, of the untimely death, after a short illness, of Crispin Haywood, who was one of our Foundation Trustees, and who is greatly missed by all who knew him.

I am pleased to report, however, that we have recently recruited three new Trustees: Bridget Lucas QC, Alison Hayes and Quita Davis, who will provide deep professional legal and marketing expertise to the Board.

We also look forward to the prospective arrival in January of a distinguished educational leader in the shape of Fergus Stewart as a Foundation Member.

So in spite of everything, we approach 2021 with confidence that everyone is doing their bit to ensure the success of the Trust in delivering the education that our pupils deserve.



Come rain or shine, It's Forest School time

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners the opportunity to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland environment.

The 6Rs (relationships, resilience, resourcefulness, respect, responsibility and reflectiveness) are continually used at a forest school session and despite the challenges over recent months, we have been able to recommence the sessions and experience the growth and regrowth in our pupils' confidence.

Launch of Rushall's first Advent Calendar

This year, Rushall have launched their first "Rushall Advent Calendar"!

The theme is "Memories of a Unique Year" and we are going to be using the time of Advent to reflect on the many truly amazing and special times we have had this year.



COVID or not, our pupils and staff have still made it possible to come together in Remembrance and hope

From Chirton's clay poppy garden, to Bishops Cannings socially distanced service, to Woodborough's virtual service to a cadets service with the 'Last Post' played on the horn from Lavington.



See our latest news section at www.equa.org.uk for the most recent updates

Live stream of Christmas play from some of our oldest students to some of our youngest

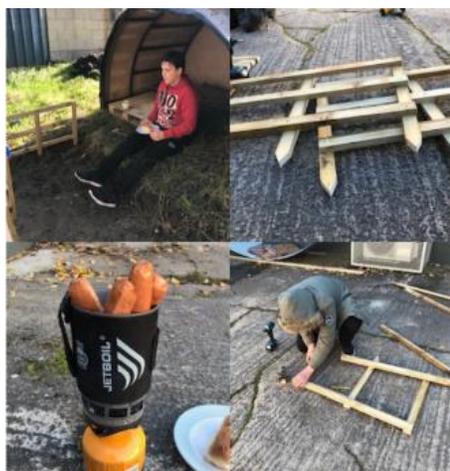
Even with a few students absent, Lavington Year 10 performing arts group were still kept on their toes as they streamed a live Christmas play to the Reception class at Bishops Cannings.



Lavington's new WildWood area proving a success

Trial and error in Wildwood as Year 7 work together to build shelters whilst Year 8 have planted a willow dome.

A Year 10 student has learnt how to construct picket fencing – to fence in the hobbit house. We cooked hot dogs as a reward for hard work.



All Cannings Harvest Festival celebrations

On Wednesday 14th October the school celebrated a remarkable Harvest Festival. Unfortunately on this occasion we were unable to invite family members to attend due to the current Covid restrictions, however the school were determined not to let this spoil our celebration. The service, led by Mrs Kelly, took place outside on the playground. Each bubble rehearsed a performance which they shared with the whole school. Ruby bubble performed 'Big Red Combine Harvester', with actions. Emerald Bubble recited a poem called 'It's harvest time' and Sapphire Bubble performed a rap to the theme tune of 'Fresh Prince of Bel'Air'. Soon after, we began the food placing. We were all amazed and delighted with the quantity and variety of food donated from sardines to custard and chocolate to macaroni! Everyone was extremely generous and it was a Harvest Festival not to be forgotten! *By Harry and Samantha, Class 5*



Woodborough join community festivities in style

Among Christmas hampers, Christmas lunch, parties (in bubbles), class conga competitions and Christmas Service streamed live via Teams, Woodborough pupils have had a nativity scene made to go on display in the churchyard at Woodborough Church (in lieu of the usual displays we take up there for our Christmas services).

They have also joined in with the [Vale of Pewsey Team of Churches](#) 'Streets of Light Advent Calendar'.



Lavington Duke of Edinburgh 'carries on camping'

Albeit on school site due to COVID restrictions....

We had a very busy expedition season in the warm months of September and October. 29 students completed their Bronze and 24 their Silver Expeditions in the beautiful Pewsey Vale.



Nothing stopping Chirton enjoying Christmas festivities

There have been many special moments of togetherness, from meeting Father Christmas in the woods, to our outdoor Nativity. We have been blessed with finding new ways to enjoy these events at such a poignant time of year.

Bishops Cannings celebrating Christmas; from a socially distancing Santa to a British Army Band virtual choir

Preschool had its Christmas Party. Whilst they were singing some songs, somebody noticed Santa passing the window outside. They quickly followed but he was too fast for them. He did leave a trail, which they followed to the Forest School area where they found candy canes and chocolate lollies that had been left in the bushes for them.

Some of the children in year 5 and 6 took part in the British Army Band, Tidworth virtual carol service. We are very proud of them and think they look amazing. The concert is on their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BABTidworth> (Bishops Cannings features from around 25minutes in).

