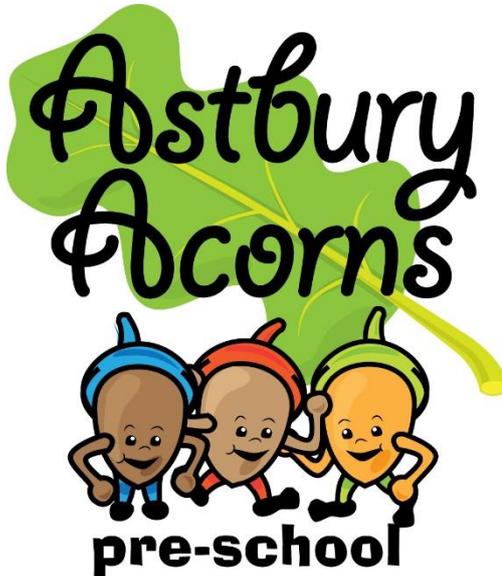




Dear Parents



Welcome to all of our new children and families who have joined our school this term.

As well as welcoming fifteen new children across the school year groups, we are also welcoming new younger children as we open our Pre-School in January.

Astbury Acorns will open its doors on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January for children aged three and four. Please like and share our facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/Astbury-Acorns-107658327394518/?modal=admin\\_todo\\_tour](https://www.facebook.com/Astbury-Acorns-107658327394518/?modal=admin_todo_tour) and spread the word.

Hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Pip Blythe

### Nativity

Thank you to everyone who came to watch the nativity on Sunday. It was lovely to see so many family and friends in church supporting the children as they presented 'Busy Bethlehem'. We are so proud of all the children, but especially Class Noah, who took the lead roles. The three narrators from Year Two read so beautifully and clearly and all the children projected their voices and had learnt their parts really well. A huge thank you to all the staff who worked hard to make it happen!

### Talk for Writing

Improving writing is a key part of our school development plan this year. During the last six weeks, children have worked towards their independent pieces of writing following the Talk for Writing approach. Teachers have seen improvements in language development, vocabulary choices, text structure and stamina for writing. Children have enjoyed the increased scaffold given to support them as writers and are also enjoying having their class book read to them every day. Astbury School has invested in quality texts to support both the reading and writing curriculum. Teachers really appreciate all the support that parents give in sharing books and reading with your children at home and recording this in reading diaries each week.

### Astbury School Winner

A handful of children from Astbury School entered a Christmas Card competition being run by Reed (one of our supply agencies). The school received a phone call this week informing us that out of over a thousand entries, we had the winner! Many congratulations to Ed in Year Six who won an Amazon Echo Dot.

### Super Science

There is a new science display in school, outside Class Jacob, that shows off some of the super science learning that has been taking place in each class this term. You are welcome to call in and have a look.

## Christingle

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christingle service in Astbury Church this morning. Our donation of £113.86 will go to the Children's Society Charity.

A BIG thank you also to Glebe Farm Shop who kindly donated the oranges for our children to make their Christingles.

## Astbury St Mary's results put it in top 2% nationally

You may have seen the report in the Congleton Chronicle about our amazing results from the end of last term. For those who missed it, here it is:

les.com

# Astbury St Mary's results put it in top 2% nationally

Astbury St Mary's Primary School is going from strength to strength as pupils and staff celebrate new success with a 100% phonics test pass rate.

The school's results in the compulsory year one tests put it into the top 2% nationally.

Phonics teaching is an important part of helping children to read confidently and to reach the standards set for key stage one by helping youngsters to break down and "decode" words. This enables them to pronounce and read the words as well as helping them to spell.

Headteacher Pip Blythe said: "We are extremely proud of the children for their dedication and effort in applying their phonics learning throughout their work. Reading underpins all learning so getting an early grasp of phonics is an excellent indicator for future success."

"Hearing that the children have put the school into the top 2% across the country with their phonics testing results is a fantastic reward."

The school has made wide-ranging improvements since Ms Blythe took over the role of headteacher in January 2016.

Having become an academy in February 2019, Astbury St Mary's is establishing itself as a new school and continuing to put in place new practices to drive up standards.

Under Ms Blythe's leadership, it has enjoyed continually improved SATS results for year six over the past three years, with this year's results being above the national average.

Ahead of a new Ofsted inspection due to take place towards the end of 2020, the school's staff and governors have worked hard to improve academic achievements.

With focused leadership and the support of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust, Astbury St Mary's is continuing to make changes to support its progress and welcome more pupils to the school.

Ms Blythe added: "We are really excited about what the future holds for the school. Improved teaching, staff training and strategic governance have allowed us to transform the school environment with greater resources to draw on."

"As we move into our second year as an academy school we would like to say thank you to the parents for their support and positive feedback. As a small school with a rural feel, nurturing a family community is important to us — and to the happiness of our pupils."

The primary school will also be opening a pre-school for youngsters aged three to four years old from 7th January.

Housed within the existing building, Astbury Acorns will open from 8.45am to 12.45pm each day, with plans to extend the opening times.

Wraparound care from 7.30am until 6pm is provided through Astbury Meerkats.

## PFA

The PFA have made over £900 this term for our school. Thank you to everyone who has supported the school disco, film night, Christmas Fair and the Grand Christmas Draw. Money raised has paid for half of the cost for Class Noah to visit the Peak Wildlife Park. This was a brilliant class trip that supported learning in science. All children engaged with the West End in Schools pantomime of Aladdin that was fully funded by the PFA. Money raised also paid for half the cost of transport for Class Jacob to attend the Helen Sharman Astronaut Lecture at Alderley Edge School for Girls. Thank you so much to the PFA!



### **Healthy Snacks**

We are a healthy eating school and at break time we promote healthy eating snacks from home. Please make sure your child's snack is a healthy one (fruit, cereal bar, bread sticks, crackers etc.) We will encourage your child to leave crisps for their packed lunch!

### **Music for Life**

Just a quick reminder that if your child is interested in trying a course of instrumental lessons in school, you can find out more and book online at [www.musicforlife.org.uk/apply-now](http://www.musicforlife.org.uk/apply-now) before midnight on Saturday 21st December. Payment for courses can be made using almost any debit or credit card and can be spread over several months or paid in full on booking. Financial support with the cost of lessons may be available in cases of hardship. Please contact Music for Life before booking if you would like to discuss.

Bookings are accepted subject to final confirmation from tutors and schools that they can be accommodated; so far this year Music for Life has successfully arranged lesson places for 99% of the 2,800 courses so far requested. All new courses enjoy a term taster period, around 12 weeks, which allows children to see how things go after which they will receive a report on progress and then be able to decide whether to continue the course, change instrument or cancel further lessons. **All children who currently have lessons with Music for Life will simply resume their lessons after the Christmas break as normal.**

### **Diary Dates**

Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	School closes for Christmas
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	INSET day for staff
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> January	School opens for children
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> January	Swimming starts for group 2
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> February	School entry health assessments for reception children
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> February	Rotary Club Swimathon. An Astbury team will be swimming 5-6pm.
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Safer Internet Day
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> February	Half Term week