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A Fabulous Year

I started to quickly flick through the events of the year and easily made a long list of the many things that the children and staff have done and achieved during 2017 - it has been a great year and is finishing with a massive finale of Christmas events. Thank you all for your support in so many ways throughout the year. The staff have yet again worked terrifically hard, enjoying their work with all the children even more every day. During 2017 we welcomed three new children, plus two children who joined us the day before new year's eve. Three young people left us and are all doing very well in their new adult placements. Three members of staff have retired this year, Joy in October, and Tiena and Ruth in December. We have been out and about doing so many things this year and here are a few pictures as reminders of our great year.



Our Christmas Market



Concert with Derek Paravicini



Coming up next year

Just after the New Year celebrations we will take some of the children to see the local panto at The Anvil theatre. Our topic theme for the start of the year is Egypt's and Deserts (warm theme for the cold winter months!). In February we hope more students will attend The Gang Show also at the Anvil theatre. Our second theme starting late February is Space. March will see us celebrating St. David's Day and World Book day as well as the start of Easter. April we will focus on Knights and Castles and we hope to visit one, as well as do plenty of dressing up. This theme include our celebration of St. George's day.

Parent Picnic day is on Monday 7th May (Bank Holiday). In June the Arts theme will be taking us to Hollywood as we explore the world of film and acting finishing with our very own Oscars. The summer events will include the many sporting competitions we join regionally as well as our Swimming gala on 12th July and **our sports day on 20th July. Please join us for our annual sports day.** We are also planning on holding a Prom Party, I was made aware last year that for parents this is a special occasion and so we will be holding our very own and this will include special photos for those who would be completing their year 11 - the traditional year for the Prom. Another busy year ahead.

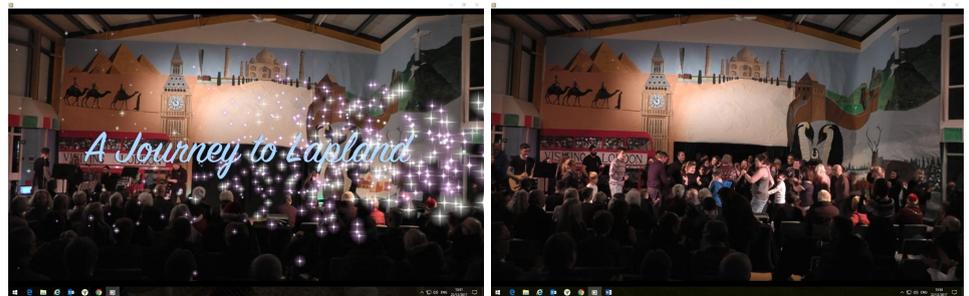


Photos from our production of The Tempest performed at The Haymarket theatre.



On Tuesday and Wednesday 12th and 13th December - the inspectors called and as a Residential Special School our grading for Overall experiences, Leadership and Management and how well the children are helped and protected were graded **Outstanding in all three areas.** A great reflection of all the team's commitment and hard work.

Our Christmas Concert



This year our concert was 'A journey to Lapland'. The Arts Team pulled together all the themed learning we had completed throughout the year and created a lovely story showing us an around the world tale. The students demonstrated their learnt skills. It was lovely to see so many people join us for this incredible performance, and to join in with the Christmas dancing. We look forward to next year's.

Our Christmas events

We started the month of December with our official 'turning on' of our Christmas tree lights. This year we have been able to put the lights fully up the tree as our site manager is a trained tree surgeon and has all the required safety climbing gear and qualifications to climb up the tree and hang the lights. The team did select a day just before the storms passed, highly windy. The results however are lovely.

Sensory Santa trip

This year we again travelled to Farnham to a residential outdoor centre designed for children with special needs, who host a Sensory Santa winter wonderland every year. The site is decorated with santa trails, musical cabins, the snowman's hut for story time and songs, and of course a special santa's grotto. The six children had an amazing afternoon and were all very happy to see Santa and receive a present. This is the second year we have visited and last year inspired us to create our own sensory santa trail and santa's grotto - which Emily (Play therapist) and Linzi (Horticulture and outdoor learning Teaching assistant) have done this year.

The build up to Christmas has seen the children creating potted plants for parents, bird seed decorations to hang outside, wooden decorations and special wooden reindeer using specialist tools. These various items along with a number of other creations form the trail.

We were delighted to welcome back a touring **pantomime company** who presented Aladdin to all the students. It is a great opportunity for those who enjoy drama and music to watch this company perform. The company are especially skilled at making the story telling highly sensory so keeping all the children fully engaged and happy.



“The Loddon School is an outstanding school providing outstanding experiences, demonstrating the highest level of progress for all children. The knowledge and understanding of the staff leads to outstanding support and protection. The effectiveness of the leadership across the school is outstanding, they know the school’s strengths and weakness, set high expectations and bring forth the highest possible results.” *Ofsted 2017*





A truly magical moment this year happened as part of our Christmas party having played a few games the children started to gradually go outside and follow the sensory santa trail, along our nature trail which Santa had visited and left great big footprints along. The lights, mirrors and hidden animals helped us follow the pathway to our very own grotto and to find that Santa was visiting us and had brought a few early presents. This was an wonderful afternoon and even a little moving.

Markets, Grottos, Parties & Nativity

Each year we run a series of Christmas events helping to defuse the anticipation of the big day and hopefully keeping everyone as calm as possible. It is however, a great time to have plenty of fun, and fully experience this Christmastide.

We held again our Christmas market, erecting the marquee and gazebos in the leisure barn and decorating each one with lights. Each house had a stall with a variety of things to buy, eat, drink and a few games. The full Christmas market experience. A massive boost to our market this year was a donation of soft toys from a local organisation which the children loved 'purchasing' with their special market money. Many of you may have attended our 'Live nativity' at the Paddocks, enjoyed the dressing up and singing of carols. This is a very special time to focus on the story and to share with the wider Loddon Family.



Santa's Grotto @our school



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