

Cleves School

First Ever Termly Music Newsletter!!

19th December 2024

Welcome to the first ever music newsletter! This term has seen record numbers of pupils engaging in music across all year groups and also saw the start of our new choir for Year 3s. It also saw our Cleves' debut performance at the Royal Albert Hall. It has certainly been an exciting term of music making and Mr. Kilhams would like to thank all children for joining the clubs, performing in and outside of school and always doing their absolute best.

Our academic year always kicks off with our groups first rehearsals and children gaining confidence to sing/play together and make new friends and after a few weeks we start to get our first performance opportunities with the Welcome Service, Harvest Service and then Remembrance Service. We continue to have a great relationship with our friends, St. Mary Oatlands and two of these took place there. Classes did a presentation and we had musicians perform solos. We also had the Year 6s from the Senior Choir perform a moving song, More Love - Less Hate for the Welcome Service to inspire our Year 3s and welcome them in to our caring and nurturing environment.

MUSIC MARK RECOGNITION RETAINED



A few weeks in to the term we put our application in to Music Mark to be considered to be a Music Mark school and we are pleased to say that we have retained our Music Mark status. We look to build on this reputation and have already looked at the next stage for furthering music and the arts in our school. Huge thanks to Mr. Kilhams for all his hard work in putting the application together and ensuring we received this again.

HANDBELLS WELCOME GUEST CONDUCTOR

It is always nice to hear how our pupils have got on at secondary school and whether they are pursuing music still. It was a pleasure to welcome back Thea who is currently doing her GCSEs at Heathside for a day shadowing Mr. Kilhams and conducting the very handbell group that she developed a love for music some 4 or 5 years ago. I am not sure she definitely wants to become a conductor but she certainly wants to go in to teaching and hopefully teach music which is music to Mr. Kilhams' ears!



SENIOR CHOIR PERFORM AT ST. MARY'S WINTER FAYRE

One of the first Christmas performances of the year is always at the St. Mary's Winter Fayre, they are always so appreciative for the choir or any of our musical groups taking part and this year we had the Senior Choir perform. Thank you to Ms Christian and Mrs. Batchelor for taking the children to this and well done for all who took part. St. Mary's ended up raising over £5000 for the church that day and we helped by adding to the festive atmosphere so well done all.

SURREY ARTS TUNING UP CONCERTS

This term was the first time in many years that we have had an end of term concert for all children taking part in our Tuning Up programme through Surrey Arts.

All children in every year group get a chance to do this and other classes will be doing the same thing next term and the summer term but this saw Year 3s performing on the violin, Year 4s performed on the "Toots" (plastic flute), Year 5s performed on the trumpet and Year 6s performed on the clarinet.

All performances were after just 10 lessons with their specialist teacher. All children were brilliant and we have already had many enquiries to continue on those instruments which is one of the reasons we do it in the first place.



OUR ORCHESTRA PERFORM AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Now we know that our children have been performing at the O2 Arena as part of the Young Voices concerts for over ten years now but Cleves have never performed at The Royal Albert Hall before - until now! Our orchestra had an exciting trip to perform as part of a collaborative concert between Music For Youth and BBC Ten Pieces. The children performed in 3 concerts but then watched the rest of the concert and went away inspired from the performances. They heard everything from Indian Classical Music through to Jazz! It was truly one of the most incredible opportunities our pupils have had. Henry in year 5 said, ***"it was the best school trip I have ever been on!"***

Below are a selection of photos from the day.



CLEVES PERFORM IN THE COMMUNITY

13 Children took part in three mini concerts at local care homes and community centres. It was a mixture of children in the senior choir, ukulele group and orchestra. Erin and Angela both performed solos and the residents and guests thoroughly enjoyed their performances. We did the same concert three times all in one morning hopping on and off the mini busy in-between concerts. The places we performed were Adelaide House, Dialstone Court and Walton Community Centre. The organisers from Adelaide House wrote to Mr. Kilhams after and said these words:

*"I just wanted to say a **massive thank you** for bringing the children to perform for our lovely residents this morning, they absolutely loved the Christmas concert and haven't stopped talking about how talented and confident the children are! They all performed and smiled so beautifully, their happiness was certainly contagious! You must be so proud of them! We have had many musicians perform for our residents but this was certainly a favourite and we would love to have you and your choir back whenever possible!"*

Well done to the children who took part, they represented the school beautifully!



SURREY ARTS CONCERTS

We are so proud of our relationship with Surrey Arts and their Tuning Up Programme. For any new parents to the school your child gets to learn an instrument in every year group for a whole term with a specialist instrumentalist (Year 3 - violins, Year 4 - Toots, Year 5 - Trumpets, Year 6 - Clarinets). For the first time since we started the programme several years ago we had each class that had that specialist tuition this term perform in a end of term showcase to parents. This has had a really positive impact on our peripatetic lessons and several children are wishing to continue learning the instrument after their term has finished. Exactly why we set up the programme in the first place and what the original intent was from Surrey Arts. Huge congratulations to all the children who took part in these four concerts at the beginning of December and we will be doing the same next term and the Summer term.

YEAR 3 AND 4 CHRISTMAS NATIVITIES

As usual, the year 3 and 4 children kick start our Christmas in exquisite style with their year group nativity concert at the beginning of December. This year was particularly impressive and saw all children in year 3 and 4 perform a class song and poem. It also saw our wonderful handbell group, training choir and junior choir perform. Well done to all children, some of which were performing for the first time in front of an audience. It is these sort of opportunities that help give children confidence not just in performing but all aspects of their school life and we enjoy seeing that confidence grow and grow as they go through Cleves. Photos below are of the handbell group performing:



YEAR 5 AND 6 CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

After our Year 3s and 4s had performed brilliantly it was time for our Year 5 and 6 performances. Every year there is a real buzz at these concerts with parents clapping along and children beaming and really giving it their best. This year was no exception. For the Year 6 Christmas Concert it was like Christmas had exploded in the hall thanks to 6P and their tinsel! All children in Year 5 and 6 performed a song and a poem and lots of those children also performed in either the Orchestra, Ukulele Group, Steel Pan Group or our Senior Choir. As this was Mr Usher's first experience of our Christmas Concerts we had to ensure the standard was exceptional and that we did! He commented afterward saying, ***“he has been to a lot of schools concerts over the years but the quality and variety was by far the best he has ever seen!”***

Well done to everyone involved in making them such a success!

RECORD NUMBER OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN MUSIC

After all those incredible concerts it won't come as a surprise to you then to hear that we have record numbers of children getting involved in musical clubs and learning instruments at our school.

- 90 children in our Cleves Senior Choir
- 60 children in our Cleves Junior Choir
- 40 children in our Cleves Training Choir
- 40 children in our Steel Pan Groups
- 25 children in our Ukulele Group
- 22 children in our Handbell Group
- 15 children in our Boomwhacker Group
- 12 children in our orchestra



This means we have over 300 children in our groups which is nearly half the school!

In addition to this we have approximately 125 children learning an instrument with teachers in our school on a one to one basis. We know there are many more learning an instrument outside of school as well. Mr. Kilhams is hoping to have doubled the size of his orchestra by this time next year so if your child is getting good on their instrument then make sure you let Mr. Kilhams know!

STEEL PAN GROUPS UPDATE

The steel pan groups or “The Calypso Crew” are run by the wonderful Lizzie Gilbert who has had both her children go through Cleves and learn steel pans. She started her calypso journey in the parent and staff steel pan group many years ago and has never looked back - now she is running the children groups! Here are a few words from her:

“The steel pans have been working hard this term. The brand new year 4 band have all had the chance to play the different pans, playing as part of the rhythm section and the melody. They have done a brilliant job and have already managed to learn 3 pieces. Year 5 performed Jingle bells and When a child is born at Cleves Christmas concert. They even managed to add some dynamic variation.

Year 6 performed silent night beautifully and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of learning Feliz Navidad, which opened with an alto introduction. Both upper school bands have also managed to start learning some pieces for the Spring term concerts and everyone is already looking forward to our next performance.

There are still spaces available in the year 4 band so do get in touch if your child is interested!”



OUR JUNIOR CHOIR PERFORM WITH THE WEYBRIDGE MALE VOICE CHOIR

On top of all of our own school concerts we had the wonderful opportunity, thanks to Mr. Kilhams, for the Junior Choir to perform with infamous Weybridge Male Voice Choir. The choir has been going over 100 years and has a good reputation in the local area but Cleves Junior Choir still stole the show! The 20 children who took part in this were a credit to the school and were unfazed with the 300+ strong audience, they still sang beautifully. As well as performing on their own they joined with the male voice choir to perform O Holy Night and Sleigh Ride which ended the concert on a really high note (pun intended!) Mr. Kilhams was so impressed with them that he gave them all 50 house points on the spot afterwards which was the most house points some children had ever got in one go! Some could say Mr. Kilhams got carried away but I think if you were there you would have realised that they deserved every one! Photos will follow with this event as they have still not been shared with us yet.



SENIOR CHOIR PERFORM WITH WALTON VOICES

Mr. Kilhams also runs lots of adult choirs outside of school and is always trying to involve our children in those concerts and inspire them. On Saturday 14th December, clashing with the Strictly Come Dancing final! 13 children from our Senior Choir stole the show once again! Performing in Cobham Free School performance hall to an audience of 200+ our Senior Choir performed 6 songs on their own and then joined Walton Voices for the 12 Days Of Christmas at the end. It was a very different 12 Days Of Christmas to what we are used to hearing and very funny in places. The children absolutely loved taking part in this event and particularly enjoyed the goodies awarded to them at the end (along with the house points!) Once again, a credit to the school and those children should be extremely proud of themselves. Photos are below and a performance video will be available soon of the whole event:





YEAR 7S DUE TO PERFORM AT THE RIVERHOUSE BARN ARTS CENTRE

Mr. Kilhams has got a small group of Year 7s from Cleves that used to be in the Senior Choir to come back and perform together at The Riverhouse Barn Arts Centre on Friday. They are performing Wassail by Alexander L'Estrange who they met a couple of years ago when they did a workshop with him. Good luck for them and it just shows that even though you might have left Cleves the school, it keeps on giving!

All that is left to say is a huge well done to every child this term for performing so wonderfully and thank you to all you parents who have helped with their practising back home, brought them to all our rehearsals and outside school events, signed many google forms and letters and kept ensuring they can take part in these wonderful opportunities.

