



December 14th 2016

Dear Parents,

This newsletter comes at the end of our very busy and successful first term as a Primary School. There has been so much going on it is impossible to capture it all here, but the staff and I have selected our highlights to share with you. Please visit the news and curriculum tabs on our website for the full story.

Loving Learning Living

As many of you may have seen on the website, we have revisited our vision statement to coincide with our change to Primary.

So, what is our School Vision?

'An inspirational and nurturing Primary School where high aspirations and dedication to the development of the whole child secure the best possible academic and personal outcomes for all pupils'

And our School Ethos?

Our Ethos and Christian Values, which underpin our shared school Vision, are distilled into a phrase of just 3 words:

'Loving, Learning, Living'

'Loving, Learning, Living' shapes a lens through which we can reflect on everything we do in school, helping us to remember our priorities and focus on who and what is important.

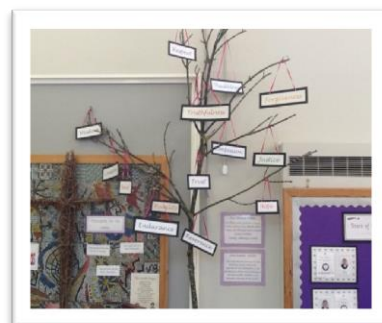
Loving God, ourselves, each other and being thankful and reverent about the world around us

Learning from all our experiences, good and bad, to gain the endurance, wisdom and humility to become our best selves

Living together in peace, friendship, trust and forgiveness, with the belief and compassion to enable everyone in our school to flourish and thrive

Celebration Assemblies

Once a week, the children come together to celebrate their own and other pupils' achievements. Alongside recognition for academic achievement, recent awards have been given to those children who have done something that reflects the values which underpin our school vision. This is a special part of the school week and we would like to invite parents to share one of these assemblies in the New Year. Please see the dates list attached to the electronic copy of this letter for details.



Extra Curricular Activities

This term we are particularly proud of the many opportunities the children have had to take part in a wide range of extra curricular activities.

Children continue to have regular opportunities for outdoor learning and this half term, under the guidance of Mrs Burroughs, each year group has also taken part in sporting activities with other schools. Events such as multi skills, hockey and speed netball have been great fun, but have also shown staff how well our children can conduct themselves in competitions and that they are able to demonstrate the qualities of team spirit and respect that we expect from them.

Our new lunch time club 'Whoosh' with games, drama and interactive Bible stories has been a very popular addition to our curriculum. The volunteers from St Michael's Church who have worked with the children this term, have commented on how engaged and enthusiastic the children are and how well they are able to make interesting contributions to the drama and storytelling. We look forward to the continuation of Whoosh club in the New Year.

After school clubs, as always, are very well attended and this term has seen the introduction of Judo club on Mondays in the school hall. We have witnessed a whole new side to our lovely Cook Mrs Preston, who as Judo 3rd Dan has commanded the respect of the children and in a short time has marshalled a group of pupils aged 5 to 10 years into well-disciplined and safe practitioners of her sport.

Children have also continued to enjoy the Craft club with Charlotte on Tuesdays and Football with Ryan on Wednesdays. Following Miss Millington's departure, the school choir is now ably led by Mrs Murray. At the time of writing this, we are poised for their first public performance at the 'Coffee and Carols' FSFA Raffle Draw in the school hall on Wednesday December 14th. Recently, we have been delighted to welcome Victoria Robinson into school as our piano teacher and she is kindly planning to accompany the choir for the first time on Wednesday too!

Explorers

From September the Explorers' Class expanded to include Year 1 children. Our fabulous staff team has worked incredibly hard to ensure that all children continue to receive the right balance of challenge and support required, so that they can make the best possible progress. Children visibly thrive in the environment and we have hosted 3 visits from other schools this term, news of our provision has spread and they were keen to learn from our good practice!

Highlights for the Explorers this term have been the Pirate topic which generated amazing writing from the older children and culminated in a Pirate day in school. Children have also loved working outdoors and their art work in the style of Andy Goldsworthy as a joy to behold. We were so proud of all of the children who took part in "Whoops Daisy Angel" and their 'Angelic' performance at the Church last week will live long in our hearts!

As we continue to grow as a school (our numbers have increased by over 30% since last year) and since there are 18 children in Nursery from



January, we now will have a new part time teacher working in the Explorers after the holidays. Mrs Fender will work on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

Adventurers

The Adventurers have had a very busy term too; exploring their topics based on Amazing Authors they have followed the Adventures of the Magic Finger, Fantastic Mr. Fox and Alice in Wonderland. This has taken them on a visit to the Laing Art Gallery, helped them create 'Alice' tea cups, involved them in a shadow puppet production, a dance project and the design of their amazing new reading area (which I had the pleasure of officially opening yesterday!) Finally, they wowed us all with their rhyming version of 'A Christmas Carol' in the Church and yet their books tell me that somehow in the middle of all this fun, they have still found time for daily spellings, reading and numeracy ...!



Pioneers

The Pioneers have really gelled as a group this term and they set a great example as the eldest members of our school. Mr Scott's classroom is a great place to learn and the children have really enjoyed studying the 'BFG' and the 'Iron Giant', making their own musical instruments and creating design solutions by applying their knowledge of maths and their understanding of how electrical circuits work. We were very proud of the shared effort that went into creating the worship element of our Christmas play in the Church and the prayers and readings the children chose showed they have a mature understanding of the message contained in a "Christmas Carol".



Congratulations

Well done to all those children who managed to avoid the many coughs and colds that have hit everyone this term to achieve the attendance target of 96% and especially those who received their 100% attendance certificates.

After a closely fought competition this term, the Green team have collected the most special tickets to be crowned the winners of team points and as such are the first to receive our new reward tokens for use in school in January. (In this case they will entitle the bearer to a uniform free day and an extra playtime on the specified day)

And finally, we are very proud of the general standard of behaviour of the children in our school. As we especially value kindness and respect for others, we are particularly pleased to have awarded so many Gold and Silver certificates for very good and excellent behaviour this term.

Looking to the future

As a school, we continue to work closely with Pumpkin Pie Child Care and many of our families with children in the Early years now benefit from our combined offer which ensures that eligible children have access to 30 hours childcare. Our close relationship supports our shared aim to achieve the best outcomes for children and this is evidenced by the smooth transition children make into full time school when they join reception. We are committed to building a partnership that will continue to develop to further benefit the children and families in the local area.

As we make the full transition to Primary over the next 18 months, we know our ongoing challenge will be to maintain the breadth of experiences currently available to our children. Where combined age class sizes are predicted to be large next year, we will make the required staffing arrangements to ensure that all

children will continue to receive high quality teaching. Our curriculum will continue to be tailored to individual needs and will be designed to engage and develop the whole child. To whet your appetite for the New Year, Topics from the start of next term will be 'Three' in Explorers, 'From Grunts to Tweets' in Adventurers and Eurovision in Pioneers!

Thank you

I would like to express my thanks to my fantastic staff team who have worked so well together in support of our school and each other this term, in order to provide the best possible opportunities for the children in our care.

We know that we could not achieve all we do without the support of parents and friends of the school and would like to extend our thanks to:

- Rachel Murphy (Chair) and all our Governors for their enthusiasm and dedication in support of our School. Please note Richard Burroughs will stand for another term as parent governor and we pleased to welcome Ellie Walter to the role of parent Governor from January 2017.
- The FSFA for their continued support and hard work
- All parent helpers on the weekly swimming rota
- Those parents and grandparents who volunteer in the classrooms or who help out on trips
- Kate Johnston who ensured our red school uniforms were put to good use-



Recycling of the Red School Uniform

Thank you to all of you who donated your child's red school uniform to the collection that I organised. I thought that you would appreciate knowing a little more about exactly what happened to it. My family and I spent an afternoon sorting it all out into different piles and this is how it was used:

- Red gingham dresses, pinafores, shorts, skirts, t-shirts and bags - sent to the charity "Mary's Meals" to be worn by school children in Malawi. The school have been given a certificate to acknowledge the donation.
- Red jumpers, cardigans and trousers – welcomed by families in South Northumberland.
- Red jumpers with logos – sent to a clothes bank.



Thank you again for your generous contributions and for helping to minimize landfill.

- The volunteers who run the Whoosh club
- James Harvey and Ed Butlin and all those who help with visitor Collective Worship on Thursdays
- And last but not least to your fantastic children whose enthusiasm for life and learning remind us every day of why we are so lucky to do the jobs we do!

With my very best wishes for a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.



Suzanne Connolly

