



Newsletter number 8 week ending 17/06/16

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to offer a warm welcome back to school for the final half term of this academic year. Last term we took part in an exhausting list of activities to enhance our learning and our diary for this half term is packed full with a mix of exciting learning opportunities, fun educational visits and interesting sessions to be held in school as the school year draws to a close. Below are details of just a few of our recent undertakings.

School Achievements

From mid-spring term to mid-summer term our Y5 and Y6 children worked regularly with Mr Towers from Staindrop School focusing on the Princess Diana Anti-Bullying Award. Having received an email to inform us of our success I await the individual certificates for our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors – the certificates should be with us at the beginning of July; a very well done to all who worked on this project. There is more to the award than receiving the certificates but its TOP SECRET so all I can say for now is watch this space!

During last half term our faith ambassadors from Y5 visited a number of places of religious worship and have been working closely with pupils from other schools to present what they found out and to produce resource CD's for the future. These will be used by all schools in the Bishop Auckland Cluster to help develop tolerance and understanding of other faiths and cultures during our RE lessons – a crucial part of the British Values agenda for schools.

Y4 and Y5 are now currently involved in the FISCH project (Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health.) While the curriculum sessions are proving to be very successful we would like to see more children attending the after school club sessions which reinforce the message of the importance of healthy eating and exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Please support us with this if at all possible.

Once again we held a very successful Careers Week with a multitude of visits and visitors to school supporting children's knowledge of future opportunities for them in the world of work. We've been working very closely with Keepmoat housing and have had a number of pupils visit there building site to practice brick laying and find out about health and safety. Reception visited when they studied the Three Little Pigs and I even heard that there were health and safety signs all around warning of the Big Bad Wolf!

A Huge Achievement

Our biggest achievement of all has to be the year 6 children completing their SATs. Words cannot express how proud I am of the mature way in which each and every one of them approached each test. They all gave their best efforts during the difficult time of changes to assessment and regardless of results, which we're still awaiting, I know they are all unique amazing individuals that have the potential to be whoever they want to be and do whatever they want to do; my congratulations to you all on completing them. Now you can enjoy the many varied and wonderful learning experiences planned for you in your final half term of primary school.





Staffing Changes

You will all be aware that Mrs Dickinson will be starting her maternity leave soon; therefore she won't be with us on our return in September. Mrs Murphy will be coming to work alongside Mrs Kidd in the job share role, moving to us from Bearpark Primary School where she currently teaches Y5 and Y6. Sadly, Mr Paterson will also be leaving us. He is moving on to become Key Stage 2 Leader at Wolsingham Primary School – we wish you every success in your new post Mr Paterson. Due to this Mrs Kidd and initially Mrs Murphy, followed by Mrs Dickinson on her return to work, will move with the children into year 6. Mr Burnett will also be leaving us at the end of July as the travel from Gateshead to our school is an exceptionally long journey so I am sure you will understand his reasons for wanting to teach closer to home. In September we will be joined by Mr Donaldson who I'm sure the children will love. As well as exceptional teaching skills Mr Donaldson has stated on his application form that he is a semi-professional footballer – not that our young footballers haven't done well of their own accord this year – but I'm sure those who love football among us will appreciate his input in this area. Welcome Mr Donaldson, I'm sure you'll be an asset to our school.

As for me, I will be taking up a post as an Educational Development Partner for Durham Local Authority from 1st September. While this is not a permanent post, it is a secondment, meaning I will be away from school for two years. My reasons for the secondment are due to my passion for school improvement and my love of St. Andrew's Primary School is the reason why I did not apply for the post in a permanent capacity. During the next two years the school will be in the very capable hands of Mrs James as Acting Head Teacher and Mr Soppitt as Acting Deputy Head Teacher. Mrs James of course will be office based. Therefore we are being joined by Mrs Castledine as our new nursery/reception class teacher. Mrs Castledine has 9 years of early years' experience gained from a number of different nursery and foundation stage settings. A warm welcome to you Mrs Castledine – we look forward to you joining the team. I'm sure that Mrs James and Mr Soppitt will be a fantastic leadership team for the school over the next two years and I'm sure they are more than ready for the fantastic experiences their leadership roles will bring. Everyone should rest assured the school continues to be in a **very** strong position for the future.

To clarify – teaching staff organisation is listed below

Mrs James – Acting Head Teacher
Mrs Castledine – Nursery and Reception
Mr Soppitt – Acting Deputy Head Teacher Y1 and Y2 teacher
Mr Donaldson - Y3 and Y4 teacher
Mrs Foggin - Y5 teacher
Mrs Kidd & Mrs Murphy (Mrs Dickinson on return from maternity leave) - Y6

Currently we are looking into class sizes in terms of numbers of pupils in each class and are considering moving some Y4 pupils into the Y5 class in September. We will be taking account of age, maturity and ability in our decisions and will contact parents individually in due course to discuss this well before September. Pupils will have opportunities to meet their new class teachers during transition week from 4th July.

