

Newsletter 3

Happy New Year! I know – it seems so long ago now as we enter February!

The New Year has started really positively and the children have settled back into their routines. I have spent quite some time in the classrooms in January and what has struck me most is how amazingly well behaved our children are. In every single lesson I have observed, every single child was working hard and clearly wanted to learn and improve. Indeed, whenever I have shown visitors around school, they too comment on how calm and quiet the children are and how they have noticed how much our children are keen to learn. It's times like these that I feel truly blessed to have such wonderful children in our school.

New Year, New You

The start of the year saw a big push to improve our health and the children have learned how to keep healthy by changing eating habits and increasing exercise levels. We have welcomed parents and carers to a Nutrition course with Durham Wellbeing team and we have ran a series of healthy lifestyle assemblies for the whole school. The children are better equipped to make the right choices now and I hope you can see that at home too.

PE Kits

Thank you so much for the huge response we have had from parents who have made the effort to supply complete indoor and outdoor PE kits for their children. I know the staff really appreciate the fact that you recognise how, not having a full PE kit, can impact on a lesson unnecessarily. We have always asked parents to provide PE kits for their child but we feel that this has fallen by the wayside recently and it has just become too big an issue to ignore. We will be insisting on children having full outdoor and indoor PE kits from now on. Children's names MUST be in each item, even shoes. If your child loses an item and you have not put their name in it, we will not be able to locate it! We sell yellow T-shirts, black shorts and PE bags and we are looking to supply black tracksuits also. Black tracksuits can be bought online or in major supermarkets. Staff have agreed that we will deduct a Dojo point, per item, at each lesson to encourage children to look after their belongings and take more care putting them away. Dojo points will be awarded for having full kit each week.

If your child has grown out of their PE kit and you are replacing it with new, please wash the old and bring it to school and we can sell them with lost property.

Year 6 SATs

As parents of year 6 children will know, the Year 6 SATs are fast approaching. The children are working hard to revise and cram in any last minute learning as best they can. We have been impressed by their work ethic and attitude towards this challenging time for them.

This year's SATs tests begin on May 8th for 4 days and we ask that children attend school every day and that parents do not book holidays for this week. As a surprise treat at the end of the week, I have booked tickets for the year 6 children to see Gangsta Granny at Sunderland Empire on the 12th May, to say well done and to have some well earned fun and relaxation. The trip will be fully subsidised by school funds.

We have booked a SATs booster teacher for 4 mornings during the Easter Holidays from 10th –13th April. All children can come along at 9am until 12am to take part in some revision exercises and keep their brains ticking over; we find two weeks off is too long at this crucial point in the year. There will be more information to follow.

Nursery

Our ten little Nursery children are doing ever so well. Some are now staying for dinner or even the whole day. They are accessing the Foundation Stage curriculum and are making fantastic progress as they grow and learn. We still have 3 places available, so if you know any family and friends who are considering Nursery for their 3 or rising 3 year old (rising 3 is the term before they are 3) please let them know we have places and tell them they are welcome to get in touch with us and make an appointment to come and visit.

Trim Trail Update

We are getting ever closer to beginning our Trim Trail project. We are still raising money with the PTA and with help from the year 6 entrepreneurs and other PTA events, we should be close to our goal. The best news is that the Governors have also agreed to extend the Trim Trail to include a separate climbing tower, specifically for our Early Years children, so that they do not miss out on the fun as well. I will keep you posted as we get more news about a starting date.

Junior Traffic Wardens

I am happy to announce that Adam Yates, Ella Robson and have been chosen to be our Junior Traffic Wardens and will begin working with Judith Foster from Durham County, to find ways to improve the Safety of our pupils outside our school gates. They will be organising poster competitions and will even be issuing parking tickets to parents who park and turn around irresponsibly at the school gates – so watch out!

I ask parents, again, to consider how dangerous it is for you to turn around at the school gates when dropping your child off. It is only a matter of time before one our little ones is run over!

Upcoming School Trips

This term we have some fantastic school trips organised and the children will be travelling to places from as near as Barnard Castle to as far afield as York. These school trips are part of the school

curriculum and will support the children's work in the classroom. You will be receiving letters about the trips very soon. I appreciate that, because of the distance, some of the trips are quite expensive but myself and the staff feel the experience is well worth the price. We aim to give you plenty of notice to make the payments and if you need to you can contact Miss.Booth, in the office, to set up a payment plan to help you.

We are also getting close to our Robin Wood trip for Year 5 and 6 pupils and we would like to thank those parents who are keeping up with the monthly payments; it really helps the staff in the office when parents pay on time.

Attendance

As you know we are constantly trying to improve attendance across the school to reach the Governments high expectations of 96%. In order to reach these figures, we are following up any unexplained absences with home visits from Miss Bell and Mr Orwin. If parents do not inform school with a reason for their child's absence then a home visit will be the next step to ensure the child is safe. If we have reason to believe that the child is not ill or if we notice a repeated pattern of absence, we will ask for medical evidence of the illness. Unfortunately, we are having to work with the Durham County Enforcement team to issue formal warnings and fines to parents who do not follow the correct procedures for reporting absences and whose children are repeatedly absent without evidence. I hope we can work together to improve attendance.

Safer Internet Week.

Next week we will be working on being safe on the internet, with lessons and assemblies teaching children about different ways they can keep safe. Class 4 are practicing a short performance which will inform children and parents about how to be safer. We usually just invite the parents of the class to come along to class assemblies but we would like to open this one to all parents. So come along and find out more about how to keep your child safe on the internet at 9.10am on Friday 10th February.

We're certainly going to be very busy in 2017!

Yours sincerely

Mrs James

Acting Headteacher