

Newsletter 4

March 2017

Dear Parents/ Carers

Spring is in the air and I can see that the children and staff all have a spring in their step. With lots of fun activities to do with family and friends, we are all looking forward to the end of the term and the Easter break.

Keeping you informed

We have had a lot going on this term and I hope you found the half termly calendar useful and it helped keep you all informed and on track. Don't forget that the school website also has a calendar, so if you are ever not sure about an event you can also visit the site for more information. We also add new updates to Class Dojo's School Story, so there are lots of ways you can keep in touch with daily events.

Learning beyond the classroom

This term has seen our pupils venturing beyond the boundaries of Bishop Auckland. They have travelled from Teesmouth River to York Dungeons, and North Shield's Sea life Centre to Yorkshire's Eden Camp. Visiting these far out places provides richness to the curriculum, bringing the learning in the classroom to life. I fully appreciate that these trips can be costly and we do try to subsidise travelling expenses wherever we can. But as cuts to school funding become an ever present threat, it seems that, unfortunately these trips maybe a thing of the past. So we hope to make the most of them while we can.

School Funding Cuts

There has been lots of recent TV coverage about the new Schools Funding Formula and I hope you all took the opportunity to voice your concerns about the future of schools funding, using the link on the letter we sent out to all parents. This is your opportunity to stand up for your child's education and let the Government know your feelings about making cuts, which will affect us all.

Unfortunately for St. Andrew's, the immanent cuts will hit us unless we increase our pupil numbers. I think it is helpful for parents to know that schools are given funding for every child on roll and additional funding for pupils who are or who have been, entitled to free school meals. Having more children in our school would avoid such drastic action.

So what can you do to help?

- Tell everyone how wonderful St. Andrew's Primary School is. Word of mouth is the best way to promote a school.
- If you know someone who is thinking about where to send their nursery or reception age child or thinking of a school move for their child, ask them to come along for a visit or call in for a prospectus to give to them.
- Make sure you have completed the Free School Meals entitlement form, even if your child is in KS1 or has packed lunches, you still may be entitled and the school would gain additional funding for this.
- Complete the Parent View questionnaire on line so that new parents can see what existing parents think about our school – parents listen to other parents. Use this link parentview.ofsted.gov.uk - there are only 10 questions and it takes a matter of minutes to complete.

We will do everything we can to maintain the same high standards and quality of teaching and learning regardless but with your help we may be able to avoid any disruption.

Parental involvement

Since September, we have seen a really positive increase in the amount of parents attending school events. Attendance to class assemblies, Mother's Day Lunch, Church services, parent workshops and dance shows which has been amazing and we wanted to thank you all for coming along. These events help the school become a community in its own right, as well as helping staff get to know our families and build important positive relationships. Look out for future events that will enable us all to come together and make our school community even stronger.

Trim Trail Update

This term has seen two very welcome gifts come to our aid. Firstly, we received notification that we would be receiving an £8000 grant towards our Trim Trail fund, from the local council Neighborhood Grant Scheme. We then got the terrific news that our ex-Governor, Judith Musgrave, was donating a whopping £500 towards our fund raising efforts from a charity pool tournament in honor of her late husband, Alan. Both donations have added a huge amount to our Trim Trail total along with the £3000 that the PTA have raised we are now in a position to start the work!

We have plans to build one large tower unit in the Early Years area and up to 7 individual Trim Trail pieces for our older children to play on.

We are hoping work will start during the Easter Holidays, weather permitting. I can't wait to see the children play on their new equipment during the summer term.

SAT tests

It's that time of year again – test time! The Year 6 tests are creeping upon us and before we know it Monday 8th May will be here. The Year 6 children have worked hard to revise everything they have learned in Maths and English in preparation for the SATs.

We even have some children coming in to school during the Easter holidays to revise some more, showing how dedicated they are to doing their very best. I am sure that their hard work will pay off. I have seen a really mature attitude from all of the children and I just know that this will carry them through this "testing" time. I am sure you all join me in wishing them all the best of luck.

Children in Year 1 are currently preparing for their Year 1 Phonics Screening week beginning 12th June and I know that they are all working hard to read words using the phonics sounds they have learned.

Children in Year 2 will be assessed for their KS1 SAT tests during June too and they will be able to show off to Mr. Soppitt all the things they have learned over the last two years. Again, we wish all the children the best of luck and hope they all do their very best.

Attendance

This term has seen a big push to promote attendance and punctuality. There has been a positive response from parents, and I think that by keeping you informed you have been able to monitor your child's attendance more closely.

As you know schools are judged on their attendance and it is the school's role to improve attendance when possible. Currently St Andrew's Primary School has an overall attendance of **95.42%** which is so close to the Government expectation of **96%** - how fabulous would it be to say that we EXCEED that figure and that our children attend school more than the National Average. This would be an excellent way to recognise how much you value your child's education and are committed to bringing your children to school every day.

Summer Term

Please find attached some dates for your diary for the last term of the year! Let's hope we get some lovely weather so we can continue to embrace outdoor learning and use our new playground equipment to the max!

Don't forget we are happy for girls to wear blue and white checked summer dresses and boys to wear grey shorts during the summer months. However, we ask that children do not wear sandals for school as these can cause safety issues in the playground.

Thank you.

Mrs N James

Acting Headteacher