

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2014

Dear Parents and Friends

Welcome back to the last term of the year – and wasn't the weather good over the Easter holidays? We had a wonderful time celebrating Easter in school with a visit from the Easter Bunny and our usual raft of competitions organised by "The Friends of Horton Grange". They always come up trumps and this year was no exception. They arranged for Stacy Crooks who plays football for Durham Ladies (the WILDCATS) to present the prizes and she was full of praise for the children and their creations for the decorated egg competition. The winners are on Facebook, but here are two of my favourites!



There is going to be a Summer Fayre this year, probably in June. The Friends of Horton Grange and Mrs McDonald would be pleased to hear from anyone who can help. Sharon Common is the chair and this is her last year, so we need lots of new volunteers. It really is open to anyone who just wants to support their child's school.

URGENT NOTICE

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HASN'T GOT A CHILD'S NAME DOWN FOR A PLACE IN RECEPTION YOU MUST CONTACT US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE ARE ALMOST FULL AND EVEN IF A CHILD IS IN NURSERY THEY ARE NOT GUARANTEED A PLACE IN RECEPTION.

If you are interested in a place for a 2yr. old starting in September ask at the front desk for a leaflet.

I've really noticed a difference in the sort of language that is being used in writing – no doubt thanks to our Pie Corbett approach to story-telling and writing. I know when many of you joined us for the **Open Learning Day and Parents' Meetings on Thursday 20th March** and you had a chance to see this in action in class, you were bowled over by the children's enthusiasm and their stories!



The children loved the Chatterbox Challenge!

Our focus on developing speech, language and communication starts in the Early Years and remains a focus across school. You really supported our EYFS team during the **Chatterbox Challenge** – thank you! Without doubt more since the introduction of Read,Write Inc. (thank you to those who attended the workshop) we've seen an improvement in children's reading skills. We've again invested in more new books in our drive to develop children who are really enthusiastic readers. Look out for **Parent / Child library sessions** in the near future.

In the meantime we have been accepted for Premier League Reading Stars. Some children in school are part of the programme, but the website is open to everyone at our school:

http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/plrs_challenges/parents - school number E14330-58 - where you can join in the online challenge.

Welcome to the Premier League Reading Stars Online Challenge

Take our challenges to win exclusive rewards.

Each Premier League club has nominated a player as our "Reading Champion". Each player has set you three challenges, based on a book, website article, poem or play.

Are you professional, world class or legendary? Take the challenge.

Completing challenges

In each challenge, the player reads aloud a short extract and then asks three multiple-choice questions. The answers to the first two questions can be found in the extract, but to answer the third question you will need to read the full article or chapter. Links are provided to online articles and, where possible, a downloadable pdf file is provided for book chapters. You can make as many attempts as you need to complete each challenge.

Your rewards

Once you have completed the challenge, you can access your reward:

Professional level

View a video of an exclusive football tip from the player

World class level

Download an exclusive poster of the player with key stats

Legendary level

View an exclusive video message and download your signed certificate

You will need to enter your name to access your reward. Make sure you print or save the rewards you download.



This is the link to Newcastle's Reading Star - http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/plrs_2014/newcastle_united

and so as not to be thought biased in any way – here is the Sunderland link - http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/plrs_2014/sunderland - **GOOD LUCK!**

Thank you to those who took time to fill in questionnaires from the last newsletter or at the Open Day. We had 60 responses, one of our best ever. As you can see the results are overwhelmingly positive but it is clear there are one or two people who do have concerns. I know it can be difficult to have the direct conversation, but please try to catch me on the yard in the morning or speak to **Mrs. McDonald – Parent Link**. If you think something isn't being sorted then I will try to help! Not everyone answered every question but most people answered them all. We're particularly pleased with the improved responses on how we keep you informed – we do try. If you think we can do something better then please drop your ideas into the **suggestion box at the main entrance**.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE FROM OPEN DAY AND PARENTS' INTERVIEWS MARCH 2014

	STRONGLY AGREE / AGREE	DISAGREE / STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
My child feels safe at this school	100%	0%	0
My child is making good progress	100%	0%	2
This school meets my child's particular needs	100%	0%	0
This school ensures my child is well looked after	100%	0%	0
My child is taught well	100%	0%	0
School helps my child devel. skills in reading, writing, maths and communication	98%	2%	0
There is a good standard of behaviour	96%	4%	0
My child's lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	96%	4%	0
The school deals with any cases of bullying effectively	92%	4%	4%
This school helps me to support my child's learning	96%	2%	2%
This school responds well to my concerns	94%	4%	2%
This school keeps me well informed	98%	2%	0
I would recommend this school to another parent	YES 94%	NO 2%	4%

This is such an important term for us all as the children consolidate their learning to date and really ask themselves – **“Am I going to meet my targets?”** Already the children are impressing me with their mature attitude to learning and how determined they are to succeed.

Our Y6 pupils are really focused at the moment – in the run up to **SATs which are week beginning May 12th**. Every school in the country which has Y6 pupils does them at the same time and tensions do come to the fore. We set out to support the children in doing as well as they can and in helping them to be confident. Feeling positive and confident in your strategies is really important – as one of our Y6 pupils said yesterday, **“Attitude is everything!”**

We've been looking for some inspirational quotes – here are some, but please let us have any you know!

‘A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new’ (Albert Einstein).

‘Be the change you wish to see in the world’ (Ghandi).

‘Remember that person who gave up? Neither does anyone else’.

We are running a SATs drop-in each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in the Learning Zone from end of school until 4.30pm up to and including SATs week. Refreshments will be available and parents are welcome to join their children. If you or your child has any concerns, don't hesitate to get in touch. During SATs week we will expect the Y6 children in school by 8.15am when they will be served a free SATs breakfast. This has become a rite of passage for our Y6 children – almost as much as the production and the prom! The production this year is **Shakespeare Rocks** – particularly as this year is the 450th anniversary of his birth. Look out for tickets on sale for the last week of the summer term.

Part of my job is to make a judgement about the quality of teaching across the school. We are I think, very lucky in that the staff is very focused on their own professional development and are often to be seen discussing what works and what doesn't. Over the year we are visited by Head Teachers and Senior Leaders from other schools, as well as our adviser and governors, and together we check that the judgements are sound. Here are some of the highlights from this year so far.

TEACHING AT HORTON GRANGE – THE POSITIVES

- ✓ Interesting and engaging learning situations with lots of practical application which promotes excellent behaviour for learning and high levels of engagement.
- ✓ Pupils are happy and confident when explaining their learning and most children are developing good independent learning skills.
- ✓ Learning is well planned using prior knowledge of pupils to closely match their needs.
- ✓ There is a strong focus on developing subject specific and other language and children are encouraged to discuss and explain their thinking.
- ✓ Questioning is highly effective and is systematically used to check understanding and move on learning.
- ✓ Behaviour is consistently good across all year groups. The management of behaviour is a key strength across the school.
- ✓ Pupils are polite and courteous. They respect the contribution made by their classmates.
- ✓ Classrooms are well organized with some very good examples of supportive learning environments.
- ✓ Staff know the children really well.

EVEN BETTER IF

- we ensure that teaching is always good or outstanding – we do this by teachers working together to plan and deliver lessons, so if someone needs support they get it from their peers;
- we ensure all children receive feedback which helps them to improve;
- we make sure teaching always meets the needs of all children – challenging them and supporting those who may struggle.

Our Y5s had a brilliant time in **London** and particularly enjoyed Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. As ever we were complimented on the behaviour and attitude of all our children and we couldn't have done it without the help of two of our parents, who did their stint of night-time cover. Both Dean and Barry leave us at the end of the year so we're on the lookout for new volunteers. We're already planning next year's visit to London and of course the Y6 visit to Hawes End near Keswick is already booked for Friday 17th October to return Monday 20th.



VISIT TO ARGYL PRIMARY CAMDEN



FLIGHT ON THE LONDON EYE

ATTENDANCE

WE HAVE 60 CHILDREN WHO HAVE ACHIEVED 100% ATTENDANCE SINCE SEPTEMBER COMPARED TO 53 FOR THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR!

RECEPTION	2	THIS IS BRILLIANT NEWS AND THESE CHILDREN WILL ALL BE TAKING PART IN A SPECIAL TREAT AS WELL AS RECEIVING THEIR BANDS AND PRIZES. THE CHILDREN WHO HAVE MANAGED 100% OVER THE SPRING TERM WILL OF COURSE GET THEIR BANDS AND PRIZES. WELL DONE EVERYONE!
Y1	7	
Y2	7	
Y3	8	
Y4	14	
Y5	10	
Y6	12	

E-SAFETY

And last but not least, I know many of you share some of our concerns about what your child may be able to access via the internet. Even when we use it every day, we're not always aware of the potential pitfalls – and if you're like me, the younger generation seem far more skilled than I am. We have recently had an audit of our e-safety provision, carried out by a professional team, over a 2 day period when lessons were observed, children and staff interviewed and systems checked.

Here are some of the key findings.

- "E-Safety and E-Safeguarding have a very high profile within Horton Grange. The Head Teacher, Governing Body and all staff work assiduously and diligently to ensure that pupils' safety and well-being are ensured.
- E-Safety is well embedded into all aspects of school life and there are effective and good day to day practices to protect users, data and systems.
- Pupils feel safe when using IT and digital technologies in school. The school encourages them to take responsibility for their own use of digital technologies. Pupils understand the benefits and the risks of online usage and know what they need to do to keep themselves safe. They have a very good awareness of the importance of protecting personal data, understanding and agreeing that protection of personal passwords is paramount. They are aware of the risks of grooming and are comfortable about reporting concerns.
- Pupils use their e-safety knowledge to help keep them safe when using IT at home. They understand that parents may not be as aware of e-safety issues and have delivered e-safety awareness sessions for younger pupils and parents."

This will continue to be a priority for us and we will run further sessions for parents, however in the meantime, if you are worried or concerned about an e-safety issue please let us know and we may be able to help. We have leaflets in reception and there are also some How2 guides for parents at the following link.

<http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides.html>

Looking forward to seeing you in school this term.

Kind regards

Jackie Chevaugon

