

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2015

Dear Parents and Friends

A somewhat belated **Happy New Year** to you all. As you are now aware I am planning to retire at the end of this school year – in fact the two oldies on the staff - myself and Mrs MacDonald have both decided to call it a day. I know it seems like a long way off, but the process of selecting a new head takes a long time! The governors will keep you informed of what happens.

As some of you may have seen in the News Post Leader we've received a letter from David Laws the Schools Minister thanking us for our good work in raising standards, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. **We are now among the top 100 schools in the country based on sustained improvement in attainment at the end of Y6** and we are being encouraged to support other schools. We have high expectations with regard to learning and behaviour, however these alone are not enough without your support and buy in to what we are about. Thank you - we are so proud of the children's achievements.

SPORTS

We have been having a busy time sports wise with our netball teams doing well, Newcastle Eagles working with us and several bike rides with the support of Sustrans. In addition we have had Y5 football coaching and the football team has several fixtures up and coming after half term.



VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

A small group of Y6 pupils visited the Houses of Parliament this week and took part in a debate. They had a brilliant time and are going to do a presentation to the rest of the pupils about their experiences.



This is the term when we really focus in on where the children are in relation to the expectations for their age. With the **new national curriculum** there has been a real raising of the bar e.g. times tables which children were previously expected to know by Y6 they are now expected to know by Y4 and it's a similar case with spellings. We've had a massive push on **basic skills** in all year groups including:

- Counting
- Rapid recall of number facts
- Times tables
- Phonics
- Spelling
- Handwriting

This year only the attainment of **Y2 and Y6** children will continue to be measured in levels, but these no longer exist for pupils in other year groups. Instead children will be judged to be at the expected level for their age, above that level or below. For those of us who have worked with levels for many years it's quite a shift but we're always happy to share the children's progress from their books. Please make an effort to come along to our next **Parents' Evening** on 24th March to find out more. Appointment letters will be out after half term but in the meantime if you didn't make the last Parents' Evening Ms Carlisle will be contacting you to make sure we can find a good time to see you.

I know many of you have found it really useful to have our **Parent Liaison, June Carlisle** as a point of contact. It feels as if June has always been with us and she is working very closely with Mr Harker, Mrs Sanderson and the Thrive team to ensure we focus on your child's learning. Just after half term we will be joined by a Lead Behaviour Practitioner Jill Kinghorn – the team is growing in capacity!

We believe it's really important that children become confident and develop resilience as this is so important to their success at school. Our aim is that years 5 and 6 children will be well on their way with this as it makes moving to secondary more straightforward. Just like adults this comes more easily to some children than others. If your child is having difficulties in any part of school life, please encourage them to talk to us. By all means tell them you will support them in doing that but please try not to do it for them. If you are at all worried please give Ms Carlisle a ring and we'll support you in helping your child to find their voice.

Another new member of staff is **Chloe Angus** who joined us just after Christmas to be our **Horton Grange Early Starters** Manager. Following the refurbishment of an area next to the nursery we are now offering free childcare for 2 year olds. Chloe joined us from Rainbow Nursery in Alnwick and Wendy Cochrane from nursery makes up the team. We currently have eight places, but if there is sufficient demand we will increase that. There are criteria but the office the EYFS staff and June have details – if in doubt ask. This is a great opportunity to get your child off to a flying start!



Some of our early starters.....



February 10th was SAFER INTERNET DAY and we've enjoyed our week of activities. Thank you for coming in to the drop-in sessions.

E-safety is about computers, ipads and mobile phones / devices and show to stay safe. All children from Y3 to Y6 have received and acceptable use policy for use of the internet. Please support us in ensuring you and your child read and sign this form and return it to school. Look out for responses to your safety queries raised during the week, on Facebook. Can I remind you all children who bring mobile phones to school require a signed consent form first – available from the office along with copies of the policy.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Week commencing 16 February	SCHOOL CLOSED FOR HALF TERM
Monday, 23 February	Return to school
Wednesday, 25 February	Sustrans Bike Ride
Friday, 27 February	SCHOOL CLOSED FOR TRAINING DAY
Monday, 2 March	Return to school
Monday, 2 March	Year 3 & 4 Stone Age Day
Monday, 2 March - 20 March	The Big Pedal
Thursday, 5 March	World Book Day
Friday, 6 March	Big Yellow Friday

Wednesday, 11 March	Sustrans Bike Ride
Thursday, 12 March	Bikers' Breakfast & Dr Bike
Tuesday, 17 March - Thursday, 19 March	Year 5 Trip to London
Monday, 23 March	Stay & Play
Tuesday, 24 March	Parents' Evening
Wednesday, 25 March	Sustrans Bike Ride
Thursday, 26 March	KS1 & 2 Dance Festival
Monday 30 March to Friday 10 April	SCHOOL CLOSED FOR EASTER HOLIDAY
Monday, 13 April	School restarts for Summer Term

You are welcome to contact us at any time and we will do our best to resolve any concerns, however, abusive, intimidatory and aggression will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Your children do us proud by taking responsibility for their learning and wanting to do well.

I hope you all have a good half term holiday.

Best wishes

Jackie Chevaugeron