

NEWSLETTER

December 2023

Dear Parents and Friends

Welcome to the December Newsletter. It is hard to believe that we are coming to the end of the first full term of this academic year. It has certainly been a busy one – especially these last two weeks with the buzz of Christmas across school.

Sporting updates

This half term, the year 6 football team took part in a tournament run by Newcastle United. After successfully getting out of the group, the team were beaten by the eventual winners in the semi-final.

More recently, Paralympic gold medalist from Rio 2016, Matt Wylie, came in to discuss his career in competitive swimming, explain what it was like at the games and discuss careers/future pathways into sport.

KS2 classes have been taking part in the virtual multiskills competition. All results have been submitted and we will find out after Christmas if any class has made it to the county finals.

Year 3 developed their fitness by taking part in a skipping festival at Blyth Sports Centre. They learned how to skip properly and were taught a lot of fun new moves.

Horton Grange were proud to host a Year 3 multiskills festival where we welcomed Bede Academy, Mowbray Primary School and New Deleval Primary School. This was also the first event that our new Year 6 sports leaders got to support running and the feedback from staff from all schools was tremendous.

Developing responsibility

At Horton Grange we know how important it is to develop responsibility in our pupils. We are delighted to announce that Head Prefect roles have been awarded to Cydney Leadbitter and Jenson Todd. Deputy Head Prefect roles have been awarded to Matthew Hewitson and Ruby Johnson. Sports Captains are Macey-Leigh Smith and John-James Dust while Deputy Sports Captains are Harvey Thompson and Grace Miller.

Our first prefects for this year are: Lily Hunter, Callum Codling, Owen Dodds, Eve Foster, Charlotte Woodrowe and CJ Laidlaw.

We will add further prefects to the group over the course of the year.

Sports Leaders include: Jack Taylor, Noah Macrow, James Snowdon and Craig Coulson.

Again, further sports leader roles may be given out during the course of year 6.



Celebrating Learning from Autumn 2

Two Year Olds

The two year olds have had an exciting half term, celebrating Halloween, Bonfire night, all in the run up to Christmas. The children have enjoyed lots of imaginary play, extending their ideas with their friends, taking on a role and representing their own experiences. They have had opportunities to develop this in the kitchen role play with a play dough tea party and in the small world area with the cars,



animals and characters. The children made the most of the bad weather, enjoying splashing in puddles and exploring the snow. They have continued to bake/cook. They demonstrated their control of different utensils and were encouraged to make choices based on their preferences.



There have been lots of festive activities on offer, fake snow, making tree decorations and lots of glitter! Staff are saying goodbye to some of our two year olds who are moving up to nursery and they wish them lots of luck.

The staff in 2 year olds wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

Next half term, there will be lots of sensory activities for the children to explore. They will be encouraged to use all of their senses and language of texture. The children will be developing their pre-writing skills with lots of fine motor activities, snipping with scissors and threading. There will be opportunities for mark making too, both on a small and large scale to develop both fine motor and gross motor movements. The lending library will continue each week and there will be a book to choose and keep for each child after every five posts on Tapestry to show them enjoying sharing their lending library books at home. It would also be great to see what your children are enjoying doing at home when they are not in two year olds, any photos of the children can be shared on Tapestry.

The following 10 texts are used continuously in two year olds. They inform a lot of the planning with links across the whole EYFS, and most importantly, repeating these texts impacts hugely on language development.

Pip and Posy series (6 titles) - Axel Scheffler

The Tiger Who Came to Tea - Judith Kerr

Whatever Next - Jill Murphy

Peace at Last - Jill Murphy

The Very Hungry Caterpillar - Eric Carle

As the weather is getting colder, could you please make sure your child has suitable warm outdoor clothing as we still access outdoors in all weathers.

Nursery

As the seasons began to change, the Nursery children started to observe the natural environment as we moved into Autumn. The children enjoyed exploring their topic by investigating the natural world around them by spending lots of time in forest school! They were brilliant at spotting how the leaves change colour and identifying some of the Autumnal natural objects they found. The children focused very hard on vocabulary and learned many new and interesting words relating to their topic.

Before they knew it, Christmas was on the horizon! The children have explored the festivities in a range of ways; from tree decorating to writing letters for Santa, Nursery did it all! While it is always exciting to get festive, the children also began to learn the reason people celebrate Christmas. They learned that the story began a long time ago and all because a special baby was born and performed in their first nativity.



After the Christmas break, keeping a close eye on the natural environment, the Nursery children will begin to explore their next topic of Wonderful Winter. They will continue to observe the changes and begin to investigate how to use these changes creatively, such as ice painting!

The children in Nursery will also be welcoming some new friends into their groups in January where they will continue to focus on how to be kind to others. They are always very caring and considerate so we are confident they will embrace the new starters with open arms!

Reception

Celebrations have been the focus of this half term, from birthdays to Diwali, Hanukkah and Christmas. The children learned why Christmas is important to Christians and enjoyed dressing up and acting out the story of the Nativity. They also learned about Diwali, the festival of light celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs, where they enjoyed making Rangoli patterns and Diya lamps. The children learned the story of Hanukkah and had lots of fun learning how to play dreidel; this has been a highlight for many! They held a party for baby Ezra in the home corner which included writing invitations, making bunting and playing party games. This half term has been a cause for celebration!



The children ended the half term with their Christmas party, 'Biscuit and a Book' and a wonderful Stick Man workshop hosted by Seven Stories! They loved getting fully immersed in the Julia Donaldson story that they love.

It was fantastic to have parents and carers in for the Mastering Number at Home maths workshop; everyone had fun while developing core maths skills such as counting, composition and comparison. The children have really enjoyed attending the extra-curricular clubs on offer at lunchtime; these have included Yoga club and Christmas craft club. We hope that next half term's clubs will be just as popular!

'A look back in time' will be the focus for next half term's learning. The children will be developing their understanding of timelines, including a timeline of how they have developed since birth, and looking closely at pictures from older stories to identify how objects, clothes and décor have changed over time. Using artefacts from museums, Reception will be able to explore old fashioned toys and compare them to what they play with at home. They will be focusing on stories such as 'Peepo', 'The tiger who came to tea' and 'Each peach, pear, plum' as they look at the details and discuss what they notice and make comparisons with what they own. The children will delve deeper into traditional nursery rhymes when they visit Seven Stories in Newcastle and take part in a workshop called 'the case of the missing nursery rhymes'.

The Reception class text will be 'Peepo' by Janet and Allan Ahlberg



Year 1

This half term, Year 1 have been strengthening their resilience and the Year 1 teachers were so impressed at how independent they became.

In maths the children learnt all about addition and subtraction within 10. Their knowledge of number bonds was fantastic and they used lots of different strategies to add and subtract. The children also explored 2D and 3D shapes and used shapes to make patterns. Ask them to recite the poem they learnt about 3D shapes!

The children also continued to strengthen their maths skills at home by playing on NUMBOTS and enjoyed NUMBOTS club on Monday and Friday lunchtimes.

The children continued to enjoy reading lots of different stories from one of their favourite authors, Julia Donaldson as well as traditional tales such as The Enormous Turnip. They produced some super sentences about the stories. The children were introduced to nouns and adjectives and used these in their sentences.

In science lessons, Year 1 learnt about materials and their properties (and they now know that this is part of chemistry)! The children used their amazing scientific skills to carry out investigations testing the transparency of materials and to find out the best material for an umbrella.

In DT lessons the children researched, designed, made and evaluated their own boats! They loved being able to independently make their own designs come to life and had great fun testing them in water. They used their knowledge from science to help understand which materials would make a good boat.

Year 1 had a great day on Christmas Craft Day! The children worked hard to create Christmas cards, tree decorations and calendars. They loved being able to wear their Christmas jumpers to school.



They did so well performing in their Nativity. Their singing and speaking was brilliant and they were all so proud of themselves!

Next half term in Maths, children will be strengthening their number skills by learning about place value to 20. They will find out how numbers are made of tens and ones.

In Science they will be consolidating their knowledge of animals from Autumn 1 when learning about reptiles and amphibians. They will also find out what animals eat and whether they are carnivores, herbivores or omnivores.

The children will also travel back in time when learning about toys from the past in their history lessons. They will be asking parents and grandparents all about the toys that they used to play with!

Please continue to read with your child at home. Children who read four times at home in a week can *go green for a custard cream!* Reading folders should be in school every day. Please return school library books so the children can swap them. Thank you for your support.

The children will be reading *Lost in the Toy Museum* by David Lucas. This links to their history topic about toys from the past.

Year 2

Year 2 have had such a busy term!

In English, the children have continued to develop their basic skills of letter formation, punctuation and handwriting. The children have read 'The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark' (by Jill Tomlinson) and they created their own moving picture books in DT using levers, wheels and sliders to make the owl move. The children innovated the story using their own ideas to create an under the sea adventure about a fish who was afraid of the sea. They explored the adventure story genre and read 'Traction Man' (by Mini Grey) where they were writing all about the problems and resolutions that their superhero faced. The children used adventurous vocabulary to describe their superhero's powers, personality and costume. We have been amazed by the improvement in the children's handwriting this half term too!



In maths, children are continuing to enjoy Numbots and Hit the Button where they are building up their speed of recalling facts within 10 and 20. They have counted each day in 2s, 5s, 10s and 3s which will support them when we focus on times tables after Christmas.

The children have enjoyed developing their understanding of addition and subtraction and they have used concrete equipment and picture representations to support their learning. The children have started to explain their thinking during reasoning and problem solving.

In geography the children have enjoyed finding out more about the world and our local area. They have loved singing The Seven Continents and The Five Oceans songs (these can be listened to on YouTube). They have explored aerial maps of Blyth using compass directions to plan routes. The children were excited to use street-view on Google maps to spot human and physical features.



In science, the children have investigated materials. The children had remembered lots of their learning from Year 1, which they used to help them to investigate enquiry questions including 'Do all materials behave in the same way?' and 'Is the material transparent, translucent and opaque?'

Next half term, in English, the children will read the text 'Zog' by Julia Donaldson. They will write an alternative version of the story about a dragon who comes to Horton Grange Primary School! Please continue to read at least 4 times with your child each week.

In maths, children will begin learning about multiplication and division where they will use their knowledge of counting in steps to help them solve problems using their 2, 5 and 10 times table. To support learning at home children should be using the following websites:



NUMBOTS

<https://play.numbots.com/#/intro>

HIT THE BUTTON

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/hit-the-button>



In science, children will be researching animals and their habitats.

In history, children will jump into the gruesome world of Kings and Queens from the past where they will find out about Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

Year 2 end of day stories will be based around talk through stories by a variety of authors.



Year 3

This half term Year 3 met new friends in Stone Age Boy and The Twits. They loved using their knowledge of the Palaeolithic period to help them write character and setting descriptions. The awful antics of the Twits gave the children fantastic material to use to write some dialogue.

As part of their Rocks topic in science, Year 3 had a virtual visit from Charlotte Guillain, the author of 'The street beneath my feet.' They loved reading the book, especially how it linked to not only their Rocks topic but Volcanoes too.

The author spoke to the children about being an author, what or who inspired her and the steps to making a non-fiction book.

She told the children her top tips for becoming an author were..

- always have something to write on
- go for an inspiration walk, let your mind wander
- keep writing... anything...any time
- keep reading as much as you can

Becoming inquisitive Scientists, the children investigated types of rocks and grouped them depending on their properties. The children then planned an investigation to explore the density of rocks and how permeable they were, ensuring it was a fair test.

In Geography, Year 3 learned all about settlements and land use. They looked at our local area to see where the local hamlets, villages, towns and nearest city are and used Google Maps to explore how land is used in and around Blyth. It was interesting to learn the differences between rural and urban areas and to spot these features around the local area.

Year 3 have been getting their sewing skills up to scratch in DT where they were tasked to create a bookmark. They planned, made a prototype and made their bookmark using various sewing skills. The children had to evaluate and edit their bookmarks as they went along to ensure they were sticking to the brief. Teachers loved seeing the concentration on their faces!



Year 3 had a fantastic Christmas craft day, where they made seasonal calendars, Christmas cards using stencils and paint and putting their sewing skills to practise by sewing felt owls. The children were so excited and they all definitely got in the festive spirit!

Next half term, Year 3 will be venturing back in time to the Ancient Egyptians where they will look at the key achievements and developments of this era and how it impacts life today. They will focus their learning on Tutankhamun, answering the key questions who, what, where, when, why to understand his life. The children will be visiting the Great North Museum to further their historical enquiry- more information to follow.



In Science the children will be investigating light and shadows. This will include getting outside to carry out practical experiments about how shadows are formed and different light sources.

In maths the children will continue their learning around multiplication and division facts and written methods. The focus times table for this half term is the 4 x table.

Literacy will link to the Egyptian topic through the class text 'Marcy and the riddle of the Sphinx' by Joe Todd Stanton, using this to write their own adventure stories. In non-fiction Year 3 will create non-chronological reports on mythical creatures.

In Art, the children will be learning printing skills. They will design and make their own poly block print taking inspiration from the artist Piet Mondrian.

Next half term, Year 3 class text will be 'Marcy and the riddle of the Sphinx' by Joe Todd Stanton. A fantastic, beautifully illustrated book full of adventure which will be the inspiration for our own adventure stories.

When Marcy's adventurer father, Arthur, disappears in Egypt, she reluctantly sets off in his footsteps. She soon finds herself standing before the great Sphinx and must answer its riddle before she can enter and find Arthur, who is trapped inside. Her only option is to ask the Egyptian gods for help, but in the end it is up to Marcy to complete the final task. Can she overcome her deepest fears and save her father?

End of the day books- Flat Stanley and the Great Egyptian grave robbery by Jeff Brown and The boy who grew dragons by Andy Shepherd

Year 4

This half term, Year 4 have learned about states of matter in science. The children have explored the differences between solids, liquids and gases and grouped materials according to their state. In geography, Year 4 linked their understanding of states of matter to their topic about the water cycle. The children learned how water is continuously recycled around our planet through the processes of evaporation, condensation and evaporation. In English, the children presented their knowledge of the water cycle process in an informative non-chronological report.

In PE, the children developed their skills in dance where they created motifs linked to superheroes in pairs. In addition to this, Year 4 developed their basketball skills and applied their new knowledge of dribbling, passing and shooting to small sided games where they developed tactics to defeat the opposing team.

The highlight of this half term for Year 4 has been their DT project. The children were required to design, make and evaluate a healthy ice lolly product. After planning their designs and researching healthy fruits and juices to add to their lollies, the children used their chopping and pouring skills to make their lolly. Once the ice lollies were frozen, the children were able to sample and evaluate their lollies with some interesting results!

Next half term, Year 4 will learn about the Romans in Britain as part of their history topic. In science, the children will learn about sound and how sound waves travel to our ears in different ways.

Year 4 will read 'Decibella and her Six Inch Voice' by Julia Cook, which will link to their science learning on the topic of sound.



In English, Year 4 will look at a range of historical fiction linked to their Romans in Britain history topic. The children will read the traditional tale of Romulus and Remus and read a collection of diary entries by a Roman slave.

Year 5

This half term in English lessons, children in Year 5 have written their own adventure stories based on the book series Alex Rider. They have also written instructions for a pizza recipe, linked with their work in design technology lessons. At the end of the term, they studied winter poetry and created their own cinquain poems based on the festive season.

In maths, the children have been learning about multiples and factors, and have begun their unit on fractions, including finding equivalent fractions and converting between mixed numbers and improper fractions. They have also tried hard to improve their times table fluency and increase their score on TT Rockstars. Any help at home with this is greatly appreciated!

In design technology, the children put on their chef hats for a day and created their own homemade pizzas. They were encouraged to think of seasonal ingredients and included mushrooms and sweetcorn on their pizzas. It was a busy (and sometimes messy) but delicious day all round!



As part of the children's RE learning, they visited the Newcastle Central Mosque. Here, they were able to see Islamic artefacts such as a range of different Qur'ans, prayer mats and traditional toothbrushes. They heard the call to prayer and learned a lot about the five pillars of Islam. The children were enthusiastic and asked some fantastic questions while they were there.

In Science, Year 5 started their Chemistry unit on the properties of materials. They planned and set up their own fair tests to answer questions using their scientific understanding. Later in the half term, the children learned about controlling variables to set up fair experiments and started investigating solubility of materials.

During this half term's Geography lessons, children have been introduced to the continent of South America. They have learned about the different country names, investigated the main climate zones and thought about the different plants and animals that live in the various biomes of South America. In their investigations they have used a variety of maps and aerial photographs.

In December, parents and carers were invited in for Book and a Biscuit with their child. This was a lovely way for children to share some of their favourite texts that they have been reading in Year 5.

In Maths next half term, children will continue to learn about fractions, including multiplying fractions before they move on to learning about written methods for division and multiplication.

In English, the children will continue to read a wide range of genres, including fairy tales and contemporary fiction. They will write their own stories inspired by these and will write a persuasive leaflet to advertise an outdoor activity centre.

In art, the focus will be on printing. The children will build on their knowledge of relief printing from Year 4. They will carve and create their own 3 colour lino print, based on the work of Alexandra Buckle and inspired by the Northumberland coastline.

In Science, the children will continue to build on their learning in Chemistry as they continue to explore the properties of materials through lots of exciting enquiries.

Next half term in History, the children will learn about the Victorian era, including learning about the Crimean War and the women who transformed the nursing profession, such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. They will also study the industrial revolution and the effect it had on the lives of the Victorians. Later in the term, they will visit the Great North Museum and then embark on a walking tour of Newcastle to discover some of the rich history from the Victorian era that is in the city centre.

Year 6

At the end of October Year 6 went on their residential trip to Hawse End in the Lake District. They all had a fantastic time and throughout the experience the children showed all of the Horton Grange values. The children took part in water activities such as kayaking, which was a new experience for most of the children and ghyll scrambling, where the children had to work together to scramble upstream and climb waterfalls. The children showed how resilient they were when they tried rock climbing and showed a positive, healthy attitude as they took on the challenge of hiking up Cat Bells. The teachers were very proud of everyone! Year 6 had an incredible time at Hawse End. It was full of new and memorable experiences that will last a lifetime.





In geography, the children were able to refer back to their experiences at Hawse End by studying the Lake District in more detail, they studied the features of glaciated landscapes, land use in that area and how to read maps using 4/6 figure grid references. The children learnt about evolution and the work of Charles Darwin as well as fossils in science. At the end of each day, Year 6 listened to a very enjoyable novel called 'The Last Wild' by Piers Torday and wrote some excellent creative fiction inspired by it describing escape adventures. If your child enjoyed this book, they may like to read the sequels: 'The Dark Wild' and 'The Wild Beyond.'

During Literacy lessons, Year 6 learnt about the Christmas Truce of 1914. They gained knowledge about this by reading and watching film clips as well as the well-known Sainsburys Christmas advert from 2014 which they found very inspiring. Then, they went on to write, as journalists, newspaper reports about the event and why it is still remembered today. In maths children have been working further on multiplication and division.

Year 6 parents came into school for our first Biscuit and a Book session of the year. They shared books with their children and read together whilst enjoying a selection of tasty biscuits! The children were also happy to show their parents details of how they use Reading Plus on the computers which can also, of course, be accessed at home.

Next term, Year 6 shall be learning about the ancient civilisation and culture of the Maya and Aztecs in history. In art, the children will be experimenting with different media to improve their mastery of design and printing. Light will be our topic in science but the children will also be revising their learning on sound from year 4. We will be reading and writing quest stories and non-chronological reports in English and in maths, the children will covering a range of topics including multiplication and division, ratio, decimals and algebra.

'Sky Song' by Abi Elphinstone is our text for next term – it is a fantasy adventure novel which will transport the children to the icy tundra of 'Erkenwald' where whales glide between icebergs and polar bears roam the glaciers.

Clubs

The variety of clubs offered this half term has been brilliant. Across school, the children have been able to participate in Christmas crafts, sports, singing and more.

Extra-curricular activities are so important for children, they have many benefits including developing your child's social, emotional and communication skills. They also give the children an opportunity to learn more about themselves and their own interests. The following clubs will be available to sign up for in spring term. Keep an eye out for the text and put your child down for something they already enjoy or even better, a new experience:

EYFS

STEM Club – Wednesday lunchtime

Nursery rhyme club – Tuesday lunchtime

Key stage 1

Art club – Monday 3.20-4.15

Singing club – Monday 3.20-4.15

Playdough club – Monday 3.20-4.15

Key stage 2

Year 3/4 Football club – Tuesday 3.30-4.20

Sewing club – Tuesday 3.30-4.20

Art Club – Tuesday 3.30-4.20

Dance club – Monday 3.30-4.20

School library

Please could any school library books be returned as we are missing a few. Also if anyone has any children's books they would like to donate we would be grateful of them.

Attendance

We know that many children have been ill this term. We understand when children are poorly the best place for them is at home where they can recover and not spread germs. However, we would ask that you communicate with us when your child is ill and keep us updated. You can do this by phoning the school office (01670 353503) Sometimes we may request medical evidence so that the absence can be authorised. This can be brought into school or sent to the absence phone (07971791810)

Our attendance awards and the presentation of the trophy at the end of each week are something the children get really excited and competitive about. After the first term the top 3 classes are:

1st -3SC/DC

2nd-6CW

3rd-5ER

Well done to them, it's a great collective effort! The class who are the winners by the end of the year will win a class treat.

School Council

The school council has contributed to their school community by completing a litter pick around the site. They did a brilliant job and want to expand this in the new year with a community litter pick around Cowpen.



OPAL

We have really battled the weather this half term, reinforcing the need for more wellies and outdoor clothes. The children in Key stage 1 have loved having more space and chance to mix with their friends and the new fixed play equipment has gone down a storm!



In Key Stage 2 the big hit has been the crates and there has been no end to the imaginative play that they have inspired-which is really what OPAL is all about! We look forward to new developments in the spring to continue to develop the field and forest areas. We are also introducing pathways in KS1 so that a more mud free option of getting to the equipment is there!





Staffing changes

As the Autumn term ends we will say goodbye to Miss Wylie, who leaves to teach abroad. In her place we welcome Miss Hudson. Also Mrs Whitehead, who has worked at Horton Grange for many years, right from the beginning of her teaching career, has made the decision to retire in July 2024. However, she will continue to work 4 mornings a week until then to ensure continuity for Year 6 pupils as they approach their SATs. We welcome Miss Wellwood to the Year 6 team who will teach the class with Mrs Whitehead.

And finally... Merry Christmas.

That just leaves me to say thank you for all your on-going support, have a lovely Christmas and we look forward to welcoming the children back in the new year on **Monday 8th January 2024.**

Best wishes
Nichola Irving
Headteacher



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please note whilst we endeavour to stick to these dates, occasionally amendments have to be made in response to other events in school, which are often out of our control. However, if you are unable to make an event, please contact school and we will discuss how the information can be shared in an alternative way.

Wednesday 10 th January	Year 2 SATs meeting
Wednesday 17 th January	Reception trip to Seven Stories Year 6 SATs meeting
Tuesday 23 rd January	Year 1 trip to the Discovery Museum
Wednesday 24 th January	Vision Screening for Reception children
Monday 29 th January	Year 1 Come Dine and Read
Tuesday 30 th January	Year 2 Come Dine and Read
Wednesday 31 st January	Year 3 Come Dine and Read
Thursday 1 st February	Year 4 Come Dine and Read
Friday 2 nd February	Year 5 Come Dine and Read NSPCC Number Day
Monday 5 th February	Year 6 Trial SATs week Year 6 Come Dine and Read
Tuesday 6 th February	Safer Internet Day
Wednesday 14 th February	Year 5 Trip to Great North Museum and Newcastle City Centre
Thursday 15 th February	School closes for half-term
Friday 16 th February	Teacher Training Day – school closed to pupils
Monday 26 th February	School re-opens
