



## **Governors newsletter – February 2020**

Another half term comes to an end and yet again the school has provided an excellent half term of activities to the children. Governors have been impressed to see the commitment shown by school staff this term, and would like to express their sincere thanks for their ongoing hard work to develop and improve the curriculum on offer to the children in light of the new Ofsted inspection framework.

### **Staffing**

We'd like to thank Miss Crampton and Mrs Hepburn for the great work that they've been doing, temporarily filling our vacancies whilst Mrs Batchelor hasn't been in school. We look forward to welcoming back Mrs Batchelor next term. Also, next term we will be saying goodbye to Miss Thomas; wishing her well as she goes off on maternity leave. We will be interviewing for her temporary replacement after the break.

### **Parent helpers**

At Cotherstone we aim to expose children to experiences of the wider community. As part of this, we very much welcome any parent, relative or friend of a child at the school who is willing to share their experiences to come into school to speak with the children. Recently we have had a former parent, who is a nurse, who has come into school to speak to the children about the importance of good handwashing; a visit from a local vet who spoke about his work helping animals and also two village residents who kindly spared their time to come into school to educate the children with their WW2 experiences. We also had former England and Burnley Footballer Dave Thomas, his wife Brenda and guide dog, Hannah, pay us a visit. He came in to talk to us about his career, how being registered blind affected his life and to talk about how important having access to a guide dog is for him. His autobiography is a great read and all royalties from it go to Guide Dogs for the Blind. An outline of the curriculum taught to the children each term is available to view on the school website at: <http://www.cotherstone.durham.sch.uk/our-curriculum/>, and is currently being updated in line with the new Ofsted inspection framework. If you, or someone you know, would be willing to come in and speak to the children about your job or relevant experiences, then we'd be very keen to hear from you, particularly to support careers week in week commencing Monday 2 March.

I have been supporting the school swimming each Monday and it's an excellent way to get to understand and support the good work being done by our school. Other ways parents share their time has been through coming into class on a regular basis to hear children read, which is always appreciated. If you think you have something to offer, then please in the first instance speak with Alison in the school office.

### **Governor Monitoring Visits**

Governors have been in school this term to monitor provision of, amongst other things, art and design, provision for pupils with special educational needs and to monitor the school budget. I was also in school to monitor a fire drill, which demonstrated that in an emergency all children can be successfully evacuated from the school in under 2 minutes. Practicing these activities is essential so that the children know what to do in an emergency, but I was very impressed to see all the children orderly exiting the premises and following instructions to the 'safe area'. It was also very encouraging to see the staff questioning procedures, challenging the existing practice to make sure that the very best plans possible are in place to safeguard the children in an emergency.



*Art & Design (Alison Lamb):* I met with Miss Lee to discuss the current provision for Art & Design in school. Miss Lee is updating the Art Policy and shared her progress so far. I saw examples of work carried out in Class 1 which were based on the local public art in Teesdale, including the stone sheep at Low Force and a recreation of The Hush. We discussed the links between Art and other curriculum areas and how it enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding of local heritage and culture.

*SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) (Alison Lamb):* I meet termly with Mr Batchelor to keep updated on issues relating to SEND in our school, locally and nationally. Mr Batchelor has recently completed his NASENCO training; this is the National Award for SEN Coordination and a statutory requirement. The course is designed to provide the opportunity for participants to reflect upon and improve their practice whilst developing their knowledge of coordinating special needs, policy and supporting the individual needs of all pupils.

### **Friends of Cotherstone Primary (FOCS)**

The FOCS do an excellent job fundraising to support the work of the school; providing equipment, resources and opportunities for pupils. We are very grateful for the time and effort put into organising these events and also the support parents give to these fundraising activities. The money raised recently will support the school in the coming months in a variety of ways including in-school Pancake Day celebrations, World Book day prizes, story sacks and phonics materials for class one and transportation for trips. FOCS have ambitious plans for more fundraising and community engagement in the coming months – look out for further details in the school newsletter next term. An excellent way for parents and relatives to easily support the school is the '100 club'. For £12 per year you can 'own' a number (between 1 and 100) for the year and each month a number is drawn, and the winner gets 40% of the monthly income, the remaining 60% goes to FOCS. Last year, this raised over £400 for school funds. This is a very easy way to support the school. If you don't already have a number but are interested, then please contact Liz Gill on [lizzie.lizzie@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lizzie.lizzie@hotmail.co.uk) for further information.

### **After school club**

Thank you to the parents who completed the survey on after school provision in the autumn term. Following this, the school is looking at widening the offer for after school club in the coming term. Children have expressed an interest in clubs including sports, baking, and art and we are investigating the possibility of introducing these in the coming weeks. However, these clubs must be 'self-supporting' so will need to be booked for the full term in advance in order to take place. Further details will be provided in due course, but please support this provision where you can. If anyone feels that they can support the provision of after school club in anyway then, again, please speak with the school office.

The full list of governors is available on the school website:

<http://www.cotherstone.durham.sch.uk/about-us/our-governing-body/>. We are all very happy to speak with any parent about any issue – please catch any one of us in the playground if there's an issue that you'd like to raise or contact by email: [Alison.Butler@education.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.Butler@education.gov.uk).

Enjoy the half term break. We're looking forward to seeing the children back and refreshed after the holiday!

**School reopens on Monday 24 February.**