

Cotherstone Primary School

Governors' Newsletter Summer Term (1) 2016

We've reached the end of yet another half term and we'd like to take this opportunity to update you on what we've been doing this half-term.

Classroom Organisation 2016/17:

Over the last couple of months, the Governing Body has been working hard to set the school's budget and within that determine the classroom organisation for new academic year starting in September 2016. For those children and families returning in September 2016 our classes will be organised as follows for the next academic year:

Reception plus Years 1 and 2 will be taught together for the full week with Mrs Hogg as their Class Teacher 3 days per week with Dr Jellis being their Class Teacher for the remaining 2 days per week.

Years 3 and 4 will be taught by Ms Blackburn in Class 2 while Years 5 and 6 will be taught by Mr Batchelor in Class 3. Ms Blackburn and Mr Batchelor swapping roles will allow them the opportunity to develop their experience in teaching new areas of the curriculum and to different age groups, strengthening their Continuous Professional Development. Classes 2 and 3 (i.e. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 as a total Key Stage 2) will combine for two afternoons per week.

Teaching support will continue to be provided across the school by Mrs Murtagh, Miss Robbins, Miss Whitworth and Miss Lee upon her return from maternity leave.

Durham County Council Consultation To Close Startforth Primary School:

You will have read in last week's school newsletter that Durham County Council have started a consultation exercise regarding their proposal to close Startforth Primary School at the end of this calendar year. When consultations such as this and the recent consultation regarding Forest of Teesdale Primary School take place, it is understandable that people then start to feel that small schools are vulnerable. We would like to reassure you that Durham County Council have informed us that at this point in time they are not considering any such plans for our school.

Academy Status for Primary Schools:

We are sure that you will also have picked up, in the national and local media over recent weeks, central government's proposal that primary schools must become academies in the very near future. Our Governing Body has been involved in attending a number of meetings to fact find about these proposals and to consider the best options available to our school. Whilst central government have retracted some of their statements regarding this matter we are still monitoring this situation very closely and will use our future newsletters as a means of keeping you up to date.

Basic Skills Quality Mark Accreditation:

We are delighted to report that earlier this half-term the school's Basic Skills Quality Mark Accreditation was renewed. The Basic Skills Quality Mark is an award that celebrates and supports continuous improvement in literacy and numeracy. It is awarded to a school in recognition of their provision, practice and performance in literacy and numeracy. The Award is valid for a period of three years before a further re-assessment during which a school must demonstrate a whole school approach to improving literacy and numeracy standards with clear evidence showing the impact of its approaches. During our school's recent renewal assessment visit we were delighted with the feedback given to us which included "the analysis of the assessment of pupil performance in basic skills is excellent", "target setting for the improvement of the school's performance in basic skills is excellent", "the school has very effective procedures for monitoring planning and assessing improvement in performance in basic skills" and "the school's commitment to improving the skills of the staff to teach and extend basic skills is exemplary". Reference was also made to the involvement of parents and carers in developing their child's basic skills literacy and numeracy with the assessor concluding "Congratulations to the pupils, staff, parents and governors of Cotherstone Primary School on achieving the Quality Mark Basic Skills Renewal Award. Very well done!".

Format of School Weekly Newsletters - We'd Like Your Views:

As you know the school produces a weekly newsletter to keep parents and carers informed of the things that have happened at school over the last week as well as announce future events and dates. These newsletters are currently colour printed with a copy given to each family every Friday. The Governing Body's Finance Committee are always looking at ways to make efficiency savings within the school's budget. We have received some feedback from parents saying they would be happy to receive future newsletters electronically rather than in paper format which means the school will save money on paper, printing and the time required to distribute the newsletters into children's book bags. If you would

prefer to receive your weekly newsletter electronically, please can you let Mrs Sabey know in the school office as soon as possible when school restarts in June 2016. We'd be grateful if you could consider receiving future newsletters electronically as this will save the school money which can be spent elsewhere.

Governor Visits

Dave Wilson has made two visits since our last report to monitor the teaching and learning of science across the school. He was able to see how the expectations of the Science National Curriculum are organised and saw examples of evidence that the pupils had understood the knowledge that the lesson had set out to impart. This session was followed by Dave observing a science lesson where he "was very impressed with the children and their attitude, with the lesson and teacher's delivery and handling of the lesson. All in all, a very rewarding experience."

CKC Update:

It has been another great half term at CKC with warmer weather finally arriving the children have been able to enjoy the school grounds to the full during the after school sessions. Warm thanks to Kando Arts for returning to CKC and running another excellent creative drama workshop with the children - it has been greatly enjoyed. Thank you to Mr Batchelor for providing a great series of programming workshops on Monday nights.

CKC is running the following activity programme in the last half term before summer holidays:

Tuesday: Nature Themed Crafts with natural and re-cycled materials with Anna Harding

Wednesday: Short Film Making with Russell Whiting

Thursday: Archery with Durham County Council

Come along to CKC for some crafty sessions with the brilliant Anna Harding. She is bringing some great fun ideas for nature themed crafts working with natural and re-cycled materials. If you have ever fancied a bit of acting, writing a script, camera work, editing or putting together a short film, join Russell on a Wednesday afternoon and get ready to work as a team and make a short film. This half term our sports sessions with Durham County Council are going to be archery so come along and test your aim.

All the activity club sessions run from 3:30pm to 4:30pm with a snack being provided to the children prior to the session starting.

Please sign up for the sessions at the school office with Alison Sabey.

Don't forget that CKC is running every school night from 3:15pm to 5:15pm and offers great fun and safe child care in the school grounds.

We welcome suggestions for after school activities to run during the sessions so please get in touch with either Claire Robinson or Angela Whiting with your ideas.

Please note that May bills for Cool Kids and Breakfast Club will be issued at the beginning of next half term.

Thank You

The Governing Body would like to express their thanks to the FOCS for their continued support in helping to provide resources and opportunities that enhance the children's education.

We hope you have an enjoyable half-term break!

If you have any issue that you would like to raise with the Governing Body please contact Jane at ayretj@aol.com or 650699.