



From: The Chair of Governors of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation

Dear Parent/Carer,

## **FEBRUARY HALF TERM NEWSLETTER 2022**

### **Introduction**

As we prepare to enter this Half Term break it has been an eventful period since School returned for the New Year. Mrs Chris Matthewman our Executive Headteacher has decided to retire and will officially leave on 25 April, but her actual last day will be Friday 8 April.

When I wrote to you on 17 January I promised to inform you at each of our stages of succession planning. The full Governing Body met this week and were able to formally record their thanks to Mrs Matthewman for her hard work and endeavour since she first came to Bowes School in September 2013 and then when she took over in the capacity of Shared Headship in September 2019 culminating in the role of Executive Headteacher of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation on 11 January 2021.

I will be in a position to update you further in writing upon School's return at the beginning of March.

### **COVID-19**

When I wrote at Christmas the position regarding COVID vaccine doses was as shown below, the table has now been updated to show the latest position.

<b>Vaccine Dose</b>	<b>15 December 2021</b>	<b>17 February 2022</b>
1st	51.3m	52.5m
2nd	46.8m	48.8m
Booster	24.0m	37.9m

This equates to 77.3% of the population.

Omicron has proven to be more transmissible but less virulent than earlier strains but there is no room for complacency. Risk management plans must

still be adhered to and masks worn where necessary and hand washing regimes as rigorous as always.

Our Schools should be commended for the professional way that they have managed COVID since the initial lock down and because of their good stewardship we will be returning to normal start and finishing times immediately after half term.

### **School Activities**

I have previously mentioned the joint activities, but please remember that the BCF allows both schools to retain their own identities and so a balanced curriculum is taught at both Bowes and Cotherstone.

### **Cotherstone**

Little Learners continues to be a huge success. They have been proactive in securing a number of high-profile visitors to school to inform them about their professions with the theme of "People who help us". A local Doctor, Veterinary Surgeon, a First Responder and a Mountain Rescue volunteer have all given informative talks and these have been very much hands on with great interaction with the children.

The curriculum has been varied and all-encompassing with Class 1 studying their favourite toys through the years, with parents and grandparents allowing toys to be brought into school. I happened to visit the day that they were talking about their particular favourite and Miss Lee had a pictorial display on the board and I was able to talk to the children about Ghostbusters and Teenage Ninja Turtles which were the rage when my sons were at Primary School.

Class 2 have been learning about the Human Skelton and in History the spread of the Roman Empire. Class 3 are covering Earth and Space plus they have been doing some great work about dragon's eyes.

My favourite though is the reversal of the story of the three pigs and the Big Bad Wolf where the Wolf is the victim and the Pigs the aggressors. Who knew!

Kema Kay a Rap artist has been working with the Children at both schools to produce their own rap music, which they have recorded.

Class 3 have looked at Biomes and I was reminded not only of the Eden Project in Cornwall but also the planned Biomes for Morecambe Bay in Lancashire. That must be a certain visit when they are completed.

### **Bowes**

Class 1 conducted an A66 Traffic Survey from the Clint Bridge and recorded their findings on Tally Charts.

Class 2 studied birds and their composition and then conducted their own survey ahead of the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch. I hope you all recorded your own Bird Watch at home. Results will be out soon.

To mirror the theme from the Nativity Play the children enjoyed We're Going on a Bear Hunt. The Children also learnt how to count to ten in Chinese for the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Tiger.

Following the Christmas Cards that our children sent to France, they received some lovely New Year cards from the French school in return. These were lovely and the co-operation is likely to be extended.

Class 3 have been working with Kema Kay and have reproduced and recorded their own Rap Music.

NSPCC Numbers Day was well attended and the children did a range of Maths activities.

### **Friends of the Schools**

The Friends of the two schools are Charitable based organisations who exist solely to serve the interests of the children at both schools. Every penny raised for fundraising goes to their respective school to supplement educational excellence. Any additional parents/carers who wish to join either Friends organisation would be more than welcome.

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

Kelly Green is Chair, Rachel Atkinson Vice Chair, Claire Carr Treasurer and Vicky Hindle Secretary. Meetings are held in the Fox and Hounds in Cotherstone on a termly basis.

### **Friends of Bowes School (FOBS)**

FOBS met in School on 25 January. The project this year is centred on the Secret Garden. It is planned to have a Maintenance Day on Sunday 20 March plus BBQ. All welcome.

The FOBS lottery has now been launched and you can join through the Facebook page or by contacting Committee Members, Tina Baimbridge Chair, Vicky Addison Vice Chair, Laura Drew Treasurer or Peter Nicholls Secretary.

### **Teaching and Support Staff**

I reinforce the message of the high esteem with which we hold the Teaching and Learning Staff of both schools. Their industry, commitment, professionalism and endeavour cannot be underestimated.

Enjoy the Half Term. Please Stay safe.

*Peter Nicholls*

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