



From: The Chair of Governors of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation

Dear Parent/Carer,

## **EASTER NEWSLETTER 2022**

### **Introduction**

As we prepare to enter the Easter break, we are saying a fond farewell to Chris Matthewman our Executive Headteacher who is retiring on 25 April, but her actual last day will be Friday 8 April. We are marking this occasion with a celebratory service at St Giles' Church. It is hoped that as many children, teachers and support staff, members of the Governing Body and parents and carers will be there to offer their best wishes to Chris for a long and happy retirement.

### **Succession Planning**

I promised to inform you at each stage of the succession planning which we have set in train. I set out in my March newsletter the interim arrangements and I would like to take this opportunity to repeat this information. These appointments have all been approved by the Governing Body of the BCF.

Mr Richard Batchelor has been appointed as our interim Executive Headteacher from Monday 25 April until the start of the Autumn Term on Monday 5 September. Mr Batchelor will share his time equally between our two schools. Miss Isobel Thomas will continue as Class 3 Teacher at Cotherstone School, but she will also assume the duties of Deputy Headteacher, again on an interim basis.

A new Classroom Teacher Megan Heaviside has recently been appointed at Cotherstone School and she will assume the teaching responsibilities previously conducted by Mr Batchelor from 25 April.

Mrs Sue Scaife remains the Deputy Headteacher at Bowes School.

Additionally, we have made some Teaching Assistant appointments at both schools. Hannah Nixon and Julie Turner are now working at Bowes and Cotherstone respectively.

All of these appointments have been made to ensure that your children continue to receive the high level of teaching and learning standards that you are all familiar with.

### **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>	<b>5 April 2022</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	51.3m	52.5m	52.8m
2 <sup>nd</sup>	46.8m	48.8m	49.5m
Booster	24.0m	37.9m	38.8m

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 were able to return to normal start and finishing times immediately after the February 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**

Class 1 and Little Learners have been learning about plants. They have been painting fruit and vegetables. They also made some hand puppets and sewed and glued them. I just happened to be in School when Class 1 held an MS Teams call with a school in Leeds. It was fascinating to compare the differences between an inner city school with 2 classes of 30 children per year group with our 14 children at Cotherstone. Class 2 went to Vindolanda which was a Roman auxiliary fort just south of Hadrian's Wall. They had brilliant fun and learned a lot about the Romans. Class 3 looked at the science behind night and day. They also started to learn about WW2 and charted a timeline. They also prepared for Space Camp.

Class 1 have been watching Lambing Live daily. KS2 undertook a 5 mile bike ride as part of Red Nose day. Cotherstone took part in a football tournament recently winning all their games and losing only to Bowes in the final. Well done to the footballers.

I went to the celebration assembly last Friday together with many parents to enjoy the work that the children had conducted regarding Space and to hear

all about their camp. COVID 19 has prevented a whole school assembly for almost two years. A Leavers Assembly went ahead last year but this was the first time that parents/carers had been able to attend.

Everyone enjoyed the activities which the children had made and then demonstrated to us. Balloon Rockets, Asteroid Cakes (they really were out of this World), Fizzy Planets and Constellation Projectors which was a really clever idea.

### **Bowes**

Penny came into school and the children enjoyed the Creation Story. The children learned about water, earth, plants and their favourite animals.

First Steps continued their work about the Three Little Pigs and made some houses for the pigs out of a number of different materials. The Big Bad Wolf didn't manage to blow them down!

First Steps learned about New Life and New Beginnings studying how baby chicks hatch. Stepping Stones continued their work about House Building and the properties of 3D shapes. Stepping Out looked at dissolving materials and used baking soda, salt, sugar, sand and flour.

Mrs Scaife and Mrs Nixon took the children to the recent football tournament and playing against four other teams they won each of their eight games including the final where they defeated Cotherstone School. Congratulations to the team, very well played.

### **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.

FOCS paid for the coach travel to Vindolanda, Space Camp breakfast, gardening equipment and have recently procured some new books for key stage 2.

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

FOBS conducted a maintenance day on Sunday 20 March plus BBQ in the grounds of the Secret Garden, 12 adults and a similar number of children worked really hard and pruned, tidied and restored much of the garden and pond area. The weather was kind and the results have been much appreciated by all concerned.

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

### **Easter**

Both schools are looking forward to the excitement of egg rolling and decoration this week prior to the Easter Holidays. Of course, Eastertime is often associated with eggs which signify new life. Easter eggs are often used by Christians as a symbol for the resurrection of Jesus. Today they are more often made of chocolate and covered in foil and your children might well enjoy an Easter egg hunt over the Easter festival. If you do please enjoy yourselves and spare a thought for the school staff enjoying their well earned break in readiness for the forthcoming summer term.

It just remains for me, on behalf of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation Governing Body, to wish you and your families well over the Easter period.

We look forward to welcoming you back after the holidays.

*Peter Nicholls*

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