



From: The Chair of Governors of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation

16 December 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2022

Introduction

As we reach the end of the Autumn Term and the end of the 2022 Calendar year, it is well worth looking back on another momentous year. In particular the hard work and industry demonstrated by the children, their teaching and support staff and the respective Friends of the Schools has been commendable.

When I last wrote on 28 November regarding the recruitment update for our new Executive Headteacher, I promised to update you as and when new information became available.

I am now able to confirm the good news that Mrs Julie Gibson our new permanent Executive Headteacher will be starting work within the BCF on Monday 17 April 2023.

We also now know that prior to this date she will be able to spend some time either each week or each fortnight familiarising herself with both schools.

Additionally, the Interim period from January until April 2023 will be covered part time by an Interim Headteacher Mrs Lynsey Kidd who will be spending 1.5 days per week at each of our schools, which allows her to continue to also conduct her duties at her substantive school.

This means that as I included in my earlier newsletter Mr Richard Batchelor will be reverting to the post of Deputy Headteacher at Cotherstone and returning to teaching Class 2. Miss Isobel Thomas will also revert from the post of Interim Deputy Headteacher to Class 3 Teacher also at Cotherstone.

I am also pleased to be able to tell you that Miss Megan Heaviside, who was employed as the Class 2 teacher at Cotherstone from Easter will be moving

to Bowes school full time to share the teaching of class 2 with Mr Chris Scaife. Miss Heaviside will teach class 2 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings whilst Mr Scaife will teach class 2 on Wednesday afternoons, Thursday and Friday. We welcome Megan and thank her for the sterling work that she has accomplished at Cotherstone.

Unfortunately, we are at the same time bidding a sad farewell to Mrs Vicki Pollard who has worked at Bowes Hutchinson's school for 19 years and also to Mrs Linda Sutherland who has been our own "bake off champion" for the past 7 years. We wish them both well in their new appointments.

All these appointments continue to be made to maximise the teaching and learning opportunities for your children whilst ensuring the transitions are as seamless as possible.

We also mark in January, the second anniversary of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation (BCF) which has seen our two distinct schools, each with their own unique character, working together to ensure the best possible outcome for our pupils.

Put simply; **Growing together, Learning together.**

COVID-19

It is a salutary fact that COVID-19 has not been eradicated and it should also be noted that Influenza is also prevalent at this time of the year. The priority remains to safeguard individuals who may be at greater risk through underlying health issues or severely weakened immune systems. Please stay safe.

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

Important themes have attracted much attention during the last half term. The importance of understanding about Anti-bullying week, Remembrance of the fallen on Armistice Day and Children-in-Need day. More recently the children enjoyed a visit to Doe Park Farm.

Christmas Jumper day was brilliantly observed and Derrick the chef prepared over 110 Christmas lunches for the children and parents alike. It was delicious.

Bowes

Miss Gillard has asked that the following be included in the newsletter and I am very happy to do so. This relates to the European Christmas decoration project.

“In the summer term, we were proudly awarded with accreditation of the International Schools Award for 2022-25.

To help us continue our international work, Class 3 made some Christmas tree decorations to send to 23 schools in European countries (and one to a fellow UK school!) for the Durham Christmas Exchange Project. We sent to France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Romania, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Greece and Bulgaria. Over the past few weeks, we have been receiving some very exciting packages back from the schools, filled with lovely decorations for our tree and information packs about each school and their country, including how they celebrate Christmas. We have learnt lots about how different countries celebrate at this time of year and hope to join in with the project again next year. Watch this space for more news of our ongoing international work!”

Nativity Plays

I had the privilege of attending the Nativity Plays again this year. Bowes returned to a full school play and staged two performances of “Children of the World” on Tuesday 6 December in Bowes Village Hall. Almost 200 attended the plays. Yesterday afternoon I thoroughly enjoyed the Cotherstone Little Learners Preschool and KS1 Nativity “Shine Star, shine”. This was followed by some splendid Carol singing from KS2 children. Over 100 were packed into the school to enjoy the performance.

I am always humbled by the quality of the performances and this year we were royally entertained by children who acted superbly, learned their lines tremendously well, sang their hearts out, danced with great enthusiasm and wore their costumes with great distinction.

The teachers and support staff had relatively little time to put the plays together, but they should all be applauded for staging such professional and inspiring dramas.

The Nativity play always marks the start of the Christmas season and this year we were honoured to witness such great spectacles.

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)

I stayed on after the Nativity to attend the Christmas Fayre. As I go to press the proceeds from the Fayre are not yet known but it was very well attended.

Friends of Bowes School (FOBS)

FOBS are holding their AGM in Bowes Club at 1900hrs on the 23rd January 2023.

The Nativity plays were hugely successful and £575 was raised by the raffle.

Teaching and Support Staff

Once again our grateful thanks go to those staff entrusted with the education of our children. When you sit down to your Christmas lunch with family members please think about the sacrifices made by the teaching and support staff within our schools and remember them as they too settle down to spend some quality time with their families.

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

We look forward to welcoming you and your children back in 2023.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Please Stay safe.

Peter Nicholls

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The First Christmas