



From: The Chair of Governors of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2023**

#### **Introduction – Review of Year**

As we approach the end of another academic year today, we can reflect on another exciting and rewarding year.

Notably the children can look back with a good deal of satisfaction after their positive approach to learning. They have worked hard and have achieved much inspired by their industrious teaching and support staff.

The year started with a joint event. The children from both schools watched as Stage 3 of the Tour of Britain came through Cotherstone en route from Durham to Sunderland. The cyclists covered 163 kilometres and we were even mentioned on National TV!

On 8 September Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, our longest reigning Monarch died aged 96. It was only a few months earlier that she had celebrated her Platinum Jubilee. Her Son Prince Charles succeeded her as Monarch.

The Nativity plays “Children of the World” at Bowes and “Shine star, shine” at Cotherstone were superbly presented by the children and well received by parents/carers alike.

In January 2023 Mr Batchelor and Miss Thomas reverted to their substantive posts after serving as Interim Headteacher of the Federation and Deputy Headteacher at Cotherstone respectively.

Mrs Lindsey Kidd from Copeland Road School took over as Executive Headteacher on a part-time basis before Mrs Julie Gibson assumed the role on a permanent basis on 18 April.

Mrs Sue Scaife left Bowes school where she had worked for over 23 years at Easter. At a special assembly she received gifts from the children and shared many happy stories from over the years.

Miss Sara Harrison took up the appointment of Deputy Headteacher at Bowes on 5 June.

Miss Jennie Lee hosted the Daremaster team from CITV at Cotherstone. Danny Murphy challenged and received challenges from the children during an entertaining and educational day.

Miss Tabi Gillard achieved the accreditation for the International Schools Award for Bowes from 2022-2025.

Both schools celebrated the Coronation of our new King Charles III and Queen Camilla over the long weekend of 6-8 May.

### **School Activities**

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. This newsletter can only offer a snapshot of the myriad activities and events that the children enjoy.

### **Recent activities - Cotherstone**

The children attended an Orienteering event at Staindrop school which was very well received. Year 6 also enjoyed a water fight, Miss Thomas asked them to remember who had taught them for the previous four years when the water was being sprayed about!

Class 1 went to Raby Castle and had a marvellous day, some children were knighted!

Mark Siswick, a former pupil at Cotherstone, visited to promote his Little Wandle phonics programme which he has introduced to the school. Some of the teaching staff have recently attended Little Wandle champion schools. The new academic year will see an opportunity for parents/carers to gain additional knowledge to help them with their children's reading at home.

Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils went to Robinwood over 3 days and enjoyed the activities and learning opportunities.

Cotherstone took part in the Wildlife Trust 30 days wild programme where children are encouraged to do one wild thing each day during June.

On Wednesday I went to the leaver's service which was preceded by a play entitled "Shakespeare on Trial". Those of you that might have seen the Reduced Shakespeare Company productions will not have been disappointed by this outstanding play. Miss Thomas told me that this had been put together in just over three weeks. However, in spite of the limited rehearsal time, the play was superb. Children were word perfect and it produced a very entertaining canter through a potted history of the Bard's works. It was encouraging to see that the Judges considered verdict was "Wow".

The leavers then took us through a photographic montage of their time at the school followed by their own ideas of what their colleagues are likely to become when they finish full time education. That was both entertaining and revealing.

### **Recent activities - Bowes**

The school enjoyed Sport Day and the weather was kind! A new format this year with traditional events and new additions led to the 8 teams enjoying the diverse range of activities.

The reintroduction of a parents' race was also well supported. The clamour for a teachers' race is growing for next year!

Lynette treated the children to a splendid Sports Day buffet.

This Wednesday saw the introduction of a "Colour run" where children and some adults ran the gauntlet whilst paint was delivered upon their clothes. Mr Scaife was suitably attired because he too received a rainbow of colours!

A company called Paris Bubble brought their fantastic bubble extravaganza into school. Everyone enjoyed the fun and the opportunity to blow enormous bubbles and shapes.

Class 2 went to Bowlees Medaows following their visit from a team from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty organisation.

The footballers won their Division at the Staindrop competition.

Class 1 enjoyed a superb day at Big Sheep, Little Cow where they had a tour of the farm and fed some lambs.

Class 3 met famous former England footballer Dave Thomas who lives locally. Mr Thomas brought Hannah his guide dog and all the children fell in love with her.

The children from Year 5 and 6 attended the Leaver's Service at Ripon Cathedral and afterwards enjoyed the play park at Leyburn.

Class 2 had a great day at Teesmouth Field Centre and visited the Transporter bridge.

The trip to the Capital was a superb day both from an educational and weather perspective. The children visited the British Museum, had a flight on the London Eye, enjoyed a River Cruise, walked for England and travelled on the Underground.

This afternoon the 13 leavers will assemble in St Giles' Church for their leaver's service. The display at the west end of the church has given us a flavour of what we can expect with their footprints and accompanying information whetting our appetite.

## **Year 6 Pupils Transitioning to Secondary School**

Year 6 children building towards the final phase of their primary education rightly experience a whole range of emotions when they move from one chapter of their life to another. After all, most of them have been at our schools for seven years.

They will most likely feel huge affection for it, both as a physical space and as a place which has provided them with such wonderful experiences, great friends and memorable moments.

Special mention must be made of Class 3 teachers Mrs MacInnes and Miss Thomas who have guided them with great commitment and led them to this important transition in their educational journey.

Good luck to them as they prepare for secondary school in September.

## **Teaching and Support Staff**

None of the above would be possible without the staff at both schools. They have once again ensured through their hard work, industry, commitment and professionalism that your children have received the quality of teaching and learning that we have come to expect from our small outstanding rural schools. Do remember your teachers this summer when you are away on holiday or enjoying a staycation.

In addition to those children who are leaving us for pastures new we will be saying fond farewells to some staff and welcoming others.

Mrs Dorothy Hedley, the HLTA at Bowes, is leaving us on retirement after almost 27 years. Dorothy has been an outstanding member of staff and countless children will recall their days at Bowes with much affection mainly due to her commitment, enthusiasm, passion and industry.

In addition to the curriculum, Dorothy has been instrumental in extra-curricular activities including Gardening Club.

We are also saying farewell to Mrs Julie Turner who has worked well at both schools and Mrs Jennifer Papworth who similarly will be missed by Cotherstone pupils and staff.

Mr Chris Scaife a Class 2 teacher who has worked for over 8 years at Bowes is intending to resign and will be leaving us at Christmas. We wish Chris well as he embarks on the next stage in his career.

At the start of the new Academic year, we will be welcoming Mrs Natalie McNab our new HLTA at Bowes. Natalie is an experienced teacher and we look forward to working with her from September.

## **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)**

Tina Bainbridge is Chair, Vicky Addison Vice Chair, Laura Drew Treasurer and Denise Marmont Secretary.

FOBS are holding another Bingo evening tonight at the Village Hall. Vicky Addison is once again organising the fun.

### **Parent Governor Vacancy**

Parent governors play a vital role on governing boards, holding the unique position of having a parental viewpoint of the school. Through the children, they have a first-hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum, and how the school is perceived from the 'consumers' point of view.

This enables parent governors to bring a different perspective to the strategic management of the school. It is important for parent governors to establish a rapport with the parental body which elected him/her, whilst continuing to maintain a strategic approach to school governance.

Although being available to advise parents on appropriate routes of action is a very important aspect of the role, it is vital that parent governors do not personally become involved in individual concerns.

If you are a parent with a child or children at either school please drop me a line via school before Friday 8 September 2023. It would be helpful to attach a statement of up to 250 words as to why you wish to become a Parent Governor. If there are several applications, then a ballot will be held to appoint the successful candidate.

I would be happy to explain the process if any of you, either existing or new parents would like to know more.

It just remains for me, on behalf of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation (BCF) Governing Board to wish you and your families well over the summer holidays.

We look forward to welcoming you back in September.

Please stay safe.

*Peter Nicholls*

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