



From: The Chair of Governors of the Bowes Cotherstone Federation

BCF Vision: Believe, Aspire, Thrive, Together

27 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

OCTOBER HALF TERM NEWSLETTER 2023

Introduction

As we prepare to enter this half term break it has been an eventful period since our schools returned from the summer holidays.

I previously announced in my summer newsletter that we will be bidding a sad farewell to Mr Scaife at Bowes at Christmas.

Mrs MacInnes will also be leaving us at Christmas after more than 12 years at Bowes School. We are sorry to see her go and her organisational and creative skills will be missed particularly with the residential educational visits, the excellent nativity plays and the Class 3 London trips. We wish her well in her future pursuits.

In happier news, Miss Thomas is expecting her second child in April.

OFSTED Inspection

Bowes Hutchinson's Church of England Voluntary Aided school was inspected by OFSTED over the two days of 20-21 September. All parents and carers received a copy of the final inspection report and as you know the lead inspector confirmed her assessment of the school is that of the grade "Requires Improvement".

The Headteacher and the teaching and support staff are already working to address the areas for improvement. The Governing Board are fully supportive of the work that is being undertaken and will work steadfastly to ensure that the school moves forward positively and with purpose.

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

In RE, Revd David came into school to speak to the children about St Cuthbert and the local church which was named after him.

Following an explanation to parent session about Little Wandle, Class 1 are working hard on their phonics. It was incredible to see how well-attended this meeting was, which highlights the on-going strong links between parents/carers and our school. Class 2 in literacy worked on a beautifully illustrated wordless book called 'Journey'. They also started their curriculum work on the Romans in history.

The curriculum is based upon a two-year planning cycle and 2023 is currently cycle B. The school website details the curriculum offer and parents/carers can see in advance what subjects will be studied.

The school enjoyed their Harvest Festival at St Cuthbert's Church. Reverend David kindly delivered the very generous donations that parents sent in to the local foodbank.

Class 3 had an enjoyable and informative day at Eden Camp where they learned about the World Wars. They also considered the impact of WW2 on North East towns.

Class 1 did some imaginative work to learn about terms like greater than, less than or equal to. For example, a crocodile always wants to eat the largest number of fish so the crocodile's open mouth will always be towards the higher number (< or >).

In Literacy Class 2 were working on 'Escape from Pompeii' in the days before Mount Vesuvius erupted.

Class 3 studied a scary book by the excellent author Philip Pulman.

Children in Key Stage 2 took part in sports events at Staindrop Academy. The boys did exceptionally well in their cross country, with one boy finishing in 5th place. The girls also ran very well. The Tag Rugby event was enjoyed by all, specially noted was the supportive teamwork that was displayed amongst all players. The Multi-Skills event sounded equally fun with participants playing everything from Duck Duck Goose to Dodgeball!

Children from the school attended Staindrop Academy and produced pleasing results in the Cross Country, TAG Rugby competitions.

Bowes

The children celebrated their Harvest Festival in St Giles' Church on 21 September and their generous donations were given to a local food bank and also with the other produce auctioned on Monday 25 September where the auctioned realised almost £700.

Little Wandle phonics was explained to parents/carers and they also learned how to support their children at home with early reading.

The Macmillan Coffee afternoon raised a magnificent £150 for this vital organisation.

The children took part in Bikeability using ABCDE – Air, brakes, chain, direction and everything else. From a safety perspective they learned the importance of wearing a cycling helmet when riding their bicycles.

Mrs MacInnes took her Year 5 and 6 children to a splendid four day Residential education visit to Low Birk Hatt Farm near Blackton Reservoir. The children all accredited themselves superbly well and enjoyed plenty of walking, abseiling, gorge walking, climbing Cat Bells in the Lakes District and wild swimming in the reservoir.

Mr Scaife took 6 children to Staindrop Academy and two of the girls finished 5th and 7th respectively out of 50 children in the Upper KS2 race. Two of the boys replicated this tremendous achievement by also finishing 5th and 7th out of 50 children.

In the TAG rugby Bowes finished second overall winning 3 games and drawing 1. They finished second on the actual number of tries scored.

On Friday 20 October Class 1 went to Locomotion at Shildon. The children were excellent ambassadors for the school and learned all about the birth of the railways right here in Co Durham.

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.

Kelly has kindly provided a comprehensive update of FOCS activities:

With Co-op Community Funding coming to an end, they will be using the funds received from there and also the funds received in a successful bid from the Freemasons to create a Wellbeing/Sensory room for the children.

They have also received a donation from Cotherstone Fun Weekend with a view to enhance the Forest School provision.

They have this term purchased new reading material, which will benefit all classes and covered transport costs for Class 3's trip to Eden Camp.

FOCS are ending the half term with a Halloween Party for the children. This will take place **tonight** at Cotherstone Village Hall 5-7pm.

Regarding future events - Next term, the major fundraising term:

FOCS plan to host a Pamper Evening at a local venue; they also have their Christmas Fayre followed by Advent Windows and village light switch on (Friday 1 December) with Rev. David taking the lead on carols with the children; Supporting the Teesdale Players, providing refreshments at their Saturday Matinee performance; providing refreshments at the KS1 Nativity; finally, Breakfast with Santa at the Fox and Hounds - which is always really popular. They are also supporting school with both their Christmas Lunch and Christmas Party.

Finally a plea from the Committee - with some of the parents/carers leaving their roles as their children are due to move on in the next year, FOCS are actively seeking new Committee Members to join the FOCS team.

Friends of Bowes School (FOBS)

The Committee is Tina Bainbridge Chair, Vicky Addison Vice Chair, Laura Drew Treasurer, and Denise Marmont Secretary. Meetings are held in Bowes School on a termly basis.

A Smartie fundraising challenge has been arranged whereby children would receive 20p coins for carrying out helpful errands and the money then goes into the empty Smartie tubes for subsequent return to school.

Gemma Sanderson has kindly produced a poster advertising the next FOBS Bag2School which is included at the end of this newsletter.

Parent Governor Vacancy

Following the information that I included in the recent newsletter concerning the subject vacancy I am very pleased to note that we have received two excellent applications. This means that after half term we will be conducting a ballot amongst all the parents to determine which candidate is successful.

Information on the two parents together with their supporting statements will be sent to all parents/carers with a request to vote for your preferred candidate. The successful person will be joining the Governing Board in time for the next Full Governing Board meeting.

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. Please continue to remember them over the half term break.

Enjoy the half term. Please stay safe.

Peter Nicholls

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