

NEWSLETTER

February 2018

Headteacher's Update

Dear Parents/Carers

As another school holiday approaches and we head towards the halfway point in the school year, I would like to take this opportunity to update you regarding developments and initiatives, as well as share my vision for the school moving forward. I have now been headteacher of Harpur Hill for just over two years and I am pleased to report that the school is continuing to improve and build on its many strengths.

Children First

As a headteacher I am often asked what are the strengths of the school. My answer never changes: the greatest strength is our children. When I show visitors or prospective parents around, they always comment on how happy and enthusiastic the children are and what a warm welcome they receive. Whatever we do at Harpur Hill, we always put the children first. We involve pupils in making decisions about the school and give them responsibility in a variety of ways. For example, the School Council have been involved in promoting healthy eating and healthy lifestyles, carrying out surveys and leading assemblies. The Head Girl, Boy and Deputies as well as the House Captains have helped devise new House names and shield designs. The Harpur Heroes have been organising sports and games at lunchtimes, and a group of Year 6 girls have recently started a lunchtime Art Club.

The School Council are going to be involved in helping us to review and further improve lunchtimes next term. They will be finding out what children enjoy and suggesting new activities and sports. We are also planning to train our next group of Playground Buddies and Harpur Heroes.

Vision and Motto

We strive to ensure that your children are happy, safe and learn well in order to have the best life chances in the future and to be able to flourish in the wider world. Shortly after I started at Harpur Hill, after consultation with pupils and staff we introduced our school motto:

Learning for Life

It sums up the vision for our whole school community.

We aim to provide:

- A learning community where all children can achieve their best.
- Excellent and inspiring teaching that enables children to reach the highest standards.
- An engaging, skills-based curriculum, taught through rich social and cultural experiences, locally relevant yet globally aware.

Homework and involving parents in learning

Last year we surveyed children and parents about homework and made some changes. We had piloted a family learning project approach in Year 4 and refined this before rolling it out to the rest of the school. We listened to feedback, and children now have a menu of homework tasks to choose from, which they can complete with their family. We have increased the amount of maths homework and raised the profile of times tables. We surveyed different year groups about use of MyMaths; this still remains popular and children say they find it useful. We now provide regular information sessions for parents about children's learning, such as Phonics, SATs etc. Many of you say these are useful but are not always able to attend so we are looking at alternative ways of getting that information out to you.

Communication

We use a variety of ways to communicate with families such as text messages, phone calls, meetings, letters and emails. Infant children can be brought into school by their parents and this provides a valuable time to handover at the start of the day. Staff are always happy to be available for meetings when they are not teaching, and will do their best to fit in with parent work commitments etc. We have changed the way we organise parents' evenings and many of you have said how much better they are in classrooms rather than the hall. Since I started at Harpur Hill we launched our popular Facebook page, which we use to share and celebrate the life of the school. I receive lots of positive feedback from parents and people beyond Harpur and Buxton, which shows what a great tool it is for promoting our school! We have upgraded our website and newsletter and they are now 'branded' consistently. In our busy, large school, we provide many events and activities. We do try to inform you well in advance of everything that is happening, but sometimes this can change beyond our control (weather, sports fixtures etc). We have also discovered that some parents are not always reading their emails and missing newsletters; therefore, we are going to text a hyperlink to the newsletter on the website. Parent surveys tell us that most people now have smart phones, so we are hoping to provide a free app for parents/carers. You will be able to receive calendar updates and reminders as well as notifications directly from the school website. We will update you on this after the holiday.

Nursery

There has been some fantastic feedback about our school Nursery recently. Now it has been up and running for 6 months, we would like to survey families to check we are providing the childcare you would like. Please click on the link below to complete our Nursery survey:

[Nursery Survey](#)

Many of the sessions are filling up for after Easter. The school nursery caters for children aged 3-4 and rising threes (children can start during the term in which they will have their third birthday). Sessions are from 9am until 12 noon, and 12.30pm until 3.30pm. Children can use their 15 hours 'universal' with us, as well as the full 30 hours for those eligible. 'Playdays' are able to provide Breakfast and After School provision for nursery children. If you would like to know more about our nursery or book a place for later in the year, please get in touch with the school office or email earlyyears@harpurhill.derbyshire.sch.uk. We welcome visits from prospective parents/carers. Please feel free to tell others about our nursery.

Finally

Thank you for your continued support of our school. I hope you have an enjoyable February holiday.

Mrs V Giliker
Headteacher

LEARNING JOURNEY TOPICS FOR NEXT TERM:

Nursery	On the farm. We will be finding out about life on the farm and all about different animals and their young.
Reception	The Wild! Books: Jack and the Beanstalk, Rumble in the Jungle, Elmer, Dear Zoo
Year 1	What are robots used for and how have toys changed? Children will be exploring robots, making robots and writing robot poems.
Year 2	What did Rosa Parks do to make the world a better place? Books - The Dragon Machine by Helen Ward, George and the Dragon by Chris Wormell, Diary of a Wombat by Helen French, and Humorous poetry.
Year 3	What makes the earth angry? Books - Volcanoes and Earthquakes, Escape from Pompeii by Christina Balit
Year 4	What's great about Great Britain? Books – Wolves in the Walls by Neil Gaiman, British Wildlife
Year 5/6	Can you survive... like Bear Grylls? Various reading and writing activities along with some outdoor adventures!

DIARY DATES

World Book Day



World Book Day is on Thursday 1st March (this is in the first week back after the holiday). Children may come to school dressed as their favourite book character.

Date and time	Event	Extra Information
Friday 16th February	School closes at 3:30pm	
Monday 26th February	INSET day	
Tuesday 27th February	Children return to school	
Tuesday 27 th February	Buxton Cluster Sports Hall Athletics	Please see separate letter for more details
Wednesday 28th February 3:00pm & 5:30pm	Year 2 Assessment Information Session for parents	Information about KS1 SATs and Year 2 assessment
Thursday 1st March	World Book Day	Dress as book character (optional)
Saturday 3rd March	Choir members to attend the 'Kinder Choir Concert' at the Palace Hotel	Please see separate letter for more details
Tuesday 6 th March	Buxton Cluster High Fives Netball	Please see separate letter for more details
Wednesday 7th March	Book Fair arrives NHS Vision screening for Reception children NHS Height and Weight screening for Year 6 children	Book Fair volunteers required, please phone school if you can help.
Thursday 8th March	Parents' Evening Book Fair	Appointment letters will be sent after the holiday.
Monday 12th March	Year 3 Parents event – Volcanoes morning	Please see separate letter for more details
Thursday 15th March	Learning for Life awards Year 5 brass at Buxton Community School 6.30 – 8:00pm details to follow	Parents will be advised about Learning for Life Awards via text. Please see separate letter about brass concert.
Friday 23rd March	Sport Relief Day School closes at 3:30pm	Children can wear sports clothes – various sports activities during the day
Monday 9th April	Children return to school	
Tuesday 10th April 2.30pm.	Year 1 Parent event – Robot Building	Year 1 parents invited to come and help build a robot.
Tuesday 1st May	Class photographs	
14 th – 17 th May	Year 6 SATs	
21st - 23rd May	Year 6 residential visit - Lea Green	
Friday May 25th	School closes at 3:30pm	
Monday 4th June	INSET day	
Tuesday 5th June	Children return to school	
Tuesday 12 th June	Buxton Cluster Quad Kids	More details will be sent in separate letter

Please note: sometimes it is necessary to change dates. The calendar will be updated on the website if any changes are made.

CURRICULUM NEWS



Year 5/6 DNA Science Workshop

On Wednesday 14th February, Year 5/6 took part in some super science workshops extracting DNA from bananas! Did you know that one strand of human DNA is approximately two metres long? If you were able to stretch the combined DNA from one person, the strand would be long enough to travel to the sun and back twice! Thanks to Alex Parker for leading the lessons and making them great fun!

It's all Greek to Year 3!

Year 3 have been enjoying their Ancient Greece topic this term. The Greek Day from the History Bus was great fun and the children enjoyed sharing their work with parents when their classroom became museum of Greek artefacts. Children had the fantastic opportunity to have a go at being archaeologists. They had to work in teams to excavate the Ancient Greek artefacts and then use the clues to help them to solve the mystery of whose artefacts they had found. We found objects belonging to Spartan warriors, Athenian women, an Ancient Greek Queen and other interesting Ancient Greeks! A huge thank you to Mrs Parker-Heath who kindly lent us the artefacts and hi-viz jackets that made the experience so authentic! Thank you to Year 3 parents/carers for coming along to our museum!



Year 4 Visited by the Police

Year 4 had a very special visit last week. Claire and Pete both used to be part of the police force - we learned about the importance of laws and how police work protects us all. We also had great fun trying on some parts of the police uniform. The helmet and cloak were both extremely heavy!



Year 2 Scottish Treat

Year 2 have loved their Scottish Island Home topic linked to the Katie Morag stories. They have made amazing zig zag books, Scottish dances, songs and shared their work with families along with some shortbread! The children looked amazing dressed up as characters from the Katie Morag stories. Thank you to families for sharing the fun!

Pancake Race Fun

Reception enjoyed pancake themed activities on Shrove Tuesday. They made pancakes, ate some and then had a race. The pancakes were delicious!



SPORTS



Basketball

Match report by Dom and Charlie:

On Wednesday 14th February, Harpur Hill's team of basketballers took part in a competition run by the High Peak School and Sport Partnership. In total there were ten of us who played in 5 a-side teams. Each team played 4 games; each game was 5 minutes long. If you were inside the D, you scored two points, and 3 if outside the D. Our first game went well and we won 4 – 0 against Gamesley. The next match was against Fairfield and we were just beaten by 1 basket - the score was 2 – 4. Our next game was vs Burbage, who went on to win the competition they only just beat us again by 2 baskets. The score was 0 – 2. We played them in the semi-final again and sadly they beat us.

We walked away with an amazing third places and a bronze medal. Burbage came first, Fairfield came second and Gamesely got the most improved team. All in all we did very well.

TEAM HARPUR

A huge thank you to Team Harpur and helpers for organising the super UV Valentine's Disco. The children had great fun and £429.28 was raised. Thank you to families for supporting this event and the work of Team Harpur.

ADMINISTRATION

Contact Information

If you change your details (telephone, email, address etc.) please let school know as soon as possible, so we can update your child's records.

Dinner Money

Kindly note all dinner money should be paid to school on the Monday for the week ahead. If we do not receive a payment on the Monday that covers the rest of the week, we will contact you to remind you of your outstanding payment. If we do not receive payment the next day we will request that your child brings a packed lunch until the amount outstanding is received, this is in accordance with our school policy.

Parking

The congestion on the car park has eased since we allowed KS2 children into school from 8.50am; however, we have still received some complaints from people in the houses close to school and we have observed some dangerous parking and driving on the school site and roads outside the school. We had a visit from the Community Police a few weeks ago; they hope to do more regular visits of schools locally at home time and will be working with us to help with safety issues. The school Governors have also discussed the issue and have asked for the following reminders to go out to parents/carers:

- Please observe the one way system
- Do not drive beyond the bollard after 8.30 or before 4pm. The bollard is there to prevent traffic on the school site in order to keep the children safe.
- Do not park on the area outside the Nursery near the school kitchen.
- Please use the car park and 'drop off zone'
- Reverse parking into a space is safer
- Please park considerately on the school car park and roads outside school – do not park on pavements or block neighbours' drive ways. Please do not block entrances or obscure other drivers' views.

Thank you for your co-operation.