



Loving, Learning, Living

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Dear Parents

After a very successful and extremely busy first year as a primary school, the staff and pupils are all tired and ready for a well-earned break!

We have had such fun this year with so much happening; I couldn't possibly mention everything in this letter. But looking back at the news section of our website, reminded me of some of the highlights:

- The creative and thought provoking Christmas and Easter services at St Michael's Church where our pupils showcased their maturity and creativity
- Meeting the amazing birds of prey at Ford Castle (a personal favourite!!)
- All children having the chance to work on their part of the glass 'Loving, Learning, Living' panel for our entrance - now to be revealed on our return in September oh the suspense!
- The forest based learning and many musical, sporting activities that have been going on throughout the year culminating in a terrific Sports' Day in June, the Musical Roots performance at Alnwick earlier this month and the outdoor learning celebration last Friday

Next year looks to be just as busy with the diary already filling up with exciting events. A comprehensive list of dates will be sent out with your child's first 'Mini Adventure' in September.

However, before then please note, there will be a change to our Swimming and PE arrangements from September. Children in Years 4,5,6 who have reached the KS2 expectations to 'swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres', will NOT go swimming and stay in school for PE on Thursday afternoons with Mrs Burroughs in the Autumn term. Our aim is for those children in years 4, 5 and 6 who are still not confident in the water, to receive support to reach the standard as soon as possible. Therefore they WILL continue to go swimming for the Autumn term. These children will be also be strongly encouraged to attend Mrs Burroughs' Sports Club on Thursday evenings after school so they have opportunities to develop other PE skills with the rest of their year group. If your child is in this swimming group, we will inform you on our return to school, review this at half term and of course always consider the needs of all children on an individual basis. There is no planned change to swimming for the children in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3 who will continue to have swimming on Thursday afternoons and PE on Wednesday mornings.

From September lunches will cost £2.30. This is the first increase in price for several years and is in line with other schools the partnership. We have recently begun providing a choice of hot meal at lunch time and have increased portion sizes for the older children and feel that despite the increased cost, the meals provided still represent good value for money.

Our range of after school clubs will continue in September and I am very happy to say that not only have we a replacement piano tutor as Victoria is off to Copenhagen (Good luck - we will miss you !), but are also going to be able to offer woodwind sessions to our KS2 children through the Northumberland Music Service. Sessions will be after school and are planned to start from half term. Watch out for news of a demonstration/taster session on our return to school in September.

Staffing for Autumn 2017

Year Group	Lead Teacher	Staff who will be working with your children
Explorers	Mrs Pounder	Joanne Murray, Jane White, Sarah Hunter, Richard Pearson (ICT) & Jean Burroughs (PE)
Adventurers	Mr Pearson	Vanessa Robshaw, Joanne Murray (Music) Sarah Hunter (Outdoor Learning), Jean Burroughs (PE)
Pioneers	Mrs Gamston	Kerry Dixon, Helen Wright (Student Teacher), Jane White (RE), Sarah Hunter (Outdoor Learning), Jean Burroughs (PE), Flora Smith (Music)

Our small but dedicated FSFA team have again been hard at work in support of our children and school this year through a range of fundraising events. We are so grateful for all their efforts as the money raised is increasingly essential in a time of such limited funding to schools and when small schools like ours are finding it increasingly difficult to survive.

We have and will use the money to

- Help support the refurbishment of the new Pioneer and Adventurers' zones which from September will have swapped places to best accommodate the pupils (see below for staffing and class organisation from September)
- Develop curriculum resources especially in Science, DT and Art
- Improve our hard playground to include new markings and to provide seating and planting to create quiet areas of reflection for all the children

Sadly, I will not be able to join you all at Brinkburn this year as I am attending a family funeral in Yorkshire. I am so sorry not to be there as I know the children and staff have been working really hard to make it a really lovely event. A huge thank you to Mrs Rachel Murphy, our chair of Governors, for stepping in at the last minute to present all the prizes and certificates in my absence and to Ed Butlin and James Harvey for their continued help and guidance.

As always, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with such a dedicated governing body and staff team. I know that you will join me in thanking them for all of their hard work and dedication which has allowed the children to make such good academic progress this year, whilst still having fun on their learning journey. We are very sorry to say good bye to Mrs Anthea Smith who retires from her role as governor after 20 years and to Mr Peacock and Mrs Fender who both joined us this year on supply and were immediately part of the team. We wish them all every happiness and success in the future.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support this year and wish you all a fantastic summer. We look forward to welcoming our new teacher Mrs Nicola Gamston into the Pioneers' zone and all of your lovely children, who will be ready to start working and having fun when school reopens on Wednesday September 6th!

I hope you all have an enjoyable and relaxing break and we look forward to seeing you all in September.

Best wishes

Suzanne Connolly