



ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) FIRST SCHOOL

February 2018 Newsletter

Dear Parents/carers.

It's hard to believe that we started this half term with those lovely signs of Spring with the lighter mornings, and evenings, the flowers peeping through and birds singing and now it is winter again. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the all of staff, caretaker, admin, teaching and lunch time staff for their commitment to ensuring our school has remained open for our children during the snow. Thank you for your support to ensure your children were able to attend – well done to everyone.

Home school partnership

Parental consultations

Thank you to all parents who were able to attend. If you still haven't met with your class teacher please would you organise to do so. These meetings are really important especially as we are half way through the school year.

PTFA events

Thank you to everyone who supported the cake stall. There were certainly some delicious cakes and £110 was raised. Thank you to the PTFA for organising the second film night this academic year. It was my first and I must say I thoroughly enjoyed it along with the children, watching movies and eating sweets and popcorn – an absolutely delightful evening as well as raising £381. The children, as always, were exceptionally well behaved. Thank you everyone.

Policies

Attendance

Last month the attendance policy was attached to the newsletter and the importance of high attendance outlined. Please can I ask parents to consider this when booking holidays particularly if your child has experienced illness as well. If an absence form is requested (by e-mail preferably), this will be sent home in your child's book bag as it will include your child's current attendance to be considered.

Except for Wednesday this week when the snow began to fall heavily the number of children who are late is reducing significantly. This has made such a difference to the start of the children's day as the children are in school ready to start their first session. We have also introduced an electronic registration system so now the first lesson starts straight away.

In terms of the efficiency of the office, this system along with the decreasing number of lates, has reduced the time Mrs McCloud spends on registration. Please can I remind you to inform school before 9.00a.m if your child is not going to attend. You can do this either by the ParentMail app, e-mail or telephone. In order to ensure the safety of our children, if we have not heard from you, we will call you if your child is not in school by 9.15am when registers close.

Please could we also ask for your help at the end of the day. As there is only Mrs McCloud in the office she will open the door at 4.25p.m for all parents to collect rather than opening the door continually. We will also remind the children to use the toilet before they leave school so they do not need to come back into school. As well as helping Mrs McCloud this will also help our cleaning staff, who are busy cleaning the school during this time. Thank you for your continued support.

Positive Behaviour Policy

Please find attached the Behaviour policy with the school rules which have been devised by staff, children and the school council. The children are doing a very good job on their monitoring roles and are also enjoying looking out for children who are following our school rules. We welcome as always any feedback from parents. Thank you.

School Update

Staffing

We are delighted to announce the appointment of our new caretaker, Mr Russell Hunter. We anticipate he will start around Easter time. He is currently a caretaker in another Newcastle school and comes to us highly recommended. Russell was very impressed with the warmth and family ethos of our school and is looking forward to starting with us.

Visits and visitors

Richard, "That History Bloke", visited Key Stage 1 earlier this term to inspire their new topic about the work of Florence Nightingale. The lady herself also paid a visit to show the children how she cared for her patients. Key Stage 1 also visited St Nicholas Church to learn about celebrations in the church calendar, the church building and artefacts in it.

The School Council have been very busy this term! They attended a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) meeting at Regent Farm First School where they discussed ideas for STEM week which will take place later this term. We will be asking parents who work in those fields to volunteer to come into school that week to talk to our children about their work and inspire their future possible careers! The School Council also visited Grange First School as part of the City of Dreams project where they considered what the culture of our city might be like 30 years from now.

School Meals

We have tried a parent suggestion to alter who is on first sittings between keystone 1 and 2. We are now back to keystone 1 have lunches first and we have decided to stay with this as we found the youngest children found it more difficult to wait and the oldest children like to have second helpings which is more available on second sittings.

Dinner money for this half term is £60 (cheques made payable to Newcastle City Council or pay via ParentPay). Mrs McCloud is a little delayed in the processing of dinner money through ParentMail and she is experiencing some issues with our ParentMail dinner money register so please bear with her whilst she resolves this. Please disregard any notifications of balances at present and Mrs McCloud will inform you when the issue has been resolved and if you are in debit/credit. Thank you for your patience.

Ofsted development plan Update

Plans to improve the school include precise and ambitious targets to secure improvements in pupils' outcomes. Improve pupils' achievement so that pupils routinely reach age-related expectations and increasing proportions particularly of the most able achieve the highest possible standards. Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. – the new assessment system is becoming embedded and the progress of individuals and specific group of pupils are now analysed. Data is collected termly, analysed for strengths and areas for development and individual pupil progress meetings are held half termly. Assessment criteria for writing and mathematics to support the planning and assessment process have been devised by the Teaching and Learning team and myself and these will be implemented this term. These aim to ensure that the work set is well matched to pupils needs and challenges pupils to think in depth as identified by Ofsted. We have reviewed our Marking policy and thank you for the kind comments some parents made regarding the marking in their child's books. We are also finalising the review of our Teaching and Learning, and assessment policies

Subject leaders receive the support needed to take a more strategic view of the impact of the actions on improving pupils' outcomes – I have worked directly with the Teaching and Learning team this term to develop the subject leader role and we have started to work with North East multi academy trust of 5 schools to access training and support for staff.

Governors fulfil their statutory duty in holding leaders to account – an independent review of governance was held which was a highly informative and useful process. The governors now have an action plan produced as part of the review.

While provision in the early years is good overall there are marked differences between the provision in the Reception class compared with that in the Nursery class. Although children in the nursery class make typical progress from their starting points, fewer children are able to make the faster progress needed to exceed the expected standard. Miss Stokes is leading the early years team in order to address these areas identified by Ofsted. She plans with Mrs Hinsche weekly to ensure consistency across the unit, holds a weekly staffing meeting for the whole team and oversees daily the smooth running of the unit. We are already seeing the consistent approach across the unit.

Current attendance information would indicate there has been a slight decline from previous years. We now have new electronic systems in place in line with the updated policy to monitor and address this. This half term we are going to look at communication between home and school and our homework policy. Thank you to the parents who have kindly offered to join a working party with staff. We are keen to work with parents so if you may be interested please see me.

News

Reverend Philip Cunningham, informed us that he will retire from St Nicholas Church retire at the beginning of September and he shared the following announcement with his congregation and school:

“It has been a great joy to serve this parish and the wider Diocese in a number of roles over the past sixteen years and before that for over 40 years in York and Liverpool Dioceses. A particular privilege has been to have a direct share in the training of four clergy and to have seen several people explore and develop their Vocations in both ordained and lay ministry. Bishop Christine has kindly agreed to grant me Permission to officiate in the Diocese and also asked me to accept the title of Canon Emeritus. As I move into my next stage of ministry be assured that you will all be held daily in my prayers”.

Mr Cunningham has been very much a part of our school for many years – infact when I was here 15 years ago as Deputy. While we will be sad to see Philip leave our Parish church we very much wish him all the best in the next chapter of his journey and will be holding him in our thoughts and prayers over the coming weeks.

Dates for your Diary

Friday 9 th March - 2.30pm	Mothers' Day Service (families welcome to join us in Hall)
Friday 16 th March	Sport Relief (plans to follow)
Monday 19 th –Thurs 22 nd March	Scholastic Book Fair (after school)
Tuesday 20 th March	Reception Sports Festival at Walker Dome
Monday 26 th March	KS2 Trip to Great North Museum
Wednesday 28 th March - AM	Early Years “Come and Play” Easter Celebration
29 th March – 2pm	Maundy Thursday Service (families welcome to join us in Hall)

Thank you again everyone for all your support during this snowy weather. It is much appreciated.

Kind regards

Mrs Denise Henry