



**Whittingham**  
C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Friday 19th January 2024  
Multiple page issue.

# Headteacher's Blog

'Hand in hand together we will become resilient, respectful and responsible citizens of our community and the wider world.'

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of Whittingham Primary School,

Welcome to our Headteacher's Blog of the week. Thank you to the very select few who attended our Homework Consultation Meeting. Feedback was good and those who attended feel the homework books that are sent home are easy to follow and that the amount of homework given is age appropriate. Teachers in KS1 and 2 reminded attendees that class dojo is also used for homework reminders as well as the pages to complete are written in the books. Teachers will continue to ensure this goes out in a timely fashion. Families in Years 1-6 are reminded to please continue to hear their child read at least 3 x per week and to spend 10 minutes or so most evenings on Times Tables Rockstars.

Just a reminder that in case of school closures home learning is set on the home learning section of our school website and that it might be prudent for families to make themselves familiar with what is required as soon as possible in case of power cuts.

Please continue to keep updated on events in school by checking our school website where the calendar is updated <https://www.whittinghamprimaryschool.co.uk/website/calendar/213885> . We will be sharing with you further details about our parent and caregivers sharing session in school on 12th February very shortly so please save the date.

All the best of luck to our Year 5 and 6 pupils who will separately be attending a virtual county multiskills final next week

**A few reminders:**

**Doors open from 8.40 so we are ready to learn from 8.45. If you are running late please come into the main school entrance.**

**School uniform and correct shoes should be worn at all times. If your child has had a growth spurt or you need new uniform we have a store of nearly new uniform in school that is available for you to look through free of charge.**

**Make up is not to be worn and mobile phones are not needed and are therefore not permitted.**

As always, Mr Charlton or I are contactable on Gate Duty each morning, during the day in the office- 01665574222 or directly by email (please do not use any other email as there may be a delay in your email getting to me as it does not go directly to me) [belinda.athey@whittingham.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:belinda.athey@whittingham.northumberland.sch.uk).

Belinda Athey - Headteacher.



Class 3 enjoyed the first in a series of taught drumming sessions. School is really pleased to have secured a subsidised teacher and resources for 10 weeks through the Music Partnership North as part of our continued development of arts provision in school. Here are some photos:

### Keeping Safe Online and age appropriate content

As part of our work in school we try to teach the children to keep themselves safe online whilst using a range of devices. It has come to our attention that some children are using Tok Tok. Just a reminder that there is a minimum age limit for Tok Tok of 13 so our Primary School aged children should not be accessing this. A good source of support for parents when dealing with online safety at home are:

<https://www.childnet.com>

<https://www.instagram.com/nationalonlinesafety/>

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## Introducing Be You...

We are a mental health initiative for children and young people within Northumberland. Our aim is to improve children and young people's mental health, helping those with mild to moderate mental health needs. Ensuring that when help is needed, children and young people have access to the right support at the right time.

Currently, we work with schools, children, young people and families across Hexham, Blyth, Ashington, Bedlington, Alnwick and Coquet. We are working hard to expand this offer so that we can support children and young people in all Northumberland localities.

Be you is founded on the following principles:

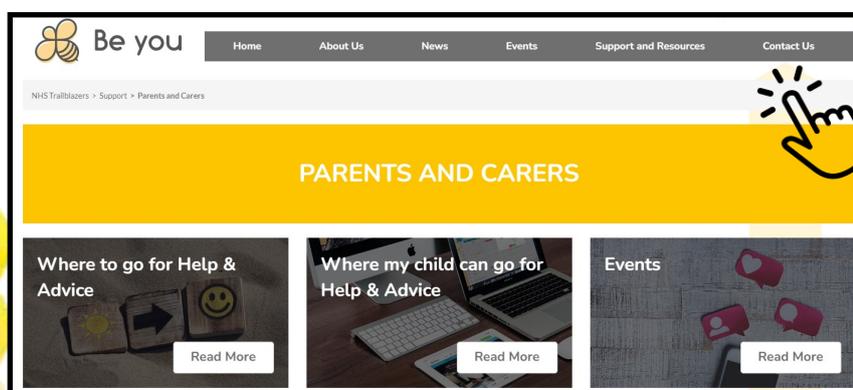
- An additional resource to enhance existing services
- An aim to reduce health inequalities and disadvantages
- Responsive to individual needs and not a 'one size fits all'.
- Accessible support all year round and not just during term time.

As parents and carers, you know your child better than anyone. If you feel as though they may need some support with their mental health it is always a good idea to talk to their school as a first port of call.

You can reach out to Be You at [BeYou@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:BeYou@northumberland.gov.uk) Where we will signpost you to relevant support.

You can also book a telephone consultation with the Primary Mental Health Team via this number **01661 864588**

Visit our website to find out about the range of support available.



Any questions you can contact us at:

[BeYou@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:BeYou@northumberland.gov.uk)



# Be you Be Creative...

- The benefits of trying something new.
- Exploring the outdoors and being creative
- Exploring new interests
- Support for parents and carers

## New Year, New Me Why Not Try Something New?

One of the 5 ways to wellbeing is 'Keep Learning' - Being curious and seeking out new life experiences can positively affect your brain. Try to step out of your comfort zone and reap the benefits.

### Benefits of trying something new:

- It can be fun and make you happier
- Challenges increase your confidence, resilience and contributes to personal growth
- You will get to know yourself more
- You will feel inspired and motivated
- It stimulates creativity
- Gain a sense of accomplishment
- Discover new great activities, foods, places that you may never have realised you like!

**“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone”**

### So what are the benefits of the outdoors and creativity?

The outdoors is a playground for development in children and young people. Spending time outside encourages physical activity, enhances cognitive abilities, stimulates creativity, and boosts mental health and wellbeing. Being outside offers a break from a screen-filled world, reduces stress and anxiety while boosting mood and overall mental health. The outdoors provides a natural setting for children and young people to explore their independence, develop problem solving skills and build resilience by facing new challenges. It is a space to find their interests and nurture creativity.

Encouraging creative activities helps children and young people with their development. It is an outlet for self-expression, allowing them to explore emotions and experiences. It also helps to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Creativity allows children and young people to approach challenges with flexibility and new ways of thinking. Creative pursuits also serve as a great stress reliever, offering a break from academic pressures and daily stress.



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## The Importance of being open to new experiences:

The New Year is a great opportunity to try something new. Learning new skills can be crucial to giving people greater independence and choice as well as helping to communicate their needs. When children learn new skills, they also build independence, confidence and self-esteem. So helping children learn new skills can be an important part of supporting overall development too.



## Exploring new interests:

By exploring new interests, we learn new skills which in turn boosts self-esteem and promotes wellbeing. This may include things you can do at home, in school or out in the local community.

## Things to try:

- Improve memory and brain function by learning a new language, playing chess or by practicing a musical instrument.
- Reduce anxiety and develop your fine motor skills by engaging in arts and crafts activities, such as sewing, scrapbooking, origami and painting.
- Develop problem solving skills while making friends in team sports such as basketball, football or netball.
- Develop your fitness and gain a sense of achievement by completing fitness activities such as swimming or going for a run.
- Improve vitamin D levels and sleep quality by engaging in outdoor activities, such as gardening, nature watching, walking, surfing and fishing.
- Practise time management in the kitchen by cooking. Learn about different cultures and tastes by trying recipes from different parts of the world.

See our [padlet](#) and check in with your school to see what local clubs are on in your area and the [local offer](#).

If you're looking for an activity that helps towards the 5 ways to wellbeing you might have seen it's the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch from 26 -28<sup>th</sup> January and the RSPB website has downloadable resources so you can take part together [Big Garden Birdwatch](#) ([rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk))



## The 5 Ways to Wellbeing



Visit our website: [www.beyounorthumberland.nhs.uk](http://www.beyounorthumberland.nhs.uk)

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## Being Creative Together...

Help your child build their confidence by asking them to think of a new activity that you can do together, giving them the choice and responsibility for making decisions and telling you what to do, so you join in and follow their ideas. This could be something as simple as building Lego™, doing art and crafts, making a meal or baking a cake, or something bigger like planning a day out. Obviously within reasonable limits! Afterwards you can both share how enjoyable it was and what you've learned, perhaps even about each other.

## Children's Mental Health Week

It's Children's Mental Health Week from **5th to 11th February** the theme is 'My Voice Matters' and it's about empowering children and young people with the tools they need to express themselves. If you'd like to take part at home you can download resources from the Place2Be or BBC websites, here's the links [Children's Mental Health Week \(childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk\)](https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk) and [Children's Mental Health Week 2024 - CBBC - BBC](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-61484444)



## Support For Parents and Carers

Amanda Sayers, at Cygnus Support, is the Be You Co-ordinator supporting parents and carers of children and young people with their own mental and emotional wellbeing. This can be through

- one to one support sessions
- group workshops in schools to develop confidence and skills
- providing tools and strategies and sign posting to further information and help



As a parent or carer of a child attending school, sixth form or being home schooled, you might want support with an aspect of your own wellbeing such as stress and feeling overwhelmed, or you might want to know how you can help your child with issues affecting them, such as worry or anxiety, low mood, self-esteem, friendship difficulties, body image and bullying.

Through the support Amanda can give and by providing a toolkit of coping strategies, resources and information, parents can feel empowered to help themselves as well as their children and also understand where to find additional support if they need it.

Participants in the workshops described them as "brilliant! Very helpful and informative" with the most helpful topics covered being coping strategies and strategies for addressing worry, working through factors affecting how a child is feeling, recognising when a child might need extra help and where to go for this. The parents and carers taking part said they felt comfortable participating in the group discussions, it was useful to have others' views and they were not alone in things that their child experiences

"Thank you for delivering the workshop...really enjoyed it, informative and helpful, lots of things to think about".

If you'd like to contact Amanda please email

[amandasayers@cygnussupport.com](mailto:amandasayers@cygnussupport.com); if you want to read more here's the link to the Cygnus Be You web page [Welcome to Cygnus Support](#) and the NHS Trailblazers Be You web site [Homepage | NHS Trailblazers \(beyounorthumberland.nhs.uk\)](https://www.beyounorthumberland.nhs.uk)





Northumberland Parent Carer Forum are a voluntary group of Northumberland parents and carers of children and young people (0 – 25) who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. We work in partnership with service commissioners and providers, sharing knowledge and experience, with the aim of supporting and enabling families within our community to access the services and give them a voice in developing the quality, range, and accessibility of this provision.

We're currently working extremely hard and we've got lots of exciting things in the pipeline;

- Coffee Morning/Drop in sessions throughout the coming months with Northumberland IASS, Early Help Team, Mike Finlay & Sam Barron (Heads of SEND at NCC)
- Our bigger and ever better Parent Carer Conference in March which this year will have a focus on Preparation for Adulthood
- Parent Carer Health/Wellbeing Activities
- New Website with ALL the information you could need on living with a child with SEND in Northumberland

To keep up to date and be the first to know, we ask that you re-register your details using [THIS](#) form.

This year see's some reviews of very important policies including;

- Northumberland's SEND Strategy
- Northumberland's EOTAS and Home Education Policy
- Northumberland's SEND travel personal budget guidance and policy

We want to ensure that we gather as many of our parents and carers views and feedback and capture the collective voices across the region, thus ensuring we give the right recommendations when we're working with the Local Authority.

Should you have any queries at all, please do get in touch at [enquiries@npcf.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@npcf.co.uk), we love hearing from you!

Best Wishes

*Northumberland  
Parent Carer Forum*

Claire, Gemma, Pamela, Vici, Emma, Zoe, Emily & Lesley  
**Northumberland Parent Carer Forum**

