



Whittingham
C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Friday 6th January - 3 Page edition.

Spring Term Newsletter 2017

Happy New Year.

On behalf of all the staff and children I would like to wish you a happy, safe and prosperous New Year and also thank you for the well wishes, Christmas cards and presents that were received at the end of the term. We look forward to seeing you at all the exciting events we have planned in school.

Pupil Profiles

As part of the Assertive Mentoring Assessment System in the past KS 1 and 2 pupils have had mentor meetings and an individual Pupil Profile has been shared with children and parents. In the light of our continuous wish to improve we have spent the last half term changing the format and how it is presented to children. The new style pupil profile will be soon ready to share with children and to come home to parents very soon.

As part of your involvement in your child's learning we will continue to review and refine our homework provision.

Whittingham - a school to strive towards!

Over the last number of years we have been increasingly approached by Teacher Training Universities to share our outstanding teaching and wonderful learning opportunities with students. This term we welcome three students on teaching placements -

Mr Marshall in Class 2

Mr Gittens in Class 3

Ms Jones in Class 3

We also provide places for those looking to become teachers and warmly welcome back a past pupil, Emma Lazenby.

Mrs Fortescue, as Deputy Headteacher will be the mentor for these students.

We continue to have another past pupil training to become a teaching assistant, Abigail Wilkinson. Mrs Maule will be her mentor.

Having a mentor in place means we can support these students whilst maintaining the high standards that we expect.

Attendance and Communication to Staff

Unfortunately we are amongst very few schools that have unsatisfactory attendance. This has been noticed by staff, Governors and at Diocesan and County Level. It was therefore a decision made at Summer Term Governors Meeting that anyone under 95% attendance each half term would receive a standard letter from school. This letter is modelled on a format the Education Welfare Officer has provided. We send this letter out fully aware that your child may have been off for illness and in our records this is recorded as a medical illness and is authorised but still is part of attendance figures and therefore a letter is needed. We look closely at the type of absence so that when the Education Officer visits on a termly basis we can explain fully the situation and then the Education Welfare Officer can make a decision if the matter needs to be taken further.

Please note this a decision that has been made at Governor level and is applied to all pupils. Please remember this when communicating with staff.

As I have mentioned earlier, it was lovely to see notes, cards, emails and positive comments about all the events in school last term. Staff at this school work extremely hard to 'go that extra mile' and a smile or kind word of recognition is greatly appreciated. Please be aware if issues arise which you are not happy with contact the class teacher or myself directly in a manner in which you would expect to be spoken to as during the last term some verbal and written communication to staff has been rather unwelcome. Please note I have a school staff to protect and protocol will be followed if staff are communicated with inappropriately. We have a complaints procedure in place.

PE and Swimming Provision.

We will continue to offer a range of provision in this area. Children in Class 1 will swim this half term and children in Class 2 and 3 will be using specialist equipment in the Sports Hall. Please ensure PE kit is in school during the remainder of the week. Early Years PE provision is provided in school.

As you know we cannot afford to continue to travel to Willowburn without your support.

This half term the contribution towards transport is £12.00 - £2.00 per session for six weeks.

Well done to the pupils who attended the Hockey competition at Shilbottle. We won one of the group competitions! Thank you to parents for transporting children and enabling this event to go ahead and to Mrs Burroughs for organising it.

Bad Weather and School Closure

Last term brought the first instance of our closure procedures. Thank you for enabling it to work so well. If we need to close school in the case of bad weather this is the protocol that we will follow. In addition to this, January often brings icy weather so please pay attention to the gritting plan that is fixed to the school gates. We have the children's safety as paramount and pay careful attention to gritting but there may be times when a route as indicated on the plan has been gritted and other areas remain icy. If this occurs in the morning please speak to the member of staff on duty and if you have younger children remember that although we allow children on the school yard from 8.40 Reception and Key Stage 1 children's official school day starts at 8.55a.m. so you are encouraged to stay with them until this time.

PTA - Thankyou

Thankyou to the PTA for their tremendous efforts last term which culminated in a highly successful auction. Please continue to support for the good of all pupils. Next meeting date is on the dates section of this letter.

Communication

Unfortunately there appeared to be some confusion over all of the different forms of communication we have. I must admit, Twitter, PTA Facebook, Headteachers Blog, letters, texts and the school website are a lot of different ways to communicate.

In the era we live in, it seems that everyone has their own personal preferences, so with this in mind we will continue to communicate in all these ways but if you wish to rely on one form of communication for events please look at the calendar on the school website. Letters from the entire school year are also kept on the website and of course this letter informs you of dates for the term.

Family Lunches

As you will know, we decided to not to host Family Lunches last term.

We are now a school of more than 80 children which brings about new challenges and rewards. It is with this in mind that we are looking for your suggestions and asking the question do you wish for this to continue? This will enable myself and Mrs Arkle to make a decision based on need.

Please could you forward your response to these questions either verbally to the office, written or emailed.

Do you wish Family Lunches to continue?

Do you think Family Lunch should be available to all pupils?

Do you think Family Lunch should be available to Early Years and Class 1 children only?

Would you like to have lunch with all of your children at the same sitting?

Any other suggestions are welcome.

Please return your responses these questions to the office by Friday 13th January.