



## Allendale Primary School

### June 2017 Newsletter

May was a very busy month at school; Y6 completed their KS2 SATs and Y2 completed their KS1 SATs, very different experiences for the 2 groups in terms of how we were allowed to administer the tests. Hopefully most Y2 weren't very aware they were doing SATs, unfortunately we were not able to adopt the same low key approach for Y6. Y6 then had a great residential at Lockerbie Manor in Scotland, taking part in fencing, canoeing, climbing, kayaking, abseiling, archery and other activities on site. We've already booked to go back next year with Y6 in June.



Obstacle Course



Fencing



Canoeing

Y4 will be going on their residential to Wasdale Hall next week where I'm sure they will have a great time. The meeting for parents is at 5.30pm tonight in Lapwing classroom.

Last half term, there were also some sporting competitions at which our children performed very well. The Y6, (with some Y5 help), rugby team were runners up in the West Northumberland team rugby competition; the Y3/4 Tri-Golf team were placed 4<sup>th</sup> in their area finals. All our sports teams have performed fantastically well throughout the year and for a small school, we are 'punching well above our weight,' making it to finals and defeating much larger schools. A huge thank to the children who represent Allendale and the staff, parents and governors who train and transport.

Some sad news, at the end of this term, Miss Armitt will be leaving Allendale Primary. We wish her well in whatever she does and will always give her a warm welcome back. We have had to look at our staffing levels in light of the budget cuts which have adversely affected all schools in West Northumberland and instead of 5½ classes we will have 5 classes from September, which will be as follows:

Pipit Class - Reception, (plus nursery from January) with Miss Armstrong and Karen (16 Reception)

Skylark Class - Y1 & Y2 with Miss Guttridge and Mrs Charlton (26 children)

Lapwing Class - Y3 with Miss White and Mrs Hawkins (18 children)

Curlew Class - Y4 & Y5 with Mr Vincent (25 children)

Kestrel Class - Y5 & Y6 with Miss Honeyman, (21 children)

We also have Mrs Pringle, Mrs Mason, Mrs Koranteng and Mrs Bishop supporting in various classes and Mr Ricketts to teach PE throughout school.

We have planned weekly transition sessions from 20<sup>th</sup> June. This will give the children opportunities to get to know their new teacher or classmates or classroom and reassure any who may be nervous about change. Current Y4 parents will shortly be informed whether their child will be in Curlew or Kestrel class.

I know that some parents are concerned about the testing culture in schools and narrowing of the curriculum. We really do maintain a balanced curriculum; we legally have to give more time to Maths and English but we make sure that our afternoons in particular are used for Science, Art, Design Technology, Music, History Geography, outdoor learning etc. as well as holding themed days and weeks such as Health Week, Science Week, World Book day etc. There is a campaign called 'More than a score' ([www.morethanascore.co.uk](http://www.morethanascore.co.uk)), which parents may be interested in. It campaigns to reduce the emphasis on the high stakes SATs testing particularly in Y6 where there is no evidence that it improves teaching and learning. I don't know of any Primary School teachers who think that the testing culture is conducive to improving standards or improves the educational value for our children. If you look at the class pages on our website, you will get a flavour of the range of learning and school themed events that go on in each class. Below are a few examples:



World Book Day - Y6 reading to Reception children    Cooking in Skylark and Barn Owl    Geography / DT in Lapwing

Although our Ofsted Inspection was in September 2014, we do receive a visit every term from a County appointed School Improvement Officer who reports on standards, teaching and learning, behaviour and safeguarding in the school. Our most recent visit was the last week of half term, where 4 lessons were observed and work scrutinised from the other 2 classes. This visit was also focused around the children's behaviour and attitudes to learning. The feedback again was overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school with the only constructive criticism was that some children were not using a ruler consistently to underline their work!

Bag2school donations can be left at school anytime; the collection will be on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

We are always looking to improve our environment and are currently having some refurbishments carried out at school to improve the staff and visitor toilets. During the summer holidays we plan to resurface the middle playground and larger playground where the children line up. Mrs Reid has kindly begun painting a design on the walls of the nurture room which we hope to have furnished by the end of the summer holidays and used regularly from September. All this work is being funded through either capital works funds, which we can only use for building, or the generosity of donations and grants or fundraising events in school' so thank you to all our parents and friends who give us such great support.

The Allen Valleys Crafted Miracles will be on display at St Cuthbert's Church in Allendale until Thursday June 8<sup>th</sup>. After that they are going on tour and will be in Catton Chapel from June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 6<sup>th</sup> and Allenheads Heritage Centre from August 5<sup>th</sup> to August 17<sup>th</sup>. Each of our classes has produced a tableau for the display and we are hoping that some classes will have the opportunity to go over to the church this week to have a look at the display.

The Bookfair will be running this week. The sessions for each class are on the attached timetable. There will be a before school and after school session for parents and children this Wednesday, opening at 8.30am until the start of school and 3.30pm - 4.00pm after school.

A polite reminder to keep checking your child's hair for headlice. We seem to have spates where headlice are absent from school then all of a sudden there will be an 'outbbreak'. Weekly checking is important.

Finally, this half term is particularly busy. I have attached a day by day timetable of what's happening rather than a list of dates as usual, as I know that ensuring PE kits, Swimming kits, outdoor learning clothes etc. is sometimes stressful especially for parents of the younger children. There are also various trips coming up. All events are on the calendar on the school website and we will put any changes on there as well as e-mailing any additional events or changes.

Mrs A Hawkins  
Headteacher