



**Allendale Primary School
May 2016 Newsletter Update**

Dear Parents

I am pleased to inform you that from September 2016, Mr Philip Vincent will be our new Deputy Headteacher. Mr Vincent currently teaches in Northumberland and brings lots of experience and skills that can only benefit our children. Mr Charlton will be a very hard act to follow but I am confident that Mr Vincent will fit in very well at Allendale and that you will give him your full support as he settles in.

Due to the success of our Year 3 and 4 Tag Rugby players last week, we will be represented in the area finals by 2 teams. This is to be held on Wednesday 25th May which was our original date for the School photographer; fortunately Mrs Clarke has been able to change the day for school photos to Friday 27th May.

The Barn Owl outdoor learning day at Allen Banks with Mr Hopper has been rearranged to Tuesday 10th May - hopefully the weather will be much better than the snow and biting wind of last week.

We are hosting a professional contemporary dance company, Fertile Ground, on Thursday 26th May. This performance will be for Y1 to Y6 and hopefully some of our friends from Shaftoe Trust Primary will be able to attend.

There has been a lot of media coverage about parent opposition to government testing in Primary Schools, particularly at KS1, and the impact these tests have upon children. Unfortunately these tests are compulsory and like it or not schools are judged on their results and held accountable for them.

Hopefully parents will see that the Y2 children at Allendale are not pressured during the tests. We try and make them as informal as possible; the children will not be sat in rows in an examination room but rather they will come and do some 'special work' in a small group situation.

The Y1 children have to undertake a phonics test; again this is undertaken very informally with the children doing some work with Miss Armitt or Miss Carpenter.

We are even expected to undertake assessment with reception aged children. Again, Miss Armstrong and Karen do this very gently, just doing some activities with the children as they would in everyday practice. It is so important that children in the Early Years do the vast majority of their learning through play as they have always done at Allendale.

The Y6 SATs are very different unfortunately; we have to administer these under strict exam conditions, with an independent invigilator and we are subject to local authority 'drop in' checks. The Y6 do experience more pressure but we do try and reassure them and ask them to just do their best. We don't do after school and weekend booster sessions as, in my opinion, even at 10 or 11 years old, they are children and should be free to pursue their own interests in their own time. We just try and strike a balance in preparing the children for Year 7.

I hope that this reassures parents that we're not a school that only values the academic but try and give the children a broad range of experiences across a range of subjects and activities.

Mrs A Hawkins
Headteacher