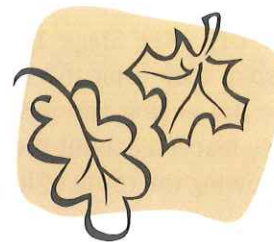


ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) FIRST SCHOOL



September 2017 Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers

I can hardly believe that this is our fourth week back in school. The children are settling well and alongside welcoming our new starters, we have also welcomed new staff including myself, Mrs Susan Atkinson, Reception class teacher and Mrs Paula Hinsche, Nursery teacher. Thank you to parents, children, staff and governors for giving us such a warm welcome.

It feels a real privilege to be Headteacher of our school and it is a pleasure getting to know you and your children. I will be in the playground each morning unless I am attending training or meetings, of which there has been many held this term, particularly last week! Mrs Massey will be in the playground on a Monday, Thursday and Friday if I am unavailable.

I also join the children in the playground on Thursday and Friday lunchtimes and I have thoroughly enjoyed trying out their games. I have been so impressed with how well they play co-operatively together, as well as how they showcase their skills, designing their own games, practising dancing, football or exploring in the Forest School area.

The children enjoy weekly worship lead by clergy from both our churches, All Saints and St Nicholas, and we very much look forward to this time together.

School Update

School Meals

I have joined the children for school lunch and I can highly recommend our school meals. Our very experienced school cook, Mrs Battista and her kitchen assistant, Mrs Sowerby, provide excellent nutritious meals and Mrs Cannell looks after all the children whilst they eat their dinner. All the dinner time staff take



the time to get to know each child as an individual. There is a superb choice with two hot meals including a vegetarian choice as well as salad and bread available each day. The weekly menus will be sent out next week. I was thrilled to see the full Reception class having a hot meal at lunchtime and it would be great to see more of our children enjoying school meals. As well as benefitting the children each day, the more children who order school meals, the more money the school receives so the school

benefits too! Please consider this and if you want to find out more about the school meals, please come to see me or Mrs Battista who will be happy to see you too.

Sports

We are delighted that the children have already experienced great success and thoroughly enjoyed some sporting events. Some of the children from Year 4 attended a hockey event at Royal Grammar School which was attended by Olympic Gold medalist, Kate Richardson-Walsh and were victorious at a Kwik Cricket tournament attend by First Schools in the Gosforth Schools Trust. Year 3 also welcomed a squash coach into school and had a great sporting session with him in the Hall. There is a board outside of my office which is updated with our sporting events.



Topic Events

There has been plenty happening this term already to inspire termly topics. Key Stage 2 had a visit from the "Go Green" team from Newcastle City Council to start their topic, learning about how rubbish is recycled in

our city. Key Stage 1 were excited to welcome White Watch from Gosforth Community Fire Station to inspire their topic this term, Fire! Fire! The children were shown how their equipment works, they explored the fire engine and even used the water hoses! The children then went on a trip to the Quayside where they learnt all about the Great Fire of Newcastle and Gateshead in 1854, visiting where the fire started and following the route of its course.

Reception and Nursery are learning their new routines, have been cutting up and tasting food this week and have been baking today for the Macmillan Coffee Afternoon

Clubs

Clubs before, after school and at lunchtime have begun this term. These include Tennis, Dance, Football, Taekwon-Do, Art, French and Awards club. Chinese club is also starting next week for Key Stage 2. It is great to see so many children taking part and the children thoroughly enjoying the experiences.

Home School Partnership

Thank you very much for taking the time to attend the drop in sessions, to meet me, and the class welcome meetings. I found it very useful speaking to so many parents. I do hope you found these sessions useful too. If you wish to provide any feedback, please see either myself or the class teachers.

School Office

As you are aware, Mrs King retired last term and this has left Mrs McCloud on her own in the school office. Please could you help her by returning your child's forms and payments to school in **book bags**. Forms/envelopes will be collected during registration. With a view to making the processing of funds received more efficient, Mrs McCloud would be grateful if you could:

- Put all payments with forms in a sealed envelope with your child's name, class and what you are paying for written on the front. Forms only do not need to be placed in an envelope.
- Ideally pay by cheque separately for each item (club, trip, event, topic money etc) and write your child's name, class and what you are paying for on the reverse. Cheques are to be made payable to Archbishop Runcie First School.
- If you do need to pay by cash, please place the **correct money** in a sealed envelope. It takes us longer to give change and count coins that it does to process cheques!
- We will continue to offer payment through ParentMail where possible although appreciate that there is currently a charge for using this service. We will be reviewing this as soon as possible.
- If you are paying Dinner Money weekly or ad hoc, it would be helpful if you could do so either termly/half termly or on a Monday. Please make cheques made payable to Newcastle City Council.



We all appreciate the excellent work of Mrs McCloud, and we hope you can support this. If anyone would be interested in gaining work experience volunteering in the office, please contact me.

Topic funds

We will continue with the collection of the voluntary contribution of £5 per family per term towards resources for the topic of each class. You are welcome to pay this per term or for the full year (£15). Your

contribution is very much appreciated and does help to enrich the creative curriculum of the school. Thank you for your continued support.

ParentMail

Parents new to school, will shortly be given instructions on how to join our school communication system, ParentMail. Paper copies of all communications to date have been sent home in book bags for those parents who are not yet on the ParentMail system.

If a form needs to be completed and returned to school, we will always send a paper copy home in book bags, as well as sending it out by ParentMail. With regard to other communications, please could we request that, if possible, parents receive information via Parentmail only, rather than requesting paper copies as well. This helps to save Mrs McCloud's time in the office and costs, as well as helping to consider our environment (the Year 3 and 4 topic is Go Green this term). Mrs McCloud will contact those families separately who have previously requested paper copies of communications.

You can download a free ParentMail app for your phone to make it easier to see communications and receive alerts rather than these going to your e-mail inbox only. If you require further information, please see Mrs McCloud in the office.

Nursery



We still have places in our Nursery so we will be admitting children in January. We will be also investigating the possibility of offering a more flexible provision and the 30 hours if there is the demand. We will be conducting a survey in the next couple of weeks. If you know of any children who are turning 3 years old between September and December, please encourage parents to come to see me.

Ofsted Update

Thank you to all parents who provided feedback and took the time to write down, at the drop in sessions, what they felt the strengths of the school were and the areas for development. These views, as well as those of the staff and children, will be considered when developing the Ofsted Action Plan. Some common themes emerged and the strengths were the nurture, care, behaviour and sports offered, which was also found to be the case by the Ofsted inspectors. Common areas to develop were homework, how parents can support, methods of communication, before and after school clubs, along with more flexible nursery provision. These areas will be considered and certainly the homework and communication will be areas within the Ofsted Action Plan, which will be finalised in the next couple of weeks. This term the agenda items for one of the staff meetings includes communication and homework. We are also further developing our website and you will see this over the next term.

Ofsted identified areas for development:

- Plans to improve the school include precise and ambitious targets – the school's current data (assessment of progress) has been analysed. Targets have been set based upon last year's data for each year group. We are looking to introduce a new pupil tracking system to support the assessment process.
- Checks on teaching are undertaken with the required urgency to bring about improvements – one to one meetings with most staff have been held and classroom observations have taken place, both informally and formally by Senior leaders with the Diocese Assistant Director and a Primary Headteacher of a National Support School. The focus has been particularly on Mathematics challenge and targets have been set.

- Subject leaders receive the support needed to take a more strategic view of the impact of the actions on improving pupils' outcomes – subject leader roles are being reviewed along with the management team. This will be formalised by the end of this half term.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duty in holding leaders to account – governor committees have been reviewed and new terms of reference compiled. There is now a strategic impact group including the Chair which meets fortnightly, and the committees have a monitoring impact meeting each term. Specific link governors have been allocated the identified areas for development.
- Improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment particularly in mathematics – we have introduced a new Mathematics scheme which focuses upon problem solving and reasoning. We are also organising training through a local National Support School and local mathematics hubs. We are researching assessment systems used in other schools and will be reviewing and adapting our current system. Regular book scrutiny sessions are now held to reflect upon the learning, share good practice and monitor progress.
- Addressing the differences in early years provision – we have reorganised the Nursery and Reception classes to address this issue, maximise the learning environment and ensure individual needs are met. The team are new and would like to thank you for your support during the settling in period. The door to Reception is open at 8.40 a.m to enable parents to take older children into school.

Dates for the Diary

Friday 6 th October	Harvest Festival (Years 1, 2, 3 and 4) – Parents and carers are welcome to join the service (2pm)	
Monday 9 th October	Parents Teacher Consultations (after school) – Reception, Years 1, 2, 3, 4	
Tuesday 10 th October	Parents Teacher Consultations (after school) - Years 1, 3, 4	
Wednesday 11 th October	Reception Welcome Meeting – for parents who could not attend this week (9am)	
Thursday 12 th October	Parents Teacher Consultations (after school) - Reception and Year 2	
Friday 20 th October	PTFA Film Night (3.15pm to 5.15pm)	
Monday 30 th October	School closes for half term	
Tuesday 31 st October	School closed for teacher training day	
Thursday 16 th November	School re-opens	
Friday 8 th December	Flu Immunisations (Reception to Year 4)	
Tuesday 19 th December	PTFA Christmas Fair (after school)	
Wednesday 20 th December	Foundation Stage Nativity – morning	
Thursday 21 st December	Key Stages 1 & 2 Performances – afternoon	
Friday 22 nd December	Key Stages 1 & 2 Performances – morning	
	Key Stages 1 & 2 Performances – evening	
	PTFA Christmas Disco (after school)	
	Carol Service at St Nicholas Church (2pm) – children attend and families welcome to join us	
	School closes for Christmas holidays	

I would like to thank the staff for their hard work and commitment this term, children for their enthusiasm and parents and governors for their support. Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to come to see me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D. Henry

Headteacher