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Newsletter – January 2016

Dear Parents and Carers,

Value of the Month



We start this term with a new whole school initiative. It is called 'Value of the Month' and the aim is to help children understand more about values and how they relate to our everyday lives. The project began in our assembly on 5th January where children talked about their understanding of values. Each class has chosen values they believe are the most important and these will be handed to School Council to collate. Children who demonstrate great effort with the value of the month will be acknowledged in our Achievement Assemblies. Year 4 have already been praised for showing great charity when they had a cake sale and raised £70.55 for Christian Aid last term.

Year 1 Dinosaur Topic



This term Year 1 will be working with Dr Ledra (a retired lecturer) as part of their Dinosaur project. Dr Ledra will share his expertise and show the children dinosaur fossil footprints, get them to match footprints to the correct dinosaur and share information about how dinosaurs got their names.

Year 5 & 6 World War II Day



On Thursday 14th January pupils in Year 5 & 6 will be working with Sarah McAllister from the Scouted.ed company to learn first-hand what it was like during World War II. Children will get a chance to make an Anderson shelter as well as cook food using rationing ingredients. Already children have shown their interest in this topic through excellent projects they have completed at home such as powerpoints. We know from talking to our pupils that they love it when history is brought to life!

School Nutrition Action Group



Our SNAG group met in at the start of this term to review what they liked about dinners (and dinner times) and what they would change. The representatives from each class were very open and honest in their views. They met with Mrs Slavin from Taylor Shaw to ensure their points were shared with someone who can implement suggested changes. They reviewed the new school menu and talked about what they thought were the positive changes and also which were the less popular meals. Mrs Slavin will be reviewing the menu and meeting again with the SNAG group to get their opinions later this term.

SAT Week and Test Dates

Just a reminder of key dates in the weeks ahead:
Year 1 Phonics Test – Monday 13th June to Friday 17th June 2016
Year 2 SAT Tests – administered during May 2016
Year 6 SAT Tests – Week beginning Monday 9th May 2016

Year 2 Visit to Lumley Castle



This term Year 2 will visit Lumley Castle as part of their 'Castles' topic. A letter will be sent out nearer the time with further details. This is an exciting trip as children get to visit a local castle and learn about what it was like to live there first-hand.

Walk to School Project



As a school we support healthy lifestyle initiatives and have worked with the 'Walk to School' team from County Durham. We will be continuing this again in 2016 to encourage as many children as possible to walk to school. Nina Cara-Collins from the project will be in school on Tuesday 26th January to take a whole school assembly where she will share the benefits of exercise and healthy lifestyles with children. As well as this she will be on the yard that morning from 8.50am and will be available for parents who would like to ask any questions about the 'Walk to School' project.

Places for Reception in 2016

Just a reminder that Friday 15th January 2016 is the closing date for applications for Reception class places in September 2016. The forms can be completed on-line or can be sent to Admissions at Durham County Council (see their website: www.durham.gov.uk).

Parent Governor Vacancy

We have a vacancy on our governing body for a new parent governor. We would like to thank Mrs Goodall for her hard work and dedication to school in her role as parent governor. We always welcome new ideas in our school and if you would like to make a positive contribution to school improvement then please get in touch.

If you would like further information or an application form, please contact school.



Extra-Curricular Clubs

We are aiming to improve the range of extra-curricular activities we offer in our school and have recently sent home a letter with a list of this half term's clubs. The response has been very positive and we look forward to the clubs starting this week. The aim is to send home a letter each half term with the choices on so children can decide in advance what they would like to do. We have already organised the clubs for next half term and a letter will follow in due course with the choices. Some parents have asked if we are still offering a before/after school club. To date the take up on this is not sufficient to allow this to occur but please note we still offer this facility through Breckon Hill Nursery and Busibodies at Fencehouses.

Rainbow Headteacher's Award Winner



We have had the first ever winner of the 'Rainbow' Headteacher's award this term. One of our Year 3 pupils has worked so hard he has achieved not only Gold and Platinum awards but has now completed all the stickers for Rainbow level too. As well as receiving his prize for this, he has also been asked to design and name the next award. We look forward to seeing what it will be! Well done to all our hard working pupils – there have been many stars and Headteacher's Awards given out in Autumn term.



Amazing Homework

We are always pleased at the amount of homework returned each week by pupils in the school. We very much appreciate the support children receive at home to do this and the time taken. It has to be noted that over the last few months the quality of homework received has been amazing. Children have gone above and beyond what is expected and produced fantastic projects (e.g. on the Romans, Greeks, Space and Iron Age to name a few) and have made fascinating powerpoints e.g. on World War II and Eden Camp. Teachers are always very appreciative of the work received and display it proudly in their class.

Yours sincerely Mrs L A Snowdon (Headteacher)