

Tanfield Lea Community Primary School – Newsletter April 2018



Dear Parents,

We hope the children have enjoyed the Easter break and are ready for the last term of this academic year.

We had a busy end to last term – if you follow us on twitter you will have enjoyed much of the action. Thanks to all who supported their children at home and at school with their **Easter Egg Decorating**. If you were able to attend the coffee afternoon you will have seen the great variety of creative entries. Well done to all who to part.

Our Upper School children led an **Easter Celebration Service** at St. Margaret's Church. This was a first for us and was extremely well received by all who attended. Many children took part reciting poetry, singing in the choir, performing on guitar and ukulele and all children sang three Easter hymns. It was a special afternoon for all involved. Thank you to all parents who were able to join us for that. We really appreciate the welcome we receive from the congregation of St. Margaret's and it was good to return at this time of year. I am sure this will become another of our Tanfield traditions. It was lovely to see so many parents taking the opportunity to come and talk to your child's class teacher at our **Parent Meetings**. This was an excellent opportunity for you to find out more about the progress your child is making, see their work and find out about how you can further support your child in their learning.

Sports Relief saw us raising £156 and the School Council ensured that there were a variety of additional sporting activities for all classes to enjoy on the day.

This half term sees the **National Assessment period for our Y2 and Y6 children**. Y2 children will complete English and Maths tests and will be assessed by their teachers using the results from these alongside the assessment of the work they are producing in their general classroom tasks. Y6 have a more formal assessment – their test week begins Monday 14th May and they will have tests in Reading, Maths and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.

All other children will be taking part in assessments during this time too – from 7th May onwards.

Finally, thank you to everyone who returned their **Parent Questionnaire**. We are currently analysing the responses and will get back to you soon with a summary of these as well as announcing the prize winning entry.

The **Dates for your Diary** page at the end of this Newsletter will inform you of all events currently planned for this term. Please keep this safe for future reference. **Newsletters** are also always accessible on our website.

As ever, if you have any questions, compliments or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We look forward to working together over the coming term.

Kay Hemmings (Head Teacher)

School Decisions – Trusting your school

We would like to thank parents and carers for their understanding and appreciation in response to recent disruptions. We have had a difficult term with a number of external challenges arising in very close succession, which is quite uncommon for our school! We had a week when we had no heating then no electricity and subsequently no toilet facilities in the Lower School. You will recall that we then had two significant periods of snow which did significantly impact on the ability to travel safely. As a school we wish to assure you that closure is always the last resort and is a decision reached only after having fully considered the implications of the situation at hand as well as any potential solutions to minimise loss of learning time. I am pleased to say that we managed this for the vast majority of Lower School children when all of the utilities had broken down during that week. We also managed to stay open during the first bout of snow when many schools around us were closed. The last significant snow fall did beat us and whilst our Y5 were safely housed at Grinton Youth Hostel the rest of the school had to close for 3 days.

I am aware however that some dissatisfaction has been expressed with the speed at which decisions on the closure of our school were made in comparison to other schools in the area. However, I wish to remind parents and carers that if at all possible, we should open and that is always our starting point. The individual circumstances for each school, including the ability of staff to get to school, will differ and this has an impact upon the timing and outcome of decision making. You will recall that the weather was quite extreme and very changeable so on each day a careful inspection of the school grounds and wider access had to be undertaken before a decision could be reached. Unfortunately this does mean that a decision cannot be made too soon. We are very aware that if we do have to close this can have a significant impact on families so we do aim to make a decision as soon as we can.

Finally, as many of you are now aware, on the Wednesday before we broke up for Easter we were one of hundreds of schools who received a threatening email. I wanted to take this opportunity to assure everyone that we have procedures in place for such events and we followed these. The advice was very clear from police – it was not a credible threat and therefore we were to continue as usual. I am now aware that some schools sent out information to parents regarding this. Given the advice from the police I took the decision that this was not necessary. To do otherwise would not be continuing as usual and could in fact cause confusion and unnecessary concern to parents and carers potentially inciting panic when in fact there was, as stated, no credible threat. You send your children to school every day in good faith and in the knowledge that we will look after them. We certainly do not take this responsibility lightly. I know that there is varying opinion on this particular incident but I feel it is important that I give you these assurances to allow your trust in us – we are the ones in possession of all the relevant information and will always make an informed decision based on this in the best interests of your children.

Please remember that we are a community based school with a strong team working ethos and so your continued trust and understanding is critical to successfully facing any further future challenges together.



Den Building Afternoon for KS1 and 2 children and parents

What a great afternoon we had for our Den Building Activity – the weather

that day was the best that week and although we still had a lot of mud to contend with it added to the fun and we had some terrific dens built by our coloured teams that afternoon. We also had great feedback from the parents who were able to attend.

Here are just some of the comments you made...

Some parents suggested we choose a warmer, less wet time of year. We chose this time as it fitted in with our creative focus that week around camping, dens and refugees. Our Lower School explored an alien theme for the week and the Upper School children's focus was on journeys and, in particular, the journey of refugee families. This inspired some really powerful writing from all children in the form of stories and poetry. Following the Den Building Afternoon, 27 brave Y5 and Y6 children plus 5 staff took up the challenge of camping on the school field that night. The children had learnt about the charity ShelterBox who provide boxes for shelter when homes have been destroyed due to conflict or natural disaster. They did this as a sponsored event. They had an exciting if windy evening, survived the night under canvas and raised a phenomenal £542 for the ShelterBox charity – just £48 short of the £590 required to purchase a ShelterBox. An amazing contribution made by those children. ☺

Very good afternoon – brings the whole school together, along with the parents.

Really good, messy fun!

Well organised

Great afternoon, even though there was lots of mud, it didn't spoil a thing. Kids enjoyed every minute and lots of great dens.

Great fun – good to see other groups' ideas.

Encouraged teamwork and competition.

All very organised. Great idea having the children in houses. Lovely that so many people turned up to get behind what the school is doing.



Tower Building Activity – sharing our Growth Mindset with parents and putting this into action

Our next event involving parents will be on the morning of Friday 29th June. We have had some feedback from parents requesting that we hold these events after school but unfortunately to successfully involve all children the best time to do that is during the school day. The Friends of Tanfield organise events after school and these are well supported but have a different focus.

Apologies to those parents who find it impossible to attend during the day.

The focus for this morning challenge will be Tower Building and we invite parents to join us for this. We'll start at the beginning of the school day and the activity should be completed by no later than 11 a.m. – possibly sooner. More information soon but if you have availability, please put the date in your diary.



Sporting Successes

Boys Football - The A and B teams have battled in tough conditions to play recent matches. The A team continue to play well against all-comers and the B team (mostly comprising Year 5s) have won more games and secured a draw against the A team which is very encouraging. The rescheduled match dates can be found below in the Dates for your Diary. We hope also to enter a Year 4 team into a district tournament in the coming term.

We're also extremely proud to inform you that Mason Miley has been selected to represent the U10 Newcastle United Team in an international competition in Amsterdam in May – we wish him all the best in this and look forward to hearing all about it.



Last term our interschool competitions with our partner schools were Y5 and Y6 girls and boys High 5 (coming away as winners), Y3 and Y4 golf, Y1 and Y2 football and KS2 Dodgeball. In addition to this we took part in the Derwentside Swimming Gala where children from Y3 through to Y6 competed. All children were a credit to our school showing determination, resilience and above all, enjoyment in the sport and in the competition itself.

This half term our Y2 children will take part in the Multi Sports Event at Brandon on Tuesday 22nd May and our Y3 and Y4 Cricket Team and Y1 and Y2 After School Athletics Team will be competing at Witton on Friday 18th May accompanied by the Anti-Bullying Champions, who will be meeting with their peers in the other schools.



It's great to be able to offer the children so many competitive opportunities alongside the Multi Sports events offered to all children from Y1 upwards.



Holidays in School Time Our whole school attendance at the half way point in the year was 95.27%.

At the same time last year it was 96.36% so our attendance is not as good this year. We have been hit by viruses but this does not account entirely for this drop in %. Thank you to the families who have used the upcoming Teacher Training days to book holidays - saving money for the family as well as avoiding having to request Leave of Absence. We cannot and will not authorise holidays in term time. As the table below shows, a 10 day holiday in term time is the equivalent to reducing attendance by a massive 5%. Adding to this a day of absence for illness will immediately put your child in a category of concern.

Good attendance is the key to good learning and our school target for attendance continues to be 96.5% - just above the national expectation of 96%. We celebrate good attendance every week in our Friday Assembly through weekly class and individual awards. This table shows clearly how absence can impact on the % attendance.

Percentage Attendance	Days missed over a school year
100%	0 days missed
95%	10 days missed
90%	20 days missed
85%	30 days missed
80%	40 days missed

Every Day Counts!

Every Day Counts!

Joint Events with Brandon Primary

In addition to the residential visits, termly sporting events and our Anti-Bullying Champions Meetings we have two additional events planned with Brandon children for this term. They are as follows:-



In it Together Conference for Y4

Our Y4 will be attending our annual 'In it Together' Conference in Spennymoor on Tuesday 8th May. At this event the children explore themes of diversity and equality. They will receive a letter soon with more information but may be a little late back to school that day – approx. 3.30 p.m.

Y6 Sleepover followed by Y5 and Y6 Activity Day - Thursday/Friday 14th/ 15th June

Our Y6 children are invited to a Sleepover event with their friends at Brandon Primary School (cost only £5). We are hoping that the majority of Y6 will attend and that parents can help with transport over to Brandon that evening. The children will then stay on for the Activity Day on Friday 15th June which is joint with Y5.



The Y6 children who have attended the sleepover will have their breakfast at Brandon and then wait for the rest of our children to arrive by bus on the Friday morning. Those children eligible for Free School Meals will be provided with a packed lunch, the rest of the children will need to bring theirs for the day (those on the sleepover will need to bring theirs with them on the Thursday night and they will be stored in the fridge).



Children can come in casual clothes but these must be clothes and footwear they can be active in (no football shirts please). Trousers and trainers will be essential for girls and boys as they will be involved in a variety of outdoor activities including a climbing wall. All children will return to school for the end of the day.

School Games Day (Sports Day) and Sports Week

Straight after half term is our Sports Week. Sports included during this week will be

- **Family Bike Ride** – letters will go out for this soon. It's our annual sponsored bike ride on Tuesday 5th June, straight after school. We leave from school and cycle on the cycle path to Leadgate. We hope many of you will be able to join us for this. Remember if you can't cycle with your child they can still take part. Helmets are encouraged for this activity.
- **School Games Day** – weather permitting this will take place on Wednesday 6th June. The Upper School will be in the morning, starting as soon as possible after 9.15. Pre-School and Early Years will be from 1 until 1.30 and Key Stage 1 (Y1 and Y2) will be from 1.45. Parents are welcome to join us for this.
- **Other sporting activities during this week are still to be confirmed**

SUMMER TERM 2018	
Swimming this term is for Mrs Wilkinson and Mrs Brown's classes - this will start on Monday 23rd April.	
Wednesday 18th April	Pre-School to have a day visit to Hall Hill Farm - all Pre-School children in all day today. Rearranged football matches for the boys - at Delves Lane Primary
Friday 20th April	Non School Uniform Day
Monday 23rd April	Big Spring Clean - Annual litter pick up in Tanfield. We will focus on tidying Tanfield woods – 3:15 until 4:30 (Adjacent to our school grounds). 
Wednesday 25th April	Y4 (Mrs Brown's Class) to rehearse and then hold a small concert for parents 2:30 (TBC) Rearranged football matches for the boys - after school at our school
Thursday 26 th April	Y5 and Y6 to visit Durham Cathedral
Monday 30th April p.m.	Police Dogs - Jet and Ben - to visit Pre-School and Reception
1st May	Rev. Andy Miller to lead Lower School Assembly
4th May	Non-School Uniform Day - please bring a donation in for school fund
Monday 7th May	BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY - no children in school today
7th May to 22nd May	Y2 Assessment period -it is important that Y2 children are at school during this time.
7th May - 11th May	Assessment Period for the rest of the school

Tuesday 8th May	Rev. Andy Miller to lead Upper School Assembly In It Together Conference for Y4 children at Spennymoor Leadership Centre. Joint event with Y4 children from Brandon Primary School
14th - 18th May	Y6 SAT WEEK It is very important that you do not book a holiday for this week or for the weeks leading up to it. Requests will not be authorised.
Friday 18th May	Y3 and Y4 Cricket Competition and Y1 and Y2 Athletics Competition v Brandon, LM and WG @ Witton (9.30-12) and Anti-Bullying Team out all morning.
Tuesday 22nd May	Y2 Multi Skills Festival with Brandon, Langley Moor & Witton @ Brandon (9.30-12)
Tuesday 22nd May	HALF TERM HOLIDAY BEGINS @ 3.15
Weds, Thurs & Fri 23rd /24th /25th May	Teacher Training Days - no children in school
Mon 4th June	Children back to school
4th June - 8th June	SPORTS WEEK - various activities encouraging healthy living
Tuesday 5th June	SPONSORED CYCLE RIDE - 3.15pm - 6pm Tanfield to Leadgate and back
Wednesday 6th June	SCHOOL GAMES DAY (SPORTS DAY) a.m. Upper School (starting as soon as possible after 9:15 a.m.) p.m. Early Years 1 until 1.30 Key Stage 1 (Y1 & 2) 1.45 onwards Alternative date in case of bad weather - Friday 8th June
Friday 8th June	Non-School Uniform Day - please bring a donation for school fund
11th June to 15th June	Y1 Phonics Test Week (+ those children in Y2 who did not reach required level last year)
Wednesday 13th June	Full Governing Body Meeting - TBC
Thursday 14th June	Y6 to attend the Leavers' Service at Durham Cathedral this morning Meeting for new parents (new Reception children) 4.00 p.m. in Lower School Hall No children at this meeting. Sleepover for Y6 at Brandon Primary School Starting 7 p.m.
Friday 15 th June	Activity Day at Brandon for Y5 and Y6 children
Monday 18th June	New Reception children and their parents to visit - 3.30 until 4.30 (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE)
Tuesday 19th June	Rev. Andy Miller to lead Lower School Assembly
Wednesday 20th June	New Reception Children Visits (children starting Reception in September 2018)
Tuesday 26th June	Nicola Davies (Author and Illustrator) in school all day working with the children.
Wednesday 27th June	New Reception Children Visits (children starting Reception in September 2018)
Friday 29th June	Tower Building Challenge - all parents invited to join us for this morning event. More details soon.
Monday 2nd - 4th July	Transition Days for Tanfield School (Y6 attending Tanfield out Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday)
Monday 2nd July	Children to move to new classes for a taster session today
Tuesday 3rd July	Pre-School Meetings for children starting in September - 4.00 p.m. (Adults only)
Wednesday 4th July 1pm	Transition afternoon for Reception children moving into Y1. Parents of Reception children will be invited in to move with their Reception children to the Y1 classroom.
Friday 6th July	Non-School Uniform Day - please bring donation for school fund Reports go out today
Tuesday 10th July	Rev. Andy Miller in to lead Upper School Assembly (Date needs to be changed) Y1 Multi Skills Festival with Brandon and Langley Moor @ Brandon (9.30-12)
Wednesday 11th July	Grinton Meeting for all parents of children in Y5 attending this residential - 5:15 start
Friday 13th July	Y5 and Y6 Athletics Competition and Y3 Maths Challenge Competition v Brandon, LM and WG @ Brandon (All day) and Anti Bullying Team - ALL DAY EVENT
Monday 16 th July	Dress Rehearsal for Y6 performance during afternoon 3.30 p.m. Thankyou tea for all volunteers, helpers and governors Y6 Leavers' Meal - 4.30 until 5.30 at local venue
Tuesday 17 th July	Y2 Moving On Assembly - 9.15 - parents welcome Evening Performance of Y6 production - 6 p.m.
Wednesday 18 th July	Lower School Fun Day
Thursday 19 th July	Upper School Walk - Craster to Embleton via Dunstanburgh
Friday 20th July <i>Back to school tbc</i>	Y6 YEAR CELEBRATION ASSEMBLY - 9 am Parents welcome Following the Celebration Assembly, Upper School to go to Oakies Park for the morning. 3:15 p.m. BREAK UP FOR SUMMER HOLIDAYS 3.10/3.15