



A Small School with a BIG Heart

Ellingham C of E  
Primary School

### Headteacher's Monthly Update

I have been made aware by our Parent Governors that you would like to receive a regular update from myself - so here is the first monthly update.

#### **Developments**

Due to the Government announcement that all schools should be academies by 2020, we were approached by the Diocese to explore the possibility of joining a Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust. Although the situation has changed, there is still a national academy agenda, and due to the support and value we have had as part of the Church school family, we would like to keep all options open and explore the potential benefits of this. We will, of course, consult with you as soon as we know more.

#### **Primary Transition**

It has been a smooth transition into keeping our Year 5 pupils, as only one was new to us this year. We have been able to immediately build on prior learning and assessment information so that there has been no dip in attainment. The Year 5 'Time Zone' pupils are coping well with working in the Hall each morning and are adept at moving equipment and resources quickly - I am very grateful for their mature attitude and behaviour for learning, when we have to work in the Library or entrance area.

Having Year 5 pupils has also allowed us to extend mastery opportunities for our most able Year 4s. Key Stage 2 pupils are split between 2 classes each morning for English and Maths, then Year 5 are taught separately for the third lesson each morning, focusing on specific Year 5 curriculum objectives.

Frustratingly, I have no further information about when building work on the new Hall will start. I, the Diocese and one of our local County Councillors have made numerous requests for information. All we have been told is that the project is being retendered. I contacted the Primary Commissioner for Northumberland, two weeks ago, who agreed this was an unacceptable situation. The Diocese is expecting there will be more information before Christmas. I will let you know as soon as I know anything.

#### **Curriculum**

The curriculum section of the school website now has assessment expectation information for every year group in reading, writing and all aspects of mathematics. The information is sorted by Key Stage, so if you want Year 5 it is in the Upper Key Stage 2 section, or Reception is in the Foundation Stage part. The assessment expectations show the curriculum covered and the expected outcomes for each term. As our curriculum is challenging, the 'end of term 2' expectations are actually the nationally expected outcomes for each year group and term 3

outcomes are those for pupils 'working at depth and mastery.' Your child's teacher will let you know if your child is working from a different set of age related expectations, either due to an additional educational need in a specific area or if they are gifted.

Topic information is available for each Key Stage, in a web or grid format, alongside information about phonics, our approaches to English and Mathematics, overviews of RE, Computing and the Creative Curriculum etc. We are currently working on the next set of topic webs.

In the Spring Term, I will arrange an after-school drop-in for parents/carers to the curriculum expectations and unpick some of the terminology that may be new to you.

From January, Year 4 and 5 pupils will not be swimming for two terms. These pupils will have an hour of additional Creative Curriculum lesson time with Mrs Stapleton, followed by PE.

Reception pupils will start swimming from January, but Nursery aged pupils will remain in school. We are closely monitoring the swimming provision at Willowburn, as we have been disappointed with organisational issues and inconsistent staffing since changes made by Active Northumberland.

We are extending our PE and Sports provision, offering a wider range of competition within Alnwick Partnership of schools, as well as within the School Games set-up. I am trying to arrange additional after-school clubs. From January, the after-school sports will be on a Thursday, starting with Badminton, Multi-sports and athletics until Easter, then Cricket with Tom Vickers onwards.

In order not to disadvantage those pupils who can't stay after school for clubs, next term we will be starting both a lunchtime recorder playing group and a 'Maths through Art' club.

Diane Lakey November 2016