

Kirk Fenton CE Primary School

Faith in Ourselves, Hope for the Future, Love for Each Other

Governors Newsletter – July 2017

As the 2016/2017 academic year comes to a close, we can reflect and feel rightfully proud of our school, both staff and pupils; for the outstanding achievements, the challenges overcome and the ongoing passion and commitment demonstrated throughout our whole school community.

Our role within the local STAR Alliance (Sherburn, Tadcaster and Rural Teaching School Alliance) has strengthened this year, with one of our staff appointed as one of the earliest Peer Support Teachers within the Alliance. This partnership of local primary and secondary schools enables collaborative planning for school improvement and in this challenging time of managing reduced school budgets, it has a positive impact on our ability to commission services and secure best value for money. Through the sharing of our many skills and experiences, capitalising on the expertise of talented staff / governors and making the most of the capacity we have to support, help and improve learning and achievement. You can visit the website for further information: www.starteachingschoolalliance.org

This year has also seen further embedding of a Kirk Fenton curriculum that reflects our ethos, values, key priorities and continued investment in Outdoor Learning. Understanding the World is now a big strength of the EYFS, with pupils demonstrating great progress through engaging activities in the woods and outdoor areas. Older pupils have learned from designing, costing, and planting areas within the grounds. These include a peace garden, sculpture park, meadow and plans for an outdoor classroom. These real-life situations have provided a relevance and context for learning across the curriculum. This outstanding provision is recognised and teachers from other schools both in North Yorkshire and other Local Authorities have visited to observe the practice and learn from our school. The Eco Warriors have led the work to achieve the Silver Eco School Award and are now aiming for a Green Flag Award. The school has also been awarded the Silver School Games Award and Bronze FFL (Food for Life).

The qualities of resilience, self-motivation and organisation are all recognised and celebrated within school. This approach has been rewarded with incredibly positive impacts, encouraging a greater depth of active learning in core subject areas and developing understanding. With this ethos at the heart, it is enabling us to deliver on our fundamental school development plan aim: continual raising of standards. This impacts progress across the whole curriculum, building on the Growth Mindset approach, and embedding the Good Learning Characteristics, in the context of our core Christian values.

Measurable success has been evidenced in the data from both SATs and Teacher Assessments. This year our Early Years children's level of development was above average, as was attainment in Y1 phonics which has improved year on year since 2014. At the end of KS2 and despite a protracted and uncertain staff absence, our oldest children made accelerated progress in their final year in primary school, most notably in reading. At KS1 children made especially pleasing progress in reading, maths and science. Great thanks go to all of our staff who are so committed to our children.

In addition, a very big thank you to the 'Friends of Kirk Fenton' who do amazing work to improve facilities and enhance resources; whilst encouraging community spirit and the links between school and home.

Our team of Governors provide support to the school in a number of ways, using our different skills and experience from various backgrounds. We aim to provide effective support and challenge for school leaders, to confirm that the school's performance is evaluated and continuously improves, to drive strategic direction and to ensure that the school rises to whatever new challenges come our way! One important area of focus now is the recruitment of a new Headteacher for our school. After 7 years of outstanding service, Mrs. Curry will sadly be leaving us at the end of Autumn Term 2017. Hence, to facilitate a smooth transition, adverts are now published, inviting applications over the summer, with plans in place to shortlist and interview in September. Most of all, as Governors we are here because we care for our school as an integral and important part of our local community and want it to succeed.

Regards, Joseph Miller – Chair of Governors

On behalf of the Full Governing Body of Kirk Fenton