

# Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

October 16<sup>th</sup> 2020 Volume 7

## **'Open the Window'**

The COVID situation requires us to think of creative solutions for a host of Ox Close events and traditions. As we are unable to go out into the community or to have parents in school, we must seek ways to continue to showcase the many wonderful things which go on in school. This initiative is termed as 'Open the Window'. This week Brendon Renwick started working with the children in Year 1 and 2 as we move towards what will eventually become our jigsawed whole school Christmas performance. Brendon is working with each class in small groups and in a well-ventilated space in the Community Garden classroom. Each teacher will then have some words to practice with their class at a convenient point after half term.

## **Harvest**

As part of the 'Open the Window' initiative, the children will also be sending messages of kindness, friendship and love to worthy local causes and people. I have allocated a cause to each class and we will be producing messages, making a display, quarantining the messages and finally sending them to the worthy causes. This is our attempt to mark Harvest by harvesting love and kindness. The Ox Close children are wonderful and if we can help to (safely) spread a little cheer at this most difficult time then that will be worthwhile.

## **Virtual Tour**

Earlier this week, I also organised filming for a virtual tour of the school. This will be used when we have our virtual open days for prospective parents next month. As we wandered around the school, it was lovely to see how engaged and happy the children are. Although this is a very challenging and intense time, it is impossible not to be lifted by the sheer zest and enthusiasm that the children show and express. I look forward to seeing and sharing the video when it is completed.

## **Wraparound Care**

Bookings for next half term are now open on our online booking system. If you require a log in for this system, then you can collect a form from either the Nursery or School office. Please note that there is no Wraparound Care on Monday 30th November due to PD Day and no After School Club on Friday 18th December.

## **School Photographer in School**

On Wednesday we had a visit from Phototronics, who took photographs of children from right across the school. Due to COVID-19, our arrangements had to be slightly different this year and all safety protocols were followed. The photographers did a great job and they were very complimentary about the children and the organisation in school. Well done to Mrs Ozturk for all of her hard work in organising the arrangements and to Mrs Franklin for assisting.

## **Autumn Walk - 1/2P**

Next week, Class 12P are going to be taking part in some Autumn activities outside. As the ground will be very wet and muddy, please could they bring in a pair of wellies or old trainers to get changed into. Could they please bring them in a named carrier on Monday and they will be returned home on Wednesday at the latest. Many thanks, Mrs Phillips.

## **Halloween - Friday 23rd October**

On Friday 23rd October (last day of term), the children are invited to come to school in Halloween themed clothing - this could be dressing up, orange/black/green clothing or just non-school uniform. We are not asking that you go out and purchase anything new - use what you already have. In school, we will then complete Halloween activities in classrooms and, for those children on school lunch, have a themed lunch provided by Karen and her staff in the kitchen. The OCF will provide school with resources. In addition, a special treat has been provided by Kaye Roberts for each child. To help raise funds for OCF, we ask for a £1 contribution on the day if possible. We are sure that all the children will enjoy the day and have lots of fun.

## **COVID-19**

If you or anyone in your family are displaying COVID-19 symptoms then the following link is useful in order for you to be able to book a test: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Alternatively, you can also call 119. Under these circumstances, please keep us informed. It is also important that if anyone in your household, child or adult, displays symptoms or has a test all within the household self isolates. This means that all siblings who live with a child or adult who is displaying symptoms should not attend school until the end of the self-isolation period or after the affected person has had a negative test. Please check by calling the school office if you are unsure. Thank you.

## **Drop off and Pick up**

We respectfully ask that only one parent accompanies the children to and collects the children from school. In addition, in the interests of minimising the risk of the spread of the virus, we ask that parents do not arrive early at school and that they leave as soon as they collect the children. While schools do not have jurisdiction over parents

off site, the advice from Durham County Council is that parents may choose to wear a face covering or mask if they feel as though it is difficult to maintain social distancing at the school gate. Thank you for your continued co-operation and for working with us to slow the spread of the virus, something which will inevitably eventually affect all schools.

**Speed Awareness**

We have received a complaint from a parent with regard to people driving too fast outside of school. Please could all drivers proceed with caution in the interests of the safety of all of the children, pedestrians and other road users.

**Reception Changes of Clothing**

Mrs Bowman is asking if any Reception parent has a pair of trousers which belong to another child as a child has lost a pair of brand new M&S trousers, unfortunately they were not named. She would also like donations of underwear & socks as they have a limited supply. Thank you.

**Virtual Classroom**

Our Virtual Classroom continues to be available on our school website. There are some children that, as we go through the term, may need to self-isolate for numerous reasons. To ensure that these children are still learning whilst at home, we will upload planning on a weekly basis. These plans contain suggested activities to complete with your child and links to useful websites. In addition, we are also making arrangements to COVID-proof our curriculum in case of further significant longer-term lockdowns. Mrs Harvey has started recording some Geography lessons and will continue with this over the coming weeks and months.

**Class Charts**

I am delighted to announce our Class Charts winners of the week. In Reception, Harry P gathered the most points while our top scorer this week in 1/2 was Toby S. In Key Stage 2 Robbie Y scored highest in 3/4 and Cassidy B was the top scorer in 5/6.

**Attendance**

Despite the particular challenges of COVID-19, our attendance has been excellent since the beginning of term. Once again, I would like to thank parents for their support with this and also to pay tribute to the children and the staff.

Classes RB and 5/6P had the highest attendance this week with 100%. The overall school attendance this year is 97.6% while this week it has been 97.9%. The threshold for what is termed as persistent absence has been determined as 90%. **Unfortunately, we are also unable to authorise term time holidays as we have to follow the Government and Durham County protocol. The Durham County protocol explains that penalty notices must be issued ‘in instances of unauthorised holidays in term time (where the holiday gives rise to 7 days or more unauthorised absence in any period...)**. The school processes absences and then the County Council pick up on unauthorised absence. The Government have now reinstated fines for unauthorised absences and their expectation is that all children will attend school.

**Dates for the Diary**

Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020	Halloween Celebration
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020	School closes for half term
<b>October Half Term</b>	
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020	Children back to school
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Flu Vaccination Day
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> , Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Parent Consultation Evenings – these will be held virtually and more information will follow.
<b>Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>	<b>PD Day – School Closed</b>
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	School closes for Christmas holidays
<b>Christmas Holidays</b>	
<b>Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>	<b>PD Day – School Closed</b>
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Children back to school

*A Bowden*

Miss A Bowden  
Head of School

*D Harrison*

Mr D Harrison  
Executive Headteacher