

Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

April 16th 2021 Volume 27

Welcome Back

It has been a great week back at school, it has been fantastic to see all of the children. They have settled back into the school routine really well and there has been a happy mood around school. The brighter weather certainly also helps to make everyone feel positive. After what has been a very challenging time, it is lovely to look ahead to the summer and, despite the continuing COVID difficulties, it will be a very busy term, as it always is at Ox Close. Attendance this week has been really high at 97.9%.

Above and Beyond

I am delighted to bring news of recognition for the school, via an aptly named project: Above and Beyond. Information on the project can be found here: <http://bit.ly/AbBe21>. Durham County Council have been looking into the efforts of schools during the pandemic and are seeking to highlight best practice. Our virtual learning offer would stand up well against others but this project is seeking to acknowledge the extras, the many things which the best schools offer in addition to conventional practice, things which do take up many hours to organise but which are really rewarding. The County Council have made some 20 minute films. I have always been a big believer in holistic development, a nurturing environment and community involvement. We can now confirm that we will be featuring in the **'Wellbeing' film at 2pm on Monday 19th April, 2021**. The film will be accessible [here](#) and, although we have not been allowed to see it yet, I do know that our Harvest Hearts project that I organised and the Tell me Trees, which Miss Bowden arranged, will be appearing, as well as some interviews that I did with our Children's Champion and 2 of our Year 4's. In addition, we can now confirm that we will be featuring in the **'Community Spirit' film at 2pm on Tuesday 20th April, 2021** and this will feature some of the amazing video which was organised by Rebecca Lawrence last year. The film will be accessible [here](#). Both films will also be available on Durham County Council's YouTube page thereafter. We will watch the films live in school both days and it would be great if parents also watched if they had time.

North East Primary Research Group

I am leading a collaborative learning project with a group of 10 Primary Schools from across the North East. This project will offer some amazing professional development for some of our teachers and will ultimately help us to make Ox Close even better, as well as develop further links with other good and outstanding schools.

Close Contacts: Key Stage 2 lunch and playtime breaks

Although we have been relatively fortunate in terms of bubble closures, unfortunately we have had 2 occasions in Key Stage 2 where we have had to close an entire bubble, leading to periods of self-isolation for a high number of children. While this is no way the fault of anyone, I have felt for some time that we need to try to do even more to try to avoid this. The reason why entire bubbles close is that they have break and lunch time together and it is impossible to prove that close contact has not occurred when we have to call Public Health. Lunch times span from 11am until 2pm with 4 bubbles, which is a huge logistical effort. It would be impossible to split the bubbles into 3 or we would be starting lunch at 6am and finishing at 3pm! This being the case, from next week we will be having separate outdoor play areas for the Key Stage 2 year groups - we have organised a rota where the 3 classes will rotate between the field, the yard and the MUGA. We have also purchased brand new play equipment. I discussed the situation with all of the classes and the children were very mature and in each class were able to identify the solution without me telling them what it would be! Key Stage 1 and Reception arrangements will remain unchanged.

Welcome Aboard

Today, both the school and parents were informed of the names of the Reception starters for September 2021. We have had a quick look through the list and there are a few familiar ones as we have a number of siblings of existing pupils. Congratulations to all who have received a space. I know that there are already 20 on the waiting list and it is shame that we are not able to give everyone their first choice but we cannot possibly fit more than 45 into a year group in our existing building.

Congratulations Lucas

Lucas R, who is in Year 6, is an outstanding footballer. This was very clear from the moment that I first saw him play in Reception and he has gone on to many successes already. Lucas plays in defence for Sunderland AFC's Academy team but he also has great attacking attributes. This has been recognised by the Darlington District Football team as Lucas has been chosen to represent them as a striker and, not only that, he will also captain the team. Congratulations to Lucas and to his parents, who I know put in a lot of time taking him to training and, under normal circumstances, to play in all corners of the land!

Parent Consultations

Thank you for booking your virtual parent consultation appointments. These will take place between the 26th and 28th April.

Class Charts Points

Over the past 5 days Lacy G, finished as top points scorer in Reception, while Nancy T scored highest in 1/2. In 3/4 Wisdom W gathered the most points while Alex T achieved the same feat in 5/6. Well done to all concerned!

Collection and Drop Off

We respectfully ask that only one parent/carer 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. **At drop off time, everyone should be mindful of the rules around close contacts and, therefore, children should not arrive too early and should also avoid being within 1 metre for a minute or more and within 2 metres of other individuals for 15 minutes cumulatively over the course of the day. In addition, we would respectfully request that adults do not stand and gather together in groups outside of the school gates as this presents a clear COVID risk. We do require visitors to the office to wear a mask at this time, just as they would be asked to wear one in a shop or garage.** Thank you for your continued co-operation and for working with us to slow the spread of the virus, something which is still very important at this point in time as the return of all pupils to school across the country will inevitably see a rise in the infection rate.

Well-being support

The pandemic has brought the issue of Mental Health to the fore and it is great that it is becoming more widely spoken about, with stories in the news every day. There is no doubt that many children and adults across the country will have suffered with anxiety as a result of the pandemic and it is something which we have been keeping a close eye on since September. Miss Bewick, our PSA, has counselling qualifications and is available to speak to, in confidence, if either you or your child need support or advice in this area. She also has a background in working for Families First so has a good knowledge of available support services. I know that she has arranged some support for families already and is very keen to help others.

Miss Bewick would also like me to share her email address with you so that you can contact her directly: r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk. Please feel free to get in touch with her about this or any other matters which she would normally assist.

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 if your child has been in school. 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, even if children are eligible to attend, 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.

In addition, if there is a positive Lateral Flow Test result, the procedure is to self-isolate and to book a COVID test in the same manner as previously. Full details are given in the link above. Thank you.

A Bowden

Miss A Bowden
Head of School

D Harrison

Mr D Harrison
Executive Headteacher