

# Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

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## **Another Busy Week**

The children have all been working extremely hard this week – when I have popped in to classrooms there has been a real excitement and buzz for learning. It has also been Parent Consultation meetings this week – thank you to all of those who managed to attend and for bearing with us when technical difficulties arose. We value our relationships with parents and carers and these virtual meetings still allow us to discuss your child's wellbeing, learning and progress in school and at home.

## **Buddy**

Miss Bowden's dog Buddy had his first day at Ox Close today – he was very well behaved and the children (and staff!) all loved seeing him. He was a special guest in our Celebration Assembly and also visited all of the classrooms. The highlight of his day was visiting our fabulous children but he also loved the smells coming from the kitchen at lunchtime too. Hopefully he will visit us again soon!

## **End of Year Virtual Events**

As we rapidly approach the final stages of the academic year, our thoughts are turning to the planning of end of year events. It has been quite a year and the country continues to be engulfed by COVID and all of the associated restrictions and necessary adjustments to daily life. While we are optimistic that the picture is improving, and we don't know by how far the picture will have improved by July at this stage: we have taken the decision to make the end of year events, such as Y6 Leavers Assembly and other Graduations, virtual. Having large groups of visitors on site presents a huge risk and we really must continue to do all that we can to stop the spread of the virus and, also, try our best not to be the source of an outbreak on the cusp of the summer holidays. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

## **Amalgamation**

We have been informed that the proposal to amalgamate Ox Close Primary and Oxclose Nursery into a single primary school was agreed by the Local Authority in its role as decision maker at this week's Cabinet meeting. The Council's Cabinet made the decision as it is believed that amalgamating Ox Close Primary and Oxclose Nursery Schools in a larger new build replacement school will ensure there are sufficient school places to meet future demand across Spennymoor and will enhance education provision in the area and will lead to a more sustainable establishment for the long term that will bring about educational improvement and will continue to provide equal access for all.

## **Exciting Opportunities**

Now that the amalgamation has been confirmed by DCC's cabinet, I have been researching the very best provision in new schools across the North East and the country. The new build is of course subject to planning and we totally respect that process. Should the plans be passed, I am determined that we will create the most amazing school and transfer the very best of Ox Close, while adding bespoke, world class facilities. My personal motivation has always been to achieve the best that I can and the school's mantra is to 'Be the best that you can be'. I am excited to work with Miss Bowden and others to make that vision become a reality if this project goes ahead.

## **Birthdays**

Just a reminder that until the end of this academic year, children cannot bring cake and sweets in to celebrate with their class due to restrictions. We will continue to celebrate birthdays in school at the end of each term with a class party - these have been a hit so far this school year so I have no doubt that the Summer one will be as well.

## **Class Charts**

Over the past 5 days Alaynah G finished as top points scorer in Reception, while Caleb W scored highest in 1/2. In 3/4 Jude G and Eva B 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.

### 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](mailto: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.

### New Menu Running from 7<sup>th</sup> June to the End of Term

You can now make meal bookings on Parent Pay to 16<sup>th</sup> July and order forms are going out today. Please return the forms as soon as possible, if you are unable to make bookings online yourself.

### Attendance

Class 1/2C had the highest attendance this week with 99.7%. The overall school attendance this year is 97.6% while this week it has been 96.5%. 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.

### Dates for the Diary

<b>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May</b>	<b>School closed - Bank Holiday</b>
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> May	3:15pm – Break up for half-term
Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> May – Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> June	Half-term holiday
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> June	Children back to school
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> July	3:15pm – Break up for Summer holidays
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	Children back to school

*A Bowden*

Miss A Bowden  
Head of School

*D Harrison*

Mr D Harrison  
Executive Headteacher