

Thornley Primary School

.....where everyone can shine like stars!



Newsletter

July 2016

Term Dates

Wednesday 20th July Break up Summer Holiday

New Academic Year 2016 – 2017

2016

Wednesday 7th September Return to School
Friday 21st October Break up October Half Term
Monday 31st October Return to School
Friday 16th December Break up Christmas holiday

2017

Tuesday 3rd January Return to School
Friday 17th February Break up February Half Term
Monday 27th February Return to School
Friday 7th April Break up – Easter Holiday
Monday 24th April Return to School
Monday 1st May School closed for May Bank Holiday
Friday 26th May Break up May Half Term
Tuesday 6th June Return to School
Friday 21st July Break up – Summer 2017

Other Notable Dates/Events

Thursday 14th July Ugly Bug Ball Performance - 2pm (Parents invited)
Friday 15th July EYFS Pedal Push (morning only)
Friday 15th July Summer Fayre 1.45pm
Monday 18th July Sports Day starting at 1.30 (Parents welcome)
Tuesday 19th July Y2 Graduation Ceremony - 2pm (Parents invited)
Wednesday 20th July Y6 Leavers' Assembly 9am (Parents invited)

Bugsy Malone DVD

The show was recorded on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday evening. I have 30 copies of Wednesday's performance available to buy at £5 per copy.

September 2016

Uniform Policy Reminder

Grey or black trousers or skirt/pinafore
Black school shoes
Pale blue polo shirt
Royal blue sweatshirt or cardigan
Hair decorations to be blue
Boys' hair to be smart – no fancy patterns!

We sell uniform at cost price. Prices are as follows:

Sweatshirts	£7.50
Cardigans	£8.75
Polo Shirts	£6.25
Fleece	£12.00
Waterproof fleece	£17.95
P.E. Kit with bag	£8.50 (must be ordered – no stock kept in school)
Book Bags	£3.60 and £4.80

There is no obligation to wear uniform with the school logo as long as the school's colours are respected.

Sale of 'old' uniform

As you will be aware, the new uniform now displays our lovely logo. However, the old style logo is still part of our uniform and there is no obligation to replace existing items of uniform that are still serviceable.

We have some boxes (assorted sizes) of sweatshirts and polo shirts which will be available to buy at less than half price.

These will be for sale at the Summer Fayre or by enquiring at the school office.

Dinner Money Increase

The cost of school meals will go up to £10 per week from 1st September (Key Stage 2 pupils only)

Universal Free School Meals

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are all entitled to Free School Meals under the above government scheme.

After-School Clubs

There will be no after-school clubs in the first week back. Clubs will resume on Monday 12th September. Details of the weekly programme will be sent out at the beginning of term. It is likely that all existing clubs will resume and that there will be some additional ones.

Staffing Organisation from September

Early Years Foundation Stage Staff:

Miss Delaney (Lead)
Mrs Stephenson (Teacher)
Miss Baird (0.5 Teacher / 0.5 Teaching Assistant)
Mr Prince (Teaching Assistant)

Key Stage 1 Staff:

Year 1 : Mrs Reynolds (0.6) and Mrs Fairclough (0.5)
Year 2 : Miss Parker

Key Stage 2 Staff:

Year 3 : Mrs Williams
Year 4 : Miss Hunter
Year 5 : Mr Johns
Year 6 : Mrs Tateson

Changes in Teaching Staff

As stated in the last newsletter, Mrs Wardle is leaving us at the end of term. Miss Delaney is taking over as the Foundation Stage Lead.

Mrs Stephenson will fill the vacant post in EYFS and Miss Baird, who has Qualified Teacher Status, will act in a teaching role for mornings due to the high number of Reception pupils joining us in September.

Mrs Tateson has returned from maternity leave and will resume her role as Deputy Head and Year 6 teacher in September. Mr Johns will teach Year 5 replacing Mr Halkyard whose one-year contract is due to expire.

Mrs Tait is going on maternity leave in September. Her part time post is being filled by Mrs Fairclough who was appointed in June.

Once again, I would like to extend everyone's warmest wishes to Mrs Wardle who has been at Thornley for almost 30 years. Staff here will all miss her expert knowledge of all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage; her fantastic creativity; her very dry sense of humour and her ability to tell a very good tale and to keep smiling whatever the weather brings!

I am sure that all parents will miss having her around – she has taught many of you - our current parents and has been able to provide a safe and comforting link between home and school.

Enjoy your retirement Mrs Wardle! We will all miss you – and we hope that you will agree to come back to see us as often as you like!!

On behalf of all staff and parents I would like to wish Mr Halkyard the very best of luck in his new job. Mr Halkyard is going back to his hometown of Doncaster to start a new teaching post. He has worked hard during his NQT year and passed with flying colours! Not only that, but he has resurrected the school football team and helped us to win the league! We will miss you Mr Halkyard. Stay in touch!

Peer Review Feedback

The school had a Peer Review on 28th June. Three local head teachers formed the review team and one of the areas I asked them to look at was around parental involvement:

- What are the good things about the school?
- What (if any) are the barriers preventing you from coming in to school?
- What could the school do to further engage parents?

A small group of parents agreed to be interviewed and I will share some of the responses with you.

Positives:

- ✓ Children love coming to school and have a good relationship with staff
- ✓ Teachers are always willing to speak to parents when there are issues, including for children with special educational needs etc
- ✓ Parents' evenings and annual reports
- ✓ All parents interviewed said they were keen to be involved – would join a PTA or similar group
- ✓ There are lots of after-school clubs
- ✓ Lots of rewards (e.g. Oscars) – could be extended across all groups
- ✓ School wants all children to 'Shine like a Star'
- ✓ Fabulous performances – everybody wants to come and watch but the hall is not big enough
- ✓ Children go on residential (however, Robinwood booked on a first come first served basis and some parents can't pay the deposit straight away)
- ✓ Parents have started being invited in to work with pupils (Easter Egg decorating was brilliant)
- ✓ The local community see the school children out and about ; golden time walking group/ litter picking etc
- ✓ Lots of villagers come to the school fayre and many turn up for the cenotaph visit

Areas to Consider:

- ? Communication needs to be better (sometimes late notice about events)
- ? Facebook not updated regularly. Open site – anyone can see photos
- ? Parents' Forum has not been sustained
- ? Parents aren't invited to come in and help
- ? Parents do not know who the parent governor representatives are
- ? Some groups of parents get asked to help at fairs etc and not others
- ? School is very 'dramatic' but not all children can be involved. More opportunities for other talents to be displayed e.g. sport / art

Suggestions:

- Support with homework would be appreciated
- Family / adult learning would be attended by parents
- A homework club for children who can't be supported at home
- Clubs for Reception pupils? – could parents help with this?

Do you have any comments about what we do well? Or what we might improve?

Please contact school by emailing thornley@durhamlearning.net with your suggestions.

Some of the issues raised by parents are what might be referred to as 'quick-fixes'. Here are some responses to the comments made:

Parent Volunteers Needed!

As classes are growing in numbers, we are looking for parents who can give us some regular time to hear readers. There would need to be some training for this but just a couple of sessions would get us started.

If you are interested in helping with hearing readers, then get in touch. Training will be early in the Autumn Term.

'Thornley Primary School...where everyone can shine like stars!'

This is our school 'motto' and it is totally inclusive. Shining like a star is something we can all do. Whether it is being an excellent reader; a great footballer; a brilliant artist or a talented singer.....but it is also a good description for those children who 'shine like stars' in other ways: being a hard worker; a good friend; being kind and caring; making others feel good by always smiling or being beautifully well-behaved Our children shine in so many different ways.... and to us, that makes them all stars!

Family Learning

In the Autumn Term, I will be setting up some times for parents to come in and work along with their children. These types of activities have not been very well-attended in the past. The sorts of things we could offer include Computing; Outdoor Learning; Mathematics and Phonics. Any other ideas or suggestions would be helpful.

Homework Club

Mrs Tateson will be starting a lunch time Homework Club in the Autumn Term. Details will be finalised in September. It is important that the Homework Club supports the pupils who genuinely need it.

Residential Trip to Robinwood

This is an annual trip – so every year pupils are invited to take part. It is usually concentrated on Years 5 and 6 but sometimes Year 4 pupils are invited to make up the numbers.

When we book the trip, we have to book pupils in multiples of 13. We would need to take 13, 26 or 39 pupils. Unfilled places still have to be paid for. In the past, the school has lost money from pupils dropping out of going to Robinwood. This year, we have filled 26 places – the best response we have had for years! Places are reserved on a 'first come, first served' basis. The letter will come around the end of February/beginning of March. It will ask for a £10 deposit. This will secure a place.

Communication

I am well aware that sometimes, we don't give enough notice – especially when decisions are made 'on the spur of the moment'. Newsletters always have lists of known dates. Comments about texting / Facebook have been taken on board.

Parent Governors : Who are they, and how are they elected?

Parent governors are elected for 3 years.

If there is a vacancy, it is usually publicised via a newsletter or other letter to parents inviting expressions of interest. Parents are asked to complete a form saying why they would like to be a governor of the school.

The last time the school asked for expressions of interest, we sent out an information sheet asking for particular skills which would enhance the quality of the Governing Body. This is a requirement now. Governors are expected to contribute to one of the key areas of school governorship. The skills include:

- Financial planning & management
- Premises & facilities management
- Procurement / purchasing experience
- Data analysis
- Understanding of special educational needs
- Good literacy / numeracy & ICT skills
- Understanding of current educational policy

If more than one parent expresses an interest, then a ballot is held. This is managed by School and Governor Support Services (SGSS) and ballot papers are sent out to all parents.

The parent with the most votes is the elected governor. Once the three year term of office is up, the vacancy must go out to advert again. Parent governors do not automatically stay in post but can be re-elected.

School governance is a strategic role. It is about 'thinking' and not 'doing'. Guidance from the National Governors' Association says that 'governors must not be tempted to do the staff's job: management of a school must be left to the school leadership team'.

The current Parent Governors are:

Miss Jennifer Adams (pupil in Nursery)
Mrs Julie Parker (pupil in Year 3)
Mrs Clare Shippen (pupils in Year 2 and Reception)
Mrs Claire Robson (pupil in Year 2)

Happy Summer Holiday

Apologies for the length of this newsletter. I hope that you have found the time to read it and that some of the information has been useful.

Thank you to all parents and members of extended families who continue to support the school.

On behalf of all staff at Thornley Primary School, I would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Summer. This is an extremely long holiday!! We all look forward to seeing you in the new term!