



# JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to January's newsletter. We have had a mixed start to the new year, weather-wise, with snow, frost, ice and of course, Storm Eowyn. Although the weather is getting a little warmer, the days remain varied but at least the days are now getting a bit longer with not so dark mornings coming to school and being light at the end of the school day. January is a long month and we have been back at school for a full four weeks now and the children have been very busy, as usual. We have had lots of enrichment visits this month too, as well as participation in sporting events and visitors to school.

## Classroom News

**Nursery** – Nursery has welcomed some new friends in the last few weeks who have settled in well. The children have had great fun exploring Chinese New Year. They watched the dragon dance then had a go at being a dragon and had great fun frightening all the parents with their dragon masks.

**Reception** – Reception children have enjoyed learning about Winter and how the weather and their surroundings have changed since Autumn. They have enjoyed learning about Chinese New Year this week and loved their visit to Chinatown! They have made lanterns and decorated paper snakes! They have also enjoyed playing in their new role play areas in the classroom – the Chinese restaurant and Chinese takeaway!

**Year 1** – Year 1 are having a brilliant start to Spring 1! In English, they have been using prefixes and suffixes in sentences as well as nouns, verbs and adjectives. In Maths, they have been comparing numbers to 20. They are able to explain day length in Science as they are learning all about Winter. They are comparing toys past and present in History. They were very excited this morning for their trip to the Discovery Museum to take part in a museum led Toy Workshop and travel to Newcastle on the metro!

**Year 2** – Year 2 took part in a brilliant gymnastics festival at NUcastle where they practised a range of skills including forward rolls, handstands, cartwheels and jumps! The children are becoming more confident when using the rekenreks during their daily Mastering Number lessons and are becoming more secure in their knowledge of number bonds. In art, they have explored the great work of Picasso and looked carefully at different brush strokes used within the artwork. They are looking forward to creating their own expressive artwork taking inspiration from the art work they have looked at.

**Year 3** – Year 3 have enjoyed reading 'The Big Blue Whale' and 'This Morning I Met a Whale'. They have been interested to learn about different types of sea bird and also facts about blue whales. In Maths, they have been extending their knowledge of multiplication and have been multiplying two digit numbers! In French, they have been learning the names of different animals and have been learning how to say what their favourite animals are. They have enjoyed creating their own games using Kodu in Computing and have enjoyed learning skills needed for football and dodgeball in PE. The children are excited to be working with Connect Mental Health on a Friends Resilience activity each Friday afternoon.

**Year 4** – Year 4 children have been enjoying our class text in English called 'Escape from Pompeii'. They have learned about Mount Vesuvius and the eruption in AD79. They have worked hard to punctuate speech between the two characters. In History, we have been learning about the Anglo-Saxons and how hard it was to invade Britain. The children enjoyed learning about Anglo-Saxon settlements and worked in groups to create wattle and daub, a weaving pattern and mixture used for building. In Science, they have enjoyed exploring how food moves through the digestive system.

**Year 5** – Seven Year 5 pupils went to Foxhunters Pavilions to learn about being Young Sports Leaders: promoting increased physical activity in school and helping younger children be active in school. The Year 5 girls took part in a girls only basketball coaching session (with Year 6 girls) led by Newcastle Eagles. The class also took part in a Climate Change workshop with students from Northumbria University where they trialled a board game that highlights how we can challenge reducing climate temperature increase.

**Year 6** – Year 6 have been enjoying learning all about the heart in Science, understanding the parts of it and taking part in sheep's heart dissections at Norham High School! They have developed their understanding of World War 2 in History and PE this month, learning a variety of World War 2 dances as well as understanding the impact the war had on Britain. Children have really enjoyed learning about Antarctica and Ernest Shackleton's Endurance expedition in English. We have found out lots about what life is like there and how difficult it is to explore.

### Staffing News

We would like to welcome, Christina, to Riverside. Christina (who is mam to Arya in Reception and Izzy in Year 2) is our new Kitchen Assistant and her role involves serving food to children alongside Michelle, another Kitchen Assistant and Christine, our School Cook. Arya and Izzy were very excited to see their mam at work on Monday!

Mrs Burston, Teaching Assistant in Year 2, continues to be absent from work following planned surgery. We wish her a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing her soon. Miss Calboutin continues to be the long term cover Teaching Assistant in Year 2, supporting children's learning.

Christine, our school cook, has now returned to work following her knee surgery and is enjoying making delicious school dinners for our children, once again.

I am very saddened to inform you that Miss Bates, Year 4 teacher, who has been absent from school since December, has been diagnosed with cancer and is currently undergoing treatment. She will be absent from school for some time whilst she receives treatment. I am sure you will join me in sending Miss Bates lots of luck and good wishes and we look forward to seeing her back at Riverside when she is well enough. In the meantime, Mrs MacDougall is currently the teacher of Year 4.

### Home- School Communication – IMPORTANT UPDATE

We now have dedicated email addresses for those members of staff who parents are in regular contact with regarding specific issues with children. This might include asking questions about upcoming meetings or incidents which may have occurred.

**These members of staff are Mrs Hall, SENCO and Miss Cameron, Pupil Welfare Officer.**

If any parent wants to send communication by email, the dedicated email addresses are:

Miss Cameron, Pupil Welfare Officer: [parentsupport@riversideprimary.org.uk](mailto:parentsupport@riversideprimary.org.uk)

Mrs Hall, SENCO: [senco@riversideprimary.org.uk](mailto:senco@riversideprimary.org.uk)

**No other email address should be used to contact these staff members.** Parents should also understand that both of these members of staff have roles which involve weekly timetabled teaching time or sessions when they directly work with children and so emails sent may not be replied to immediately, but normally within 48 hours.

### ReachMoreParents

We are delighted that so many of our parents have now signed up to our new school app but sadly we have yet to have 100% sign up! We consider the app to be the best way for us to communicate information with you (and for you to communicate with us!) as well as sharing lots of photographs of what your children have been up to. The app is also used to obtain parental consent for trips as this prevents the need for an unnecessary waste of paper for trip letters. If you know of a parent who hasn't yet signed up, please encourage them to do so. School Office staff can also assist with setting up the app and activating notifications on your phone.

### Attendance and Punctuality

A reminder that the 100% attendance certificates for the Spring Term will now also take into consideration being on time for school so those pupils who will receive a certificate and an Amazon voucher at the end of the Spring Term will be those who have been at school EVERY DAY AND have arrived at school ON TIME.

### School Office

The School Office is open Monday to Thursday from 8.00am – 4.00pm and 8.00am – 3.30pm on Fridays. The school answerphone is in use outside of these times if you wish to leave message. All messages are picked up at 8.00am. The school office staff are Ms Taylor, School Business Manager, and Miss Clay, Administration Assistant. Miss Cameron is also on the front desk in the Main Reception from 8.50am – 9.15am, every day.

### Data Collection

It is particularly important that we have your current mobile phone number on file in case of emergency contact so if you do change your phone number, or details of your emergency contacts, it is essential you tell us straight away.

### Medication

No child should bring medication to school. If your child is unwell, and has been prescribed medication to be taken during the school day, a parent MUST complete a form and the arrangement MUST be agreed by the Headteacher **before** any medication is administered. All enquiries regarding medicines should be directed to Miss Cameron.

### School Meals Ordering System – Hutchison's Appetite

Can we please remind parents to order their child's school meals in advance. This will avoid a long queue at the office in the mornings, and ensure children are NOT missing valuable learning at the start of their first lesson of the day! The winter menu is now in place with some different hot food choices for the children and we would ask that you encourage your child to have a hot meal at lunchtime, especially in this seasonally cold weather.

### School Uniform / Clothing Rail

Our pre-loved clothing rails are in the Main Entrance. Parents can access school uniform items (polo shirts, trousers, skirts) at no cost. All uniform and other clothing items are freshly laundered before being placed on the rail. If you have any outgrown school sweatshirts or other clothing items in good condition you would be happy to donate, please bring them in. Any contributions will be gratefully received – thank you. We also add new/unused school clothing items regularly. If you are experiencing difficulty in providing your child with school clothing or footwear, please contact the School Office or speak to Miss Cameron, Pupil Welfare Officer. We are here to help.

### Forward dates for February

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| 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> February | Children's Mental Health Week: 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself' |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> February | 3 day residential trip to Robinwood, Alston, Cumbria          |
| Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> February           | Spring Term Governors Meeting                                 |
| Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February          | Safer Internet Day: 'Together for a better internet'          |
| Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> February           | Year 1 Dance Festival at NUCastle                             |
| Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> February           | Year 5 at the Centre for Life                                 |

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February

Dogs Trust Workshops

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February

Year 5 at Hoops for Health Tournament at Vertu Arena

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February

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Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February

School closes for half-term