



# JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to January's newsletter. Cast your mind back to the very first day of the new term when we were covered in a blanket of deep snow! Some schools in the North East were closed but Riverside were open - business as usual! Thanks to the hard work of our caretaker, Graham, an access path was created in the playground for children, parents and staff to walk safely, the car park was gritted and the heating was turned up a degree or two! Following snow, we then experienced very icy conditions and the routes outside of school were dangerous and slippery; however, Graham gritted the playground frequently to ensure a safe access route for all. Now, as we have reached the end of January, the last couple of weeks have been very stormy with high winds and heavy rain. I am sure we are all looking forward to the arrival of Spring and the better weather it should bring!

## **Classroom News**

**Nursery** – Nursery have been having great fun being vets, police, dentists, bin men, and firefighters. We have been looking at People Who Help Us, from the lollipop person to people in our homes. The children have really enjoyed learning about how they all help us in different ways and if we ever needed them we would have to ring 999. We have also been cleaning teeth to help the dentist and sorting out materials to help the bin men. We had a vets practice role play area and we looked after the animals (as well as their owners) who came in with broken arms and legs and needed bandages!

**Reception** – Reception have loved our winter topic, especially as they got to play in the heavy snow! We have been reading a book called 'Ten Little Lights' and we have retold it using finger puppets in role play and using new vocabulary when retelling it using words. We have loved reading in our reading igloo and playing in our frozen castle! Reception have also enjoyed learning about Polar Regions and we have learnt about the Arctic and Antarctic and the animals which live there.

**Year 1** – January has been a great start to the year in Year 1! The children have come back from the holidays full of enthusiasm and ready to learn. We have enjoyed exploring the story *Grandpa's Gift* by Fiona Lumbers and are beginning to plan our own rewrites using our own ideas. In art, the children have shown lots of creativity while making stamps out of foam and card, and experimenting with patterns and prints. We have also been learning about toys from the past 100 years and the children have been very interested in how they have changed over time.

**Year 2** – Year 2 have been reading *The Dragon Machine* in English. They have produced command, question, exclamation and statement sentences about dragons, as well as remembering to use adjectives and suffixes in their writing. They all produced a letter to Mrs Yilmaz telling her about what the dragons have been up to in our classroom!! In Maths, they have been interpreting and constructing pictograms, tally charts and block diagrams. For one of their lessons, they used skittles to create a tally chart. They have been learning about historically significant people who flew aeroplanes in their History lessons. They know about The Wright Brothers, Bessie Coleman and Amelia Earhart. They have been extremely expressive in Art this half term, producing their own paintings using different tools, including toothbrushes, sponges and bottle tops. In PSHE, they have been taking part in 'Fun Friends' sessions led by Connect, talking about their emotions and how others feel. They have had a brilliant start to 2026!

**The Butterflies** - We have enjoyed exploring Winter this month and we were very lucky to be able to play in the snow - making snowballs and even having a snowball fight. We have enjoyed lots of winter inspired crafts, including using Duplo blocks to create an igloo. We have also been reading 'The Colour Monster' and have been learning about different colours, sorting coloured objects and learning how to create a pattern made up of

different colours. We have enjoyed exploring the different emotions associated with each colour monster and using this to explore how we might be feeling. Thursday is a favourite day in the Butterfly Room and we have enjoyed cooking - making cakes, snowman biscuits and even creating our own playdough. We have also enjoyed PE and building the confidence to climb on different apparatus using a range of skills.

**Year 3** - Year 4 have enjoyed learning about the Romans. We have looked at a range of primary and secondary sources to help us understand why the Romans invaded Britain and how Britons responded. We particularly enjoyed trying out some of the Roman Army formations. We have enjoyed playing dodgeball and using techniques involved in rhythmic gymnastics in our PE lessons.

**Year 4** - In Year 4, the children have begun our new term positively and are eager to learn. They have shown a great interest in learning about Pompeii as we are reading the book, 'Escape from Pompeii' in our English lessons. This has produced lots of questions regarding the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. In maths, the children have impressed me with their understanding of fractions – they have explored fractions of amounts, tenths and hundredths and compared a range of fractions! Finally, the children are very much enjoying their weekly swimming lessons! They are enthusiastic and keen to improve their swimming each week!

**Year 5** – Year 5 have had a hugely positive start to the year in January. All children have worked hard, showing a positive attitude and enthusiasm about our new topics of learning. We have been lucky enough to go on trips, which the children have mentioned enjoying very much, including a Hoops 4 Health basketball competition at Newcastle Eagles and a morning of multi-skills sports activities at Newcastle Foundation. Back at school, children have particularly enjoyed learning about the story 'Kai and the Monkey King' as they build up to writing their own Mythology based on Ancient Chinese myths. We very much look forward to reading their final piece of writing at the end of the half term.

**Year 6** – Year 6 went to NUcastle to take part in a multiskills festival with two other schools run by the NUFC Foundation. The children took part in various active games including bench ball and golf. Some children from Year 5 and 6 attended a gymnastics tournament at The Parks where they executed a sequence of movements that they had practised in school. Year 6 also visited Safety Works to take part in an afternoon of activities all about keeping safe in the community. This included some role play and the exploration of realistic film-set like displays and rooms.

### **Staffing News**

We will be saying 'Farewell' and 'Good Luck' to Mrs Brough at the end of this half term when she retires from her role of Teaching Assistant at Riverside after an amazing 24 years! We wish her the very best in her next chapter of life adventures and that she has an enjoyable and fulfilling retirement!

### **Attendance and Punctuality Awards**

A reminder that the termly 100% attendance awards are for those children who were not only in school every day but who also arrived in school on time (before the classroom doors close). Spring Term certificates, badges and an Amazon voucher will be presented to those children in our Awards Assembly on the morning of Thursday 2nd April (the day we break up for the Easter holidays).

This month, Year 5 also enjoyed their reward for being the top attendance class for the Autumn Term! On their special reward day, they wore non-uniform and ate pizza and watched a film in the afternoon. These children have now won this award FOUR TIMES! (3/3 terms when they were in Year 4 and now the Autumn term award when they are in Year 5). I wonder if they can be beaten by another class for the Spring Term top attendance award?

### **Sports News**

We have provided a lot of sporting opportunities for our children this month:

- Reception children have received weekly coaching lessons from 'Rugby Minis' and Rugby Minis now run an after-school rugby club for children from Reception to Year 2 on a Wednesday.
- A group of Year 5 children attended a Sports Leadership event at Linskill, run by the Education North Tyneside School Sports team.
- Dance City came to Riverside to deliver dance workshops to Year 3 and Year 5

- Year 5 took part in Hoops for Health at the Vertu arena (Basketball - Newcastle Eagles)
- Year 5 attended a Multiskills event at NUCastle
- A group of five Year 5/6 girls took part in a gymnastics event at The Parks
- Year 6 attended a Multiskills event at NUCastle
- Year 2 took part in a Skipping Event with Gail (in preparation for the skipping festival)

### **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 a 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.

### **School Meals Ordering System – Hutchison’s Appetite**

Can we please remind parents to order their child’s school meals in advance. This ensures that the children are served with food that they like to eat. The winter menu is now in place with some different hot food choices for the children, including some lovely warm puddings with custard! 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 financial 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**

<b>Monday 2nd February</b>	Year 4 Netball event at NUCastle (morning)
<b>4th – 6th February</b>	3 day residential trip to Robinwood, Alston, Cumbria
<b>9th – 13th February</b>	Children’s Mental Health Week: ‘This is My Place’
<b>Tuesday 10th February</b>	Safer Internet Day: “Smart tech, safe choices Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI”.
<b>Friday 13th February</b>	School closes for half-term

### **Half-term holidays**

<b>Monday 23rd February</b>	School re-opens at 8.50am
<b>Tuesday 24th February</b>	Chinese New Year Day in school – ‘Year of the Horse’
<b>Friday 27th February</b>	February’s Newsletter published