



FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to February's newsletter. We hope you all had a restful half-term break and managed to get out and about as thankfully it didn't rain everyday! We are now beginning the second half of the Spring Term. This is a short half term (5 weeks and 4 days) in the run up to Easter but will be full of exciting events in school including World Book Day, Parents into Classroom events and the annual Easter Egg decorating competition. Please do read on below to find out what our children have been learning about in the month of February, as well as some regular reminders and forward dates for March.

Classroom News

Nursery – Nursery had great fun going to the library on the last day of term. We listened well to the storytellers and enjoyed joining in doing the actions. We then got a chance to explore the library. The start of this half term is all about circles, pancakes and Chinese new year. We have been tossing pancakes like professional chefs before adding on our topping of choice - and the best part is eating them! We have started to set up our Chinese restaurant to encourage mark making by taking orders and developing our cutting skills by cutting noodles.

Reception – Reception have been learning all about China and we have been celebrating Chinese New Year in class. We have compared these celebrations with celebrations for our New Year, highlighting similarities and differences. Reception have loved the story of the Lunar New Year and we have retold the story really well using the different animals. We have also tried really hard using symbols to write numbers 1-10 in Chinese writing.

Year 1 – February has been an exciting month in Year 1! The children have enjoyed taking part in Valentine's activities and celebrating Chinese New Year with crafts and stories. They returned from half term to a huge surprise as a mysterious alien visitor appeared in our classroom to introduce our new book, "Beegu". The children had lots of enthusiastic questions and did some investigating to work out who had been "breaking into" our room. Our weekly gymnastics sessions with a coach have been a real highlight, with the children learning forward rolls and beginning to put movements together into short routines. In Maths, we have started exploring multiplication, and the children are becoming very confident counting in 2s, 5s, and 10s.

Year 2 – Year 2 worked so hard towards the end of Spring 1! They amazed Miss Beattie with their final pieces of writing in English where they remembered to use all of the Mastery Keys. In Maths, they worked hard identifying shapes and their characteristics. For Science Week, they learnt all about animals and their offspring. Miss Cooper visited the class with her baby, Ollie! They have had a brilliant start to Spring 2 this week where they learnt about Chinese New Year in an assembly and also in the classroom. They learnt about the hours in the day and time in Maths. We have also started to practice for the Skipping Competition which will take place in June! We are looking forward to another great half term.

The Butterflies - In the Butterfly Room, the children have enjoyed studying The Colour Monster book and have explored different feelings associated with each colour. We have explored different ways of managing our feelings and finding ways to be calm. We have enjoyed lots of activities linked to colour including colour mixing with paints and water, colour matching, Skittles experiment and also creating Veggie Kebabs using coloured vegetables. We have also enjoyed exploring Children's Mental Health Week, thinking carefully about our feelings. We enjoyed making pancakes too - flipping them was great fun. This week, we have enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year, learning the Zodiac story, making dragon puppets and tasting Chinese food.

Year 3 - The children really enjoyed science week, learning about rocks and soils. We described their properties and classified them using our own criteria. We carried out experiments to work out which was most durable, their buoyancy and permeability. We found out about soil and how it is formed, investigating different types of soil and identifying what was in it. The children enjoyed learning about fossilisation and making their own fossils.

Year 4 - In Year 4, we have now finished our English unit based on Escape from Pompeii. The children worked hard to include key writing features such as fronted adverbials and expanded noun phrases and their descriptions of the eruption were vivid and engaging. Miss Macdougall enjoyed reading their stories! We have now moved on to our new English unit focusing on refugees. We are reading the book, 'Wisp', and the children have already shown great interest, engaging in lots of discussion and questioning. So far, children have enjoyed Science where we have been learning about the digestive system. The children enjoyed a hands-on experiment using a range of food and a sock to explain how food travels through the digestive system!

Year 5 – Year 5 have continued their always positive attitude towards their learning throughout February. In English, they have completed excellent mythologies, which both pupils and staff are immensely proud of. We have begun to learn about Malala Yousufzai, an inspirational woman from Pakistan, whose life story children will be learning about as they build up to writing their own autobiography as we move into March. In PE, we completed our unit on basketball, which the children thoroughly enjoyed and have shown much confidence and expertise in our PE lessons.

Year 6 –Year 6 have completed their English work on the story of the explorer Shackleton which they all enjoyed. Some children have been preparing for the Lego League competition with a lunchtime club. They really enjoyed learning how to play badminton in their PE lessons, culminating in a class tournament. They've also worked really hard on their SATs revision and are making very good progress in increasing their scores in mock tests. They really enjoy doing the online skills practice for grammar and punctuation and arithmetic.

Staffing News

We all had a wonderful day in school on the last day of half term where we held a very special 'Mrs Brough Day'! She was given gifts and cards from children and parents and we presented her with flowers and a surprise video message from all the children at a very special assembly, thanking her for her 24 years at Riverside and wishing her the very best in her retirement. However, due to budget restraints, we will not be recruiting a Teaching Assistant to replace Mrs Brough.

Some of you might have noticed that Miss Badminton is pregnant! Her baby is due in May and she will be leaving to commence her maternity leave at the end of this half term when we break up for the Easter holidays.

Robinwood

Children in Year 4, 5 and Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed their three day residential visit to Robinwood in the first week of February. Myself, Miss Green, Miss Macdougall and Miss Woodcock accompanied Mr Fadden and the group of 20 children to Barhaugh Hall Activity Centre in Alston. The children were split into two groups: 'Hill Team' and 'Wood Team'. Despite the very cold temperatures and driving rain (and sleet!) the children showed great enthusiasm for every activity - even the ones outdoors! They showed real confidence, bravery, determination and resilience when taking part in a range of adventurous activities and a lot of them really stepped out of their comfort zone - especially when involved in activities involving height, including the Giant Swing, Zip Wire, Climbing Wall, Trapeze and Crate Challenge. Our group leaders, Emma and Charlotte, were great at encouraging the children as well as organising fun games in the evening. The children were presented with their personalised certificates and their group photos at an assembly delivered by Mr Fadden on Tuesday.

If your child would be interested in attending Robinwood in February 2027, we will be shortly sending out an expression of interest form. Robinwood is open to children in Years 4, 5 and 6 only. We will take deposits to secure a place, and then set up a payment plan for parents so that the full amount is paid by the end of November, 2026. Spreading the cost throughout the year enables parents to pay an affordable amount and ensures parents have paid in full before the impact of the cost of Christmas.

Homework Award

Well done to the following children who won the Homework award for the Spring 1 Homework Tasks: Holsten, Esmail, Madison, Chloe, Ivy, Lily and Connor. These children were presented with a certificate at Monday's Assembly. They had been chosen by their teacher for the effort they had put into their activities and their commitment to extending their learning from school to home. The awards for the Spring 2 Homework Tasks will be presented on the first Monday back after the Easter Holidays - Monday 20th April.

Children's Mental Health Week

The theme for this year's Children's Mental Health Week (9th - 13th February) was 'This is My Place'. We began the week with a whole school launch assembly followed by a day of Yoga workshops for every class! Throughout the week, children took part in age appropriate activities from the Place2Be website and at the end of the week, they completed a pupil wellbeing questionnaire.

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. It is very distressing for a child when they have not ordered a meal - and are given the main meal option - and they do not like it. We do not want any child to go without food at lunchtime so it is absolutely essential that their daily meal is ordered for them by the parent/carer. The winter menu has a range of hot food choices for the children, including some lovely warm puddings with custard!

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 March

Monday 2nd March	Year 1 Multi-skills event at NUCastle (morning)
w/c 2nd March	Class Curriculum Information Leaflets uploaded to website
Thursday 5th March	World Book Day
9th - 13th March	British Science Week in school: 'Curiosity: What's your question?'
Thursday 12th March	FIRST LEGO League Challenge Regional Tournament
Monday 16th March	Year 3 Multi-skills event at NUCastle (morning)

Monday 16th March	Parents Into Classrooms – Year 4 (2.50pm)
Tuesday 17th March	Parents Into Classrooms – Year 3 (2.50pm)
Wednesday 18th March	Parents Into Classrooms – Year 5 (2.50pm)
Thursday 19th March	Parents Into Classrooms – Year 6 (2.50pm)
Friday 20th March	Nursery Stay and Play (11.00am)
Monday 23rd March	Parents Into Classrooms – Year 2 (2.50pm)
Tuesday 24th March	Parents Into Classrooms – Year 1 (2.50pm)
Wednesday 25th March	Reception Stay and Play (2.50pm)
Friday 27th March	March's Newsletter published
Monday 30th March	Year 4 Skipping event at NUCastle (morning)
Tuesday 31st March	Reception – Y6 Parental Consultations (3.30pm – 4.30pm)