



23.10.15

Dear Parents and Carers,

In my last letter I described a broad picture of changes affecting school and this letter is to update you and add some detail. Many decisions cannot be confirmed until the final outcome of the Consultation on Options for the Alnwick Partnership in January 2016. However, we need to be well prepared to action plans from the end of January, if Consultation proposals are agreed.

The Building

In preparation for the possibility of Hipsburn becoming a Primary School in 2016, Governors have met with County Hall representatives to explain the additional space that we believe is absolutely necessary. The plan on offer is to build a separate block behind the school, to include a classroom, a smaller room and toilets. We need more storage space and have proposed that in addition, a PE/table store opens from the hall into part of Lindisfarne Classroom. The remaining part of that classroom could be a therapy/group room if an additional classroom were built in the new block. We were asked to provide evidence for our request and won't know the final outcome until November.

Governors have ambitious plans for the future that will involve major fundraising, but at this stage, we need to establish what can be provided by the Local Authority.

Numerous building surveys are already under way but please be aware that **there will be site surveys during half term so some areas of the school grounds will be unsafe for the public.** Some of the work has been booked on Friday 30th October, to avoid Trident Football and Allsorts events. However, please be aware that there will be other site visits arranged during afternoons and public access cannot be allowed.

Resources

Governors are considering the resources that will be needed and what will be available; both human and material resources.

Plans for Learning Group Organisation

Draft plans continue to be discussed but more information is needed before any decisions will be made. At a recent meeting of the Full Governing Body, Governors agreed that the current registration class organisation is working well and asked that this be fed back to parents in a newsletter. Lunchtime sittings are having a very positive effect on mature pupil behaviour and allow for social groupings requested by parents. Monitoring organisation will be an agenda item throughout the year.

Early Years

Due to a recent change in Ofsted legislation, our Preschool is no longer considered separate and all Hipsburn children are now part of the school, currently for 2-9 year olds. This allows us greater flexibility to offer more sessions if there is a need. A working group is currently **considering plans to offer preschool children three afternoons per week in addition to our current five mornings, from January 2016.** Details will be available soon after half term so families have time to make decisions about child care.

Curriculum Development

A new national curriculum was introduced in September 2014 and now that this is securely in place, we're identifying scope for further development in each area. Last year we focussed on **English**, and this year we are focussing on **maths**.

Our next subject focus will be **science**, and if you are able to help (e.g. gardening, pond maintenance, wildlife spotting, hide maintenance) please contact Esther Currie in Bamburgh Class.



A working group has started to look at **Primary School Physical Literacy** (PE) provision. This includes formal lessons, informal sessions e.g. playtimes, and extra-curricular provision. If you are able to help, please contact Jo Oates in Alnwick Castle Class.

A working group is gathering information about **residential visits**. Please contact Yvonne Richardson in Dunstanburgh Castle Class if you are able to help.

A parent offering to be our 'artist in residence' has already made an impact this term and the Alnmouth Arts Festival have again offered to support an **arts** project this year. If you would like to be involved, please talk to Miss Jones in Bamburgh Castle Class.

We will be considering our extra-curricular **music** in due course. This year we are providing violin tuition for all children in Years 3 and 4. If there is sufficient interest, we can also offer small group instrument tuition through the County Music Service that parents pay for. There is usually a range of instrument options and we can keep costs down when a group of children buy lessons together. We will be offering a choir club in the spring and will also consider other clubs e.g. recorder.

Some subjects are offered in half term blocks, e.g. Spanish and some sports and dance.

Homework

Parents have asked us for clarity about homework, so an updated guide will be ready straight after half term.

Village History

To commemorate the centenary of Piper Daniel Laidlaw's bravery in 1915, the Lesbury Village Hall Committee organised a memorable celebration recently and many children took part. Today, they gave every school aged child a mug as a memento of a child from Lesbury Village School who was awarded the VC.

Poppies

Poppies and gifts for the Poppy Appeal are in sale from the school office now. Price details are available in school foyers.

Attendance

Information about each child's attendance has been sent home this week.

Diary Dates.

School starts again on Monday 2nd November.

I have been asked to let you know about a bonfire at Alnmouth Common on November 5th at 6pm.

Volunteers and Donations

We really value the generosity of a number of volunteers who are helping this term. A volunteer has kindly offered to make some plywood animal templates for our woodland area. We'd be very grateful for donations of plywood offcuts.

If you're interested in volunteering for anything in school, please ask for details at the office or talk to a teacher.

Allergies

Some children's food allergies include contact as well as eating. Children are taught not to share packed lunches or to bring treats to school to share. Occasionally, parents have very kindly send cake for the class to celebrate their child's birthday. There are a number of children with various food allergies, so we will not share out any foods sent as treats.

Head lice

To minimise head lice in school, please check regularly, combing wet, conditioned hair with a fine comb. Advice is available from your local chemist.

During the absence of Mrs Solomon, our Office Manager, please help by:

- Checking the website regularly for information
- Paying bills on time
- Understanding if we can't answer a query immediately - we'll get back to you

Family Review Forms

We're asking you for your initial thoughts before the next Full Governing Body meeting, and you will be consulted further throughout the year. Please return your School Review form by 9th November.

Kind regards, Dot Charlton

