

Featherstone Wood Primary School

Newsletter

2nd September, 2016

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to another fun packed and productive year. The last three years have been tremendously eventful, exciting and successful for Featherstone Wood. The improvements have come about through all the hard work and dedication from the staff and governors, children and yourselves. We still have big plans for further improvements and I wanted to take a moment to explain some to you.

Our first priority is always to provide a high standard of education and to stimulate and excite the children about learning so that they become lifelong learners with no limitations on their dreams, aspirations and successes.

This year we are introducing mastery in maths, this is something that you will hear more about over the coming months and we are very excited about. The children started to experience this towards the end of last term and Year 4 particularly enjoyed it.

We are also introducing a new phonics scheme that focuses on the sounds within stories. This will be used alongside our current phonics system and will also help to engage children more in reading. As teachers we understand that life is very busy and that while reading with your children every day is sometimes difficult it is important that they read at least 4 times a week and that you at least initial it in their diaries.



Mrs Handysides is changing her working days as of September they will now be **Monday, Thursday and Friday**. This is in preparation for the return of Mrs Smith towards the end of term when she will be working **Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday**. More information will follow later in the term about their roles in January but for the moment if you have any SEN enquiries please contact Mrs Handysides.

We will be starting a baby and toddler group on Friday afternoons in September. It will start on the 23rd September. More information will follow but please spread the word. If you have any baby toys and equipment you are planning on getting rid of we would be happy to take them. Please hand them in at the office.

You will have noticed that Mr Joe was absent at the end of last term. He had an operation on his knee and is doing well. We are hoping to have him back on the 12th September.

In order for the children to be able to undertake all of their learning without any issues or barriers the following remain a great focus of the school and the children need your support greatly: -

Communication

- this is key and the first person should always be the teacher or sometimes the SENCO. If you have an issue that you are dealing with it is important the school knows so we can support the child in school. We also have access to many agencies that can support the whole

family too but if we are unaware of an issue we can't support properly. I am introducing a suggestion box in the office. There will be slips for things that we do well and a suggestion slip. The box will be checked regularly.

Attendance

- persistent lateness means your child walks in late to a class and misses out on vital information. If they are always 20-30 minutes late they always miss phonics, if they are always 30-50 minutes late they always miss phonics and half of literacy. This then impacts on their learning not only in those lessons but every other subject that they do in school. It adds stress to the children because they are walking in late and then do not know what they are meant to be doing, over time they realise that they are not keeping up with their peers and this causes anxiety. If you are struggling getting your children to school on time please contact us as there is support that can be put in place to help you.

- absences lead to the children missing out on large chunks of their learning that the school cannot easily help them make up. This again causes anxiety for the children and can also affect friendships and social interaction. Absences will not be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances. If you are having problems getting your children to school please talk with the school as there are many things we can do to support. Failure to work with us and get your children in school regularly means that the Attendance Officer from County will become involved with your family and could result in a fine.

- we understand that sometimes you get held up at the end of the day but it is important to pick your children up promptly at the end of the day.

Equipment

- in order for the children to learn they need to have their equipment with them at all times - this means their diaries are in school every day with their reading book, they are wearing the correct uniform and have their PE kit in school Monday to Friday. The children always look incredibly smart in September and it is important we keep that up throughout the year.

-homework is completed and handed in on time. Having the correct equipment eases their day and lessens anxieties whilst supporting their learning. It is also important the school equipment is returned, over the course of last year the school lost many library books. Please have a look to see if you have some at home and return them.

Payments

All monies due need to be paid on time and in advance. You would not walk out of a restaurant or with your weekly shop and ask to pay next week. The office staff spend a great deal of time, which has a huge cost implication itself, chasing up unpaid and late payments. This is unacceptable and debts need to be cleared. If you are having issues come and speak to me and payment plans can be put in place.

The cost of a school meal is now £2.35 (£11.75 per week). You may pay for school meals via Schoolcomms, which is an online payment system, the minimum payment being £5.00. Information cards may be obtained from the School Office detailing how to download the details.

Dealing with issues

- if you are concerned about something there is a strict protocol to follow: -

- 1) always discuss issues with the teacher involved
- 2) if not satisfied take it to the key stage lead or relevant member of the SLT
- 3) if still not satisfied take it to the Headteacher
- 4) if still not satisfied write to the Governors

The complaints procedure is on the website and needs to be followed correctly.

- writing negative comments about the school or staff on Facebook does not serve any productive purpose. Quite often the facts are incorrect or incomplete and therefore do not give a true picture. It also gives the school no way to reply as it would be totally unprofessional to comment on a Facebook post. If you have an issue you must follow the procedure mentioned above. Sometimes social media posts actually break the law and those that do will be reported to the legal team.

- the school is not responsible for any comments written on social media other than the schools accounts, about other families or children and will not be getting involved with these issues. Everyone who comes on to site is expected to behave appropriately and that includes social media posts. It is inappropriate to post information about children whether they are yours or someone else's and could be deemed as a failure to safeguard and be referred to social services. These messages can cause a lot of distress to families and often there is major comeback on the person who posted initially. Before you post think "would I be happy if this was written about me or my child?" Remember it is important that the school remains a safe and secure place for everyone especially the children.

The PTA is looking for more volunteers, they do an amazing job running activities for yourselves and the children and raising a lot of money. However, they are always looking for extra help and new ideas. You don't have to attend every meeting or work at every event but your increased support would be greatly appreciated.

If you or someone in your family has a skill or talent that we don't know about and would be helpful for the children, we would love to hear about it to see how we could best utilise it. Please contact me via the office.

Finally I would like to close by thanking you for your continued support and we look forward to working with you over the coming year.

Louise Shuttleworth
Headteacher