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Executive Headteacher Mrs Sharon Stevenson

Ravensworth Governors' Newsletter 15th December 2016

Dear Parent/Carer,

The Christmas holidays are nearly upon us and the school has been full of festive cheer this week. The hall was bustling with pupils, parents, grandparents, staff and governors at lunchtime yesterday, as we got together to share having a lovely Christmas dinner. Class 1's angelic performance on Tuesday was a joy for all to watch.

In this edition of the Governors' Newsletter is a roundup of governor news from the autumn term and updates of developments in school.

The Governing Body (or Board)

Sarah Yarrow joined the team as parent governor in September. She has completed her new governor training. All governors are involved in the governor training programme to ensure that they continually improve their knowledge and skills in order to benefit the leadership of the school and the outcomes for the children. We have also recently welcomed Rev. Alan Gledhill to the Governors, he is joining us in order to assist Rev. Anthony Kirby.

Governors have been involved in their regular meetings and monitoring throughout the term. Governors need to hold the Head and staff to account. It is especially important to monitor performance in key areas defined in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

One of the SIP priorities includes a focus on reading. An outcome of governor monitoring of reading practices is that we are looking to arrange an evening for parents to talk about how we can make better use of planners to help children to develop their reading skills, which also impacts on writing. More news on this will follow in the new year.

This term has seen the implementation of successful initiatives, leading to significant improvement in provision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for Reception and Y1.

A governor visit to South Otterington School, who obtained an outstanding judgement from SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) has taken place. Ideas shared from this and governor training on the new the new SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) curriculum can be incorporated into current practice in school. In line with our school ethos and values, this will support development of pupils' personal skills and identities and help them flourish as individuals.

Governors have also been working on improving the school environment, putting plans for interior and exterior work into action.



Staffing

Miss Crisp returned in September with enthusiasm and commitment and has launched herself fully back into school life and the role of Lead Teacher. Rose and Dad are regularly involved in school activities too.

Sadly, Mrs Shazell will be leaving at February half term. As a result of her husband's deployment to the Falklands, the whole family will be moving out there. We wish the Shazell family all the very best and thank Mrs Shazell for her valuable work in various roles in her time at Ravensworth School. She will be missed by pupils and as part of the staff team. We have advertised for a new Class 1 teacher and hope to interview early in 2017.

In Miss Thurman's absence, Mr Roper has settled well into our school community and is working hard, together with the pupils in Class 3.

The governors would like to thank all staff for their continual commitment to the school and its pupils.

Collaboration

It has been a very successful term, and we have already have come a long way on our journey with Barton School, through our collaboration. Mrs Stevenson quickly became part of the Ravensworth team as Executive Head. She has boundless enthusiasm, initiative and energy; is a good leader and an asset to both schools. The children have benefited from and enjoyed joint activities, including the trip to Beamish, Skip 2 B Fit, Class 2 visit to Kirby Hill church and Class 1 wedding event.

Our partnership has produced immediate other gains for staff and pupils, from the sharing of resources and expertise in weekly joint staff meetings, collaborative planning, and staff learning from and monitoring each other's performance.

Staff and governors continue to collaborate with many local schools through meetings, conferences and training.

Wider Curriculum

As a result of a governor meeting, it was agreed that we wanted to ensure that money that had been earmarked for sport development was being used to benefit all pupils. This has resulted in action to take part in a wider variety of sports and more children having the opportunity to represent the school. The aim is to have all children involved in various sporting events throughout the year.

Class 3 have been developing their musical skills and all learning to play the violin, with teacher Mrs Su Evans, as part of the Wider Opportunities Scheme that we have opted into. On Wednesday 14th Class 3 entertained and amazed, as well as Class 1 and 2 pupils, with their musical knowledge and violin skills performing tunes and a song in a stunning performance. They have really learned a lot in just a few months. Lessons continue through this academic year and a concert is being planned involving pupils at the schools of St Mary's Richmond, Barton, North and South Cowton, Melsonby and Hawes.

Future Developments

You may have heard lots in the news about schools providing 'stretched provision' for children, involving care from 8a.m. to 6p.m. We will be looking at putting out a consultation to determine needs in the area. Discussions have begun about the possibility of lowering Ravensworth's age range to 2 – 11 years, incorporating Pam Braithwaite's outstanding Pre – School, which is currently based in Ravensworth Village hall.

We look forward to working with parents in future developments for the school.

On behalf of all the governors, I'd like to wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas and best wishes for the New Year ahead.

Alison Brooks
 Chair of Governors



