

North Walkden Primary School
Head teacher's Newsletter
Autumn 2017



Welcome back!

Welcome back to school everybody! I hope you are all refreshed and ready for a new school year!

It has been lovely to return to school and seeing the children happy and eager to learn. For those parents/carers new to North Walkden, I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming you and your children to our school. I am sure your child will soon feel very settled and happy here.

Team North Walkden

This year, we are really going to be thinking about how special and unique North Walkden Primary School is and how all stakeholders play a part in shaping the ethos of our school. We really want to raise the profile of North Walkden within the local community and give the children a real sense of pride and belonging in their school. With the school council's help, we have devised a 'School Promise' and a set of 'Core Values', which will underpin everything we believe and do at North Walkden Primary School. They also link closely to our class rules and behaviour system.

The promise and the values compliment our Vision 'Reach for the Stars'. Over the school year, lessons and assemblies will explore the values so the children have a real understanding of them.

Mrs Bulmer will be explaining more about the School promise and the Core Values in future correspondence.

Summer works

Each summer, we usually undertake work in order to improve our school environment. This summer we have had all the corridors painted, the key stage 1 corridor has been renewed and our nursery class has been transformed into a lovely, modern and inviting learning environment, complete with its very own kitchen area! School is looking lovely! I would like to thank Mrs Nolan and Mr Thomas for coordinating and overseeing the schedule of works. Mr Thomas, as always has worked hard in the summer to ensure the school is clean, safe and secure for the children's return. I would also like to thank all staff who gave up part of their

summer holidays to prepare for their new classes. The classrooms look fabulous!

Welcome to new members of staff!

I am delighted to welcome some new members of staff to our school team.

Mrs Seddon is a new teaching assistant in Year 2 and Miss Lewandowska is the new teaching assistant who will be working in both Year 1 and reception.

I would also like to introduce Miss Goulding, who is our new school cook.

Mr Beasty and Miss Hughes are joining us as trainee teachers and will be working alongside teachers in Years 5 and 2 respectively.

Miss Prince has now formally (and finally!) changed to her marital name of Mrs Bulmer.

New Year, New changes

Last year, during my first year as head teacher, I implemented many changes in order to continue to improve teaching and learning at North Walkden. All staff are continuing to embed the changes this year and we can see the impact of the improvements. This year, there will be more changes and improvements within school. Some of these include:

1) Behaviour

In order to avoid complacency and to continue to improve behaviour and ensure we reward positive behaviour consistently, we have made significant changes to our behaviour policy, which ensures absolute consistency and rigour throughout school. Our expectations are very high. Teachers are working hard at the minute to cascade the new policy to the children so they fully understand it. Mrs Bulmer will be sending a letter to all parents within the next week or two, fully explaining the rationale of the new policy, along with an explanation of how it works so parents fully understand and can support school with our policy.

The full behaviour policy will be published on the website in due course.

2) Homework

This year homework has been simplified in terms of subject and frequency, focussing on the basic but important key skills within times tables, spelling, handwriting and reading as we felt these were the main areas that need continuous practice and reinforcement. Homework is now consistent throughout school. Miss Briggs will be providing more information about this shortly.

3) Maths

Last year, we worked tirelessly on improving the standards and consistency of teaching and learning in reading and writing and this year we are going to focussing on maths, which is already of a good standard, but can be even better. Miss Briggs is our Maths subject leader and will liaise with parents where necessary.

4) After school provision.

It is our aim this year to increase the amount and variety of extra curricular activities. Mr Tierney, our external PE coach, will be delivering two after school clubs this year and there is a possibility that he may be able to deliver some clubs before school but this is yet to be confirmed. All teaching staff have kindly agreed to lead one extra curricular activity throughout the year and they will advise parents accordingly. Watch this space!

Music

This year we are going to ensure that all children from years 1-6 have the exciting opportunity to begin to learn an instrument over a sustained number of sessions. In the summer term all children in years 1 and 2 will learn how to play the ukulele.

After Christmas, children in years 3 and 5 will have weekly recorder lessons.

Children in year 4 will receive weekly tuition from MAPAS, where they will learn to play an instrument from the brass or woodwind section.

This school funded provision is an exciting opportunity for North Walkden and something that we want to continue to develop.

Information from class teachers

You should by now have received a Home/School topic letter and welcome letter from your child's teacher, introducing themselves, the class team and outlining work to be covered this half-term. These will also be available on our school website. I hope you find these to be interesting, and useful when supporting your child with homework. After school "Meet the Teacher" meetings are going to be held over the next 2 weeks. The diary dates highlight when the meeting is for your child's class.

Mrs Nolan will be sending out diary dates for all events this half term. However, on occasions, dates may change due to unforeseen

circumstances but staff will give plenty of notice of any such changes that may arise.

Diary dates and events can also be viewed on the school website.

New School App

We have also set up a new school 'app' which is aimed at improving communication and providing easier access to information and diary dates. Mrs Nolan will be sending out further information on how to download the app shortly.

Uniform

The children are looking very smart in their uniforms, which have hopefully all been labelled. If any part of your child's uniform is not named, please do it as soon as possible. Staff will also be doing regular uniform checks to ensure all uniform is in line with the schools uniform policy.

The full uniform policy can be viewed on our school website

Please note that trainers are NOT allowed in school, the correct footwear is black shoes. The only bags needed in school are reading folders and PE bags. Children should NOT bring rucksacks into school as space in the cloakrooms is very limited.

PE Kits

Last year there was an unacceptable number of children who did not have the correct PE kit for their PE lessons and this not only posed a health and safety issue, it also caused a lot of disruption to the lesson as staff were trying to find spare kits when the lesson should have started. PE is a statutory subject that we are required to teach and therefore having the correct kit is essential. Parents must not rely on their child being given a spare kit. This year, we will be doing half termly 'Kit Checks' and letters will be sent to parents advising them that their child did not have all or part of their kit in school. Please ensure your child has a PE kit, in a draw string bag, in school at all times. If any parents is struggling to find or finance PE kits, please mention this to us.

Health and Safety Issues

Please note that the only jewellery permitted are plain watches and stud earrings. Any children who come to school wearing hoop earrings, or any other jewellery, will be asked to take them out and they

will be kept safely by the class teacher until home time. Nail varnish and false nails are NOT to be worn at school. Also, children are not permitted to bring any toys to school, they will be provided with equipment and games for use at breaktimes.

Earrings must be removed for swimming.

The new 'craze'

Each year sees the onset of new 'fads or 'crazes'. For example, last year we had the water bottle flipping challenge, the JoJo bows and more recently the fidget spinners. Whilst some of these are not particularly intrusive or detrimental to teaching and learning, some of them can be dangerous, whilst others just cause a lot of problems within school. I will take an individual view on each 'craze' that arises this year and will make a decision as to whether they will be banned or not. I thank you in advance for your support and cooperation in this matter.



Punctuality and Attendance

Please remember school starts at 8.55am. Last year there was a small number of families with children who were persistently absent or regularly late for school. Not only does this impact on your child's education, lateness and poor absence also has a detrimental effect on your child's individual attendance figures, which Ofsted scrutinise during their inspections. Please note that all lateness is monitored by the Education Welfare Officer, Nick Townley along with Mrs Blemmings and myself. Persistent lateness or poor attendance could result in a fine.

Please adhere to school policy when reporting absences.

Like last year, I will not be authorising any holidays taken in term time unless exceptional circumstances are proven.

Safe arrivals and collection of children

Please ensure that your child is under your supervision at all times whilst waiting for school to start. The playground equipment **MUST NOT** be used out of school hours_nor must they be allowed to run around the playground, or ride their scooters and bikes once on the school premises. This is for health and safety reasons.

I would also like to remind you that your child should be collected on time at the end of every school day. We have a clear policy on Safe Arrival and Collection of Children. This is available to read on the school

website or on a paper copy on request from the office. Parents of children in years 5 and 6 are requested to indicate on the annual consent form whether or not you give consent for your child to walk home unaccompanied at any point during the school year.

Children in years 3 and 4 are not allowed to walk home alone, nor are they allowed to walk home with siblings who are in year 5 or 6.

Concerns

Should there be any matters of concern regarding your child, you should first discuss these with the class teacher or teaching assistant, who will normally be able to resolve the concerns. They are the people who know your child best and who are aware of incidents that happen during the school day. Should you feel that your concerns have not been resolved, or if there is an urgent matter you need to discuss with myself or our deputy head teacher, Mrs Richardson, we will be happy to meet with you at a convenient time that can be arranged via the office.



School Meals

Again, this year, children in Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal. I would encourage you to take full advantage of this.

However, if you are in receipt of financial support it is vital that you still claim your free school meal entitlement to ensure school receives the correct funding. Should you wish to check your entitlement, please contact 0161 909 6508.

For parents/carers choosing to provide a packed lunch, at North Walkden we actively encourage healthy eating and therefore certain foods and drinks are not allowed. The list of suggested items and 'banned' items can be viewed on our website.

Snacks

All infant children are provided with a piece of free fruit every day, and we actively encourage all junior children to bring a piece of fruit to eat at playtime. All children in school have access to fresh water should they require it.

Family Worship

Some of our classes will be leading assemblies this term and families are warmly invited to attend. All class assemblies start at 9am. Please see diary dates for your child's class assembly.

Coffee Morning

We will be hosting a Macmillan coffee morning on 29th September, and on the same day, will be holding a cake sale after school at 3.20pm to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Fund. Further details will be sent nearer the time.

News from the School Council

The children have been electing their new representatives on the school council. We are hoping the new School Council will be instrumental in the development of new initiatives in school.

Parent/Pupil Consultations

These will be held on 22nd November from 3.30-6.30pm. Your child's teacher will be able to report on how your child has settled into their new class and the progress they are making. You will receive an appointment with the teacher nearer to the time and we request that you make every effort to attend, as it is so important that we work together and find out how best to help your child. We ask that all pupils from Y2 -Y6 accompany their parents/carers to the appointment to discuss their progress and future targets.

Consent Forms and data collection sheets.

Mrs Nolan has sent out data collection sheets for each child containing important details and contact numbers. It is very important that you ensure your contact details are up to date in case we need to contact you in an emergency and return to school as soon as possible.

Tesco Tokens!

Exciting news! Miss Kelbie has been liaising with Tesco and we have an opportunity to win either £1000, £2000 or £4000 for us to spend on

developing provision and activities in our school grounds, using a forest schools approach. All you have to do is shop at Tesco for the next few weeks and place your blue token in the 'North Walkden' cylinder that is on display in some Tesco stores. Miss Kelbie will be writing to you soon with more information. In the meantime, please collect as many tokens as possible!!

School sports grant.

Each school receives a substantial amount of money each year to spend on developing PE, healthy living and sports provision for all children. This year, all schools have received double the amount! We have lots of ideas on how we are going to spend the money but we just need to finalise a few things first! We will publish our sports spending premium on the schools website later this half term.

'Little Pot of Healthy Schools' Grant.

Some time ago, Mrs Blemmings and Mrs Gardner applied to the above scheme, hoping to secure a £5000 grant to spend on promoting healthy bodies and minds in our school. They had to put forward a detailed plan on how we would spend the money if we were successful. Well I am delighted to inform you that we were successful! Thanks to their hard work, very soon we will have a 'trim trail' in our junior playground (wooden activity course), along with a sports themed before school club and also training for some of our key stage 2 children to become playground leaders! Exciting times ahead at North Walkden.! Watch this space.

Finally

I think I have given you more than enough information to digest for now! I hope you have found this newsletter to be interesting and informative. I look forward to working closely with you and your children over the coming school year and can assure you that we are all 'Reaching for the Stars!'

Should you have any queries you would like addressing, please don't hesitate to contact school and we will do our very best to help you.

Kind Regards,
Mrs H Warburton
Headteacher