

St Aidan's Newsletter

November 2023



Staffing Update

We have appointed Mr Sam Smith (not that one!) to cover Mrs Emery's maternity leave following a recruitment process last week. Mr Smith will be familiar to quite a few of the children within school as he has covered a fair few classes on longer term supply over the last two academic years. I have agreed to take him on via his supply agency for the two weeks before the Christmas break so he can work alongside Mrs Emery and get to know the class. His contract will start officially when we return from the Christmas holidays. Mrs Emery plans to work right up until her due date, which is just before we break up.



School Performance Update

School performance measures will be published for the first time since 2019 prior to the COVID pandemic. When published, they will be available to view in full on our website. Our performance data across the entire school is incredibly positive and in the vast majority of key areas we are above national averages.

In KS2, are Year 6 SATs data from the last academic year was again very positive. The number of children achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths individually were all significantly above the national average, as were the percentage of children achieving the greater depth standard in Maths and Writing.

The number of children achieving at least the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined is in the top 15% of schools nationally.

Our KS2 progress measures were again very pleasing. These scores measure the progress the children made during their time in our school before leaving in Year 6. Progress was positive in all three key areas – a few highlights being that progress for Maths being in the top 30% of schools and progress for Writing putting us in the top 3% of schools nationally.

While academic tests and outcomes aren't everything, it is important to recognise the quality of education children get. They benefit from very dedicated teaching and support staff who give their all for the children and outcomes like this wouldn't be possible without the very dedicated staff team I have. I am also please that these results provide recognition for the work we are doing to improve the quality of teaching and learning in school.

Detailed results will be available soon.



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SEND

An update from Miss Marshall (SENDCo)...

All children who have a pupil profile and passport are in the process of having them reviewed and updated ready for parents evening. They will review the targets set at the end of last year and provide new ones to support the teaching staff in ensuring they make good academic progress. These will be shared with parents prior to the parent/carers consultations in early December.

The NEST

The NEST unit (which stands for Nurture and Emotional Support Team) is up and running. It is accessed by a number of children across the school who all have additional needs. This fantastic resource is staffed additionally to the classroom and supports children who may find accessing the same curriculum as their peers difficult.

We were unsure exactly what it was going to look like in practice until it began but it has got better each week and the children who access it really enjoy it. This, coupled with the Sensory Room, really gives all children the chance to do well at St. Aidan's, regardless of their needs.



The room has been refurbished to a very high standard and decorated by Mr Trewick and is set up like an EYFS classroom which incorporates play based learning like that which is found in Nursery and Reception. It is a very inviting and warm environment and the children who access this are absolutely thriving.

A special thank you to Mrs Robertson and Miss Scott who staff this unit full time between them and have hit the ground running since September. A huge thank you to all of the other staff who support this too.

Miss Marshall

We have also commissioned a SEND review to be undertaken by Nichola Taylor, the lead for SEND at the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. This will review our current practice, celebrate what we do well and provide ways for us to become even better in meeting additional needs of some learners. It will also form part of the process in reviewing our SEND policy and intent statement so that we really get right what we want to achieve. I really am determined that in our school 'no one is left behind' and each child gets the chance to thrive regardless of the background or needs.



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If you have any concerns about your child's learning or wish to speak to the SENDCo, an appointment can be made via the school office.

School Improvements

The school yard and markings are very popular. They have been such a positive thing to brighten up the school yard along with the removal of the fences and installation of the prayer garden. It really is starting to become such a bright space. I have two big basketball nets and goal rebounders for the football pitch on order – they should be installed soon.



The library looks absolutely fantastic. It was a significant investment but it really is such an inviting space and I can't wait until we get the books into it and we can start using it properly. It has also been painted and there has been an order placed for an interactive TV to make sure it has equal facilities as the other classrooms when it is being used as a teaching space.

The old library (or the room with books in it, if we're being honest!) will be repurposed soon – I'm actually planning on moving my office in there so there is more space for meetings!

The school dining hall and assembly hall have also been painted and had new equipment – including folding dining tables – installed. We're revamping lots of areas that are really in need of it and Mr Trewick is determined to make each area as high a standard as possible. He really is putting so much effort into this and I'm so appreciative.



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Unsung Heroes

Well done to our Unsung Heroes for last half term. We only got around to doing the award assembly yesterday because of how busy last half term was. This is my favourite award to give out. It celebrates all of those children who might just sneak under the radar and may not shine in an obvious way because their behaviour and effort are always excellent. It is always so important to recognise the contribution they make to our community.



Photography by Michelle Fowler



A special mention to Mr Trewick too who won Staff Member of the Half Term – another Unsung Hero. He had several nominations and his work is often behind the scenes but the school really would stop without him. Thank you from all of us!

Attendance

Below are the attendance figures for each class last half term.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
<u>Saplings</u>	<u>92.77%</u>
<u>Sycamores</u>	<u>94.46%</u>
<u>Poplars</u>	<u>97.25%</u>
<u>Maples</u>	<u>95.69%</u>
<u>Elms</u>	<u>97.70%</u>
<u>Hawthorns</u>	<u>96.75%</u>
<u>Chestnuts</u>	<u>96.23%</u>

Whole school attendance is **96%**



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The national average is **95.1%**

I am absolutely delighted with our attendance figures this half term. It is an incredible positive that our attendance is consistently above national averages – this is also the case in all subgroups. It really helps that the children really enjoy what they do here so much.

I must also thank you as parents. There has been a noticeable decline in the number of requests for holidays during term time compared to the last two years – this really demonstrates your commitment to ensuring children have good attendance.

I do also understand that sometimes it is impossible for parents due to shift patterns etc. to book family holidays during school breaks. I also thank parents for communicating this in advance whilst knowing that their request will likely be denied.

Social Media

The best way to stay up to date with all the wonderful things happening in the classroom is to follow our Instagram account. It is full of photos of all of the wonderful things the children get up to. The tag is @staidansashington.

School Council Update

A message from the Head Boy and Head Girl...

This year we have decided to give all of our fundraising to improve the outdoor areas in Nursery and Reception.

Thank you to everyone who came to Bingo night. We took almost £1400 and that means we have made £1050 after our costs have been taken away.

Our next event will be the Christmas Fair. Please come and support it. There will be lots of things to buy in each classroom and hopefully some extra stalls in the hall too. We will be having a non-uniform day on Friday 10th November where we would like everyone to bring in a raffle or tombola prize donation.

Jack R

Head Boy

Josee

Head Girl



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Uniform

The children look very smart in their uniform each day. A few quick reminders – earrings must be removed. Please ensure that retainers are in place.

Please remember that there should be no extremes of hair style – this includes bleaching or dying of hair.

PE kit should be in school and remain here for the half term. Some children are taking their kit home after each lesson which is meaning that they aren't wearing their kit for lessons as they don't have it.

Reception Applications

The portal is now open for anyone wanting to apply for a Reception place starting in September 2024. Please remember that you must apply online, even if you are already attending our Nursery – and a place in our Nursery doesn't guarantee you a Reception place. Any applicants who wish to evidence Baptism or that they are part of a particular faith must also complete one of our supplementary application forms.

The link to the portal can be found here:

[Northumberland County Council - Reception entry applications](#)

Finally

I look forward to seeing you all during our parent/carers consultations which will take place in early December. This is always the longest term of the school year and the children are always exhausted by the end of it – as well as excited for Christmas! There are so many nice activities and opportunities to invite you into school once Advent arrives. I look forward to celebrating this special time of year with all of our school families.



Mr M Moran

Headteacher



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