

Yetholm Primary School



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Spring Newsletter

What a busy term it has been since we returned in January! The children have all been working very hard and been learning about the Vikings (P4-7) and Pirates (P1-3) which has been very interesting to hear all about.

As perhaps my last newsletter, I wanted to write a little message to you all. My time at Yetholm started back in 2010 and it seems like a lifetime ago that I walked through the door to teach some of the older siblings of the children we have now. Mrs Douglas and Mrs Luke were there, and we worked very closely together over those years. I've seen staff come and go and they could say the same about me- it was 2015 when I headed to Broomlands with the promise of coming back...now it might have taken a little longer than a year, but I DID come back eventually. Having stretched my wings a little as Principal Teacher and Depute Head Teacher at Trinity in Hawick I relished the chance to come back as Head Teacher of our school in 2020.

Everyone will talk about highs and lows and those tough times for me would probably be summed in with just 2 really- watching Mrs Potter lose her battle with cancer and having to try and see the school through COVID. I don't want to dwell on either, but I do believe they have made our school stronger, and I feel blessed to have had the chance to work with Elizabeth in her time. The bench which will be unveiled after Easter is a fitting legacy for her, overlooking both the playground and the beautiful countryside, framed with some of her favourite flowers.

The list of things I love about the school could fill the page but a few of my highlights are- school chickens, our new trim-trail, glowing grades from the Care Inspectorate for our ELC, fantastic residential experiences, watching the trophy cabinet fill up (basketball and cross country awards), receiving a Silver Greener gateway award; our fantastic school shows (Jack and the Bean stalk and Wee Red in particular); supporting the school through the Green Tree, RSPB and Leaf awards, our Heritage Heros awards for our involvement with the historical dig at Halterburn; creating a school website; playground developments; replacing the SMART boards in each room; planting trees in both the park and the conservation area, and the many laughs I have had with pupils, staff and parents alike.

Whilst it is not goodbye quiet, I wanted to say this now before everything gets even busier. Thank you for your support, both regarding the school as well as personally, over the years. Mrs Finn is a very capable and experienced pair of hands who I have no doubt will support the school in its forward momentum. I am sure you will get behind her and support her in the same way you did with me, and I look forward to hearing from her about how well the school is doing.

Staffing

You will be aware that Mrs Cockburn in the nursery has her last day with us today (Friday 4th). We wish her all the very best in her next adventure with the social work team. I am pleased to let you know that Miss Caitlyn Hume will be taking up a full-time, temporary position with us until summer. Mrs Mel McEwan will be filling in the support post that Miss Hume comes out of, which is also a great benefit to our setting. We are currently sorting supply for the 1-hour lunch cover.



School-Police Link Officer

You may have also noticed on social media that P.C Tait-Logan is off to pastures new. She has been our school-police liaison officer for several years, and we wish her well in her next venture. P.C Liam Lawrence will replace her when we return after the holidays, and he is looking forward to coming around and meeting everyone.

Primary 7 residential

This week (Monday 31st March to Wednesday 2nd April) 4 of our Primary 7 pupils went on their residential experience. They went to the Robinwood Centre at Barhaugh Hall, Alston in Cumbria. We had magnificent weather which was a blessing! We had 3 fun-filled days taking part in problem solving challenges, canoeing, climbing, heigh challenges (trapeze, giant swing and crate challenge), archery and a nightline task which involved completing an obstacle course blind folded. The kids were all praised for their manners and positive approach, which was great.

We hope that hearing all about it is filling P6 with excitement as they are going earlier next session and head off in September...not long to wait!

Active Schools

In March we had teams represent us at basketball (small schools' tournament in Gala and the Kelso schools tournament in Kelso High School). They did not win the small school competition in Gala despite playing well and winning many of their games, but they did retain the Kelso cup for the small schools- well done!

We also had 3 pupils who represented us at the Kelso school's cross-country competition. They ran well against some tough competition. Special mention to Peter who came 6th in the Primary 7 boys' category. We unfortunately did not have enough to make up a team so we could not contest our trophy this year.

Litter Pick

At the very end of February, we organised a litter pick around both Town Yetholm and Kirk Yetholm including the school playground and the park. We collected about 6 bags of litter altogether! This seems like an awful amount of litter to find in our lovely little village but by collecting it up and getting rid of it we are able to help keep our community clean and safe for everyone. We were able to do this through the funding we received from the Action for Change group which helped us buy the new litter pickers that we used.

Report Cards

We hope that everyone receives their report cards. If you haven't, please contact the school office. If you haven't already done so we would appreciate you returning the slip to say you received it and offer us any return comments. Please note that attendance on the front is important- if this is below 90% then meetings will be arranged for after Easter to try and find ways to support your child to improve this.

Clothing Grant/Free School Meal renewals for Academic term starting August 2025.

Clothing Grant applications have now closed as of 31 March 2025 for the 2024/25 Academic year. New Free School meal only applications can still be made as normal until the start of summer holiday using our online form. Details of current criteria and an application form can be found here – www.scotborders.gov.uk/fsm

Parents/Guardians who have already applied/are entitled to Free School Meals and/or a Clothing Grant for the 2024/2025 Academic year will be issued a renewal letter inviting them to re-apply roughly around mid-May-June 2025. This will provide full details on the renewal process. Please do not renew until you have received that letter.

World Book Day

Not long after the February break we had a week of celebrating all that's great about reading. There was a lot of teamwork across the classes and learning together. Pupils told me that highlights were starting to share stories and hot chocolate together on Thursday afternoon! We are firm believers that World Book Day is more than just one day in the year, and we want to foster a love of reading.



School Review

This term we had a team of visitors in our school from across SBC made up of an early year's teacher, 2 other head teachers and the Quality Improvement Manager. This was part of our preparations for Inspection and to help validate my evaluations of the school. They were happy with what they saw, agreed with my evaluations and offered lots of positive comments as well as a few action points to consider implementing which we have already started to do.

Parent Council

Earlier this term we had a fantastic night in the Wauchope Hall for the easter Bingo. It was an enjoyable evening that helped raise £434.

Last week the Parent Council also had a slot in The Plough's quiz calendar. Fiona put us all through our paces with rounds on general knowledge, entertainment, science and history/geography! Quizzers were also treated to a delicious plate of cheesy chips. The quiz raised another £145.

The work of the Parent Council in terms of fundraising is fantastic and all feeds into the opportunities that all our children are able to benefit from. Thank you for supporting them and in turn, thank you to the PC for supporting our young people.



Diary Dates

Monday 7 April to Friday 18 April 2025 (Easter holidays)

Monday 21 April 2025 - Term starts.

Monday 5 May 2025 - May Day holiday, schools closed to all.

Tuesday 6 May 2025 - Staff resume, in-service day (school closed to pupils)

Wednesday 7 May 2025 - Pupils resume

Wednesday 25 June 2025 - Last day of term

Important Dates:

20th May 2025 P5 – Countryside Day @ The Show Ground Kelso (full details to be shared)

27th May 2025 P6 – Inspire Learning Day @ The Show Ground Kelso (full details to be shared)

27th May 2025 P3 – Bikeability Day @ Morebattle Primary School (parents to arrange transport)

3rd June 2025 P3-P7 – Hike up Staerough Hill (full details to be shared)

6th June 2025 YPS – Sports Day– with visit from the Festival Principles

10th, 11th, 12th June 2025 P7 – Transition Days – Kelso High School

18th June 2025 YPS – Proposed Summer Trip to Eyemouth (full details to follow)

23rd June 2025 – YPS Leavers Assembly – (full details to follow)

24th June 2025 – YPS “Yet fest” - (full details to follow)

