

Spring Term Newsletter



Luke Akehurst MP Visit

Luke Akehurst MP visited the school today to learn more about our work on inclusion and the Rights Respecting Champions programme linked to UNICEF. He spent time speaking with pupils about how they promote fairness, respect, and children's rights across the school. During his visit, he also enjoyed watching a lively Tudor dance performed by Year 4/5 and a creative interpretive dance performed by Year 6 inspired by Sir David Attenborough's *Earth*, which highlighted important messages about climate and caring for our planet. The visit was a great opportunity to showcase the pupils' hard work, talent, and commitment to making a positive difference.



Punctuality

It is great to see so many children arriving to school on time and being involved in their learning right from the beginning of the day. Class 1, 2 and Class 3 begin their phonics sessions at 8.45 am and Class 4 and Class 5 begin their challenge time activities at 8.45 am. We also have co-ordination programmes, reading/maths/speech and language interventions and lego therapy running at that time.

Being frequently late for school means lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.

- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Lateness to School

School starts at **8:45 am**. Your child will receive a late mark if they arrive after this time. If your child arrives after the register closes at **9.15 am** they will be given an unauthorised late mark. Persistent Unauthorised late marks will result in a referral to the Local Authority School Improvement Officer for further intervention and enforcement action may be taken.

Please can you ensure children arrive at school for 8.45am. Thank you so much to parents/carers for your continued support.

Important Information of Changes to the issue of penalty notices.

Changes to the issue of Penalty Notices to address School Attendance from 19th of August 2024: THE EDUCATION (PENALTY NOTICES) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2024 No. 210.

From 19.08.24 new legislation comes into force regarding the criteria for and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance. A national framework for parental fines is being introduced for any pupil who misses 10 or more half-days within any 10-week period. Please note that if you have requested a Leave of Absence that commences from September 2024 onwards, any Penalty Notice/s issued will be at the new rates and trigger the start of the three year

threshold period, as specified below. The following changes have been made:

- the number of unauthorised absences that may trigger a potential fine: 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in a 10 school week period.

- the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child: a maximum of 2 penalty notices will be issued (per parent, per child) within a 3 year period
- for the first penalty notice issued to each parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3-year period: the amount of the penalty notice has increased from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days

- any second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice issue is now set at £160 to be paid within 28 days - NB: No discount for earlier payment is offered.

- any further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty was issued - The maximum fine the court can impose for a first offence is £1,000 per parent, per child. If, however, you have a history of offences of this nature you may be prosecuted under Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 and the court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. Please speak to us if you have concerns about your child's attendance - we want to support you to address any barriers which prevent your child attending on time every day.

Texts/Emails

We regularly send texts to parents with details of events happening in school or just reminders. We are now also sending

emails. Thank you for your patience while we are updating this. Letters have been sent out explaining our new systems. Please notify school if you haven't received any texts/emails in the last week. Your contact details may need updating.

School Website

Please continue to look at our school website on www.nettleworth.durham.sch.uk for diary dates, latest news, celebrations, advice and information.

Diary Dates

Wed 18th March-Phonics Screening Meeting with Parents/Carers

Friday 20th Mar-End of Half Term Reports and Comic Relief Day

W/B Monday 23rd March-Parent/Carer Parents meeting- no after school clubs this week but wrap around care can be booked

Friday 27th Mar-Wear a Hat Day

Wednesday 1st April- Easter Egg Competition

Thursday 2nd April- End of Term

Monday 20th April- Children Return to School

Tuesday 21st April-Class 5 Trip-Centre for Life

Thursday 30th May- Y4 Times Tables Check Parent/Carer Meeting

Monday 4th May- Bank Holiday

Tuesday 5th May- Children return to school

WB Monday 11th May-

Year 2 and Year 6 SATS Assessments Week

-Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Paper

Tuesday 12th May-Reading Paper

Wednesday 13th May-Maths Arithmetic and Reasoning Paper 1

Thursday 14th May- Maths Reasoning Paper 2

Friday 15th May- Y2/Y6 SATs Party

Monday 18th May-Robinwood Meeting for Parents/Carers

Friday 22nd May- End of Half Term

Monday 1st June- Children Return to School
-Y4 Tables Check two week window begins

Tuesday 2nd June- Class Photographs

Wed 3rd June-Fri 5th June-Year 5/6 Robinwood Residential

Friday 5th June- New Reception Starters Parent/Carer Meeting

W/B Monday 8th June- Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Monday 15th June- New Reception Starters Visit 1

Tuesday 16th June- Sports Day

Wednesday 17th June- New Reception Starters Visit 2

Monday 22nd June- New Reception Starters Visit 3

Wednesday 24th June- New Reception Starters Visit 4

- Class Swap Day

Saturday 4th July- School Summer Fayre

Tuesday 7th July- KS2 SATS Results

Wednesday 8th July- Class 1 Performance

Thursday 9th July- Class 5 Summer Showcase

Friday 10th July- End of Year School Reports to Parents/Carers

Monday 13th July- Parents Open Evening

Tuesday 14th July- Heel and Toe Talent Show

Wednesday 15th July- TT Rockstars Day

Thursday 16th July- Year 6 Leavers Assembly

- Year 6 Prom

Friday 17th July- Picnic with Parents/Carers

- End of Term

Thursday 3rd September- Children return to school

Further letters/details will follow about each event

Absences

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent/carer, you are responsible for making sure this happens. **Once your child is registered at Nettlesworth Primary**

School, you are responsible for making sure your child has regular and punctual attendance at school.

The Local Authority (LA) is responsible for making sure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities, and the school must tell the LA if your child is regularly absent from school. As a parent/carer, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly. You run the risk of being prosecuted by the LA if your child's attendance is poor.

Reporting School Absence

We appreciate there may be times your child is unwell or unable to attend school. As a parent you have a responsibility to:-

- Contact school on the first morning of absence, providing a reason for their absence.
- Keep school informed on a regular basis if your child is absent for a long period.
- Provide medical evidence if this has been requested by the school

If school are not informed and unable to contact you via telephone regarding your child's absence a letter will be sent requesting details of the absence or our Parent Support Advisor will come out and visit to see if you need any support. If this is not returned and still no reason for the absence is provided the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Only head teachers can authorise absence and it is at their discretion as to whether the reason provided is acceptable or not.

If your child is unwell, please contact school office as soon as possible by 9am. It is important that children attend school as often as possible because if they are not in school they cannot learn.

The minimum acceptable level of school attendance is 96%. **We believe as a school that identifying poor attendance early as well as working in partnership with parents we can significantly improve attendance and prevent a child becoming a persistent absentee and involvement with the Local authority.** Below outlines the procedure that we follow to support and improve attendance:

- Notice to Improve Letter - sent home to indicate to parents/carers that attendance is starting to decline. This will be sent to students below 96% attendance.
- Medical Evidence Request Letter - sent home to request medical evidence to be provided to support absence, without this future absence will be marked as unauthorised. **This could be in the form of an appointment card or proof of medication given by the doctor**
- Parents/carers to be invited to attend a school attendance meeting to discuss concerns and set targets to improve attendance.
- If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, this is considered, by the Government, to be persistent absence. Where attendance falls below 90% and there are unauthorised absences a referral will be made to the Local Authority School Improvement Officer for further intervention and

enforcement action may be taken.

Chinese New Year 2026

KS1 & EYFS Celebration

UNCRC Article 14 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion).

This week, our EYFS and KS1 children joined together for a wonderful shared learning session to celebrate **Chinese New Year 2026 – the Year of the Horse**. The children learned about the origins of the Chinese zodiac and how the twelve animals earned their places through the traditional zodiac race story. They were especially excited to find out what makes the **Horse** such an important and symbolic animal in Chinese culture.

To deepen our understanding of this special celebration, the children took part in a range of hands-on activities. We enjoyed a fantastic **food-tasting experience**, trying a variety of traditional Chinese dishes and exploring new flavours and textures.

The children also got creative with themed crafts, making **paper lanterns, Chinese dragons, and paper-plate horses**. These activities helped bring the celebration to life and gave everyone a chance to express their creativity while learning about Chinese traditions.



World Book Day 2026

UNCRC Article 17: Children have the right to access reliable information.

What an incredible World Book Day 2026 we've had!

This year marks the National Year of Reading, and our whole school embraced the celebration with enthusiasm, creativity and a shared mission to ignite a lifelong love of books.

From the moment the doors opened, the corridors became a living storybook. Children and staff arrived dressed as their favourite characters—superheroes, magical beings, animals, adventurers and colourful story favourites—bringing instant joy and excitement to the day.

Throughout the school, classes took part in a vibrant mix of activities designed to show just how magical reading can be. Children enjoyed story-sharing sessions, with older pupils reading to younger ones, book recommendations being swapped, and wonderful discussions about characters and plots filling every corner.

Children explored a wide range of authors, poets and genres, discovering new favourites and deepening their appreciation for the world of stories. To round off the day, the whole school came together for the Ultimate World Book Day Quiz—an exciting finale packed with riddles, mystery extracts, character challenges and story soundtracks. The teamwork, laughter and excitement during the quiz showed just how much the children had absorbed throughout the day.

With it being the National Year of Reading, we are more committed than ever to helping every child find the books that light a spark inside them—stories that make them think, laugh, imagine and dream. World Book Day wasn't just a celebration; it was a launchpad for a year filled with reading adventures across all genres. Thank you to all our families for the effort that went into costumes, conversations about books at home, and supporting children on their journey as confident, passionate readers. Here's to a wonderful Year of Reading and many more stories yet to be discovered.

Happy reading, everyone!



Tremors in Class 3

Topic engagement – Tremors!

UNCRC – Article 28 – Right to a range of activities to further learning.

For our topic engagement we conducted a scientific experiment. We investigated chemical reactions that cause a reaction. It was lots of fun to see things explode.



I am Warrior in Class 4

To kick off our new Cornerstones topic of 'I Am Warrior!', we recapped what we already knew about The Romans before taking a closer look at the size, location and length of the mighty Roman Empire. Then, after learning of the battles between The Celts and The Romans, we held our very own battle reenactment in the hall – amazingly, defying history, The Romans beat The Celts!

UNCRC Article 29 – education must develop child's personalities and and talents to the fullest.



William the Conqueror and his role as king. Why did he want to invade England? Why wasn't being Duke of Normandy enough for him? Did his wife help him at all?

UNCRC Article 12 – every child has the right to an opinion and to be heard.



Blood Heart in Class 5

Today we took part in our memorable experience to launch our topic of Blood Heart – we used different materials to make a representation of blood! We looked at each part and learned what it was called and its very important job.

UNCRC 29 – Develop talents



Who was William the Conqueror?

In our Speaking and Listening session today, we began to ask our peers questions about

I hope you all had a lovely break and are feeling refreshed for the exciting half-term ahead. The children have been busy sharing their ideas and together they have chosen a magical new topic for Spring 2: **“Enchanted Forests.”**

Over the next few weeks, we'll be stepping into a world filled with **fairies, mystical creatures, woodland magic, and endless imagination.** The children will explore stories, create their own forest-inspired art, investigate natural materials and enjoy lots of hands-on learning linked to this enchanting theme.

It's set to be a half-term full of wonder, creativity, and plenty of fun! I can't wait to see where the children's curiosity and ideas take us.

Here's to a magical Spring 2!



French Food in Class 4

To continue with our new topic of French food, we had a look at national delicacies of France and tried our best to pronounce them!

UNCRC Article 12 – every child has the right to be heard.



Welcome Back to Spring 2 in Class 1!

UNCRC Article 28: Every Child has the right to an education.