



Alston Moor Federation
Alston Primary School
Nenthead Primary School
Samuel King's School

Working Together – Achievement For All

13th February 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy New Year to all of our families and what a busy half term we have had!

I'm pleased to see many of our children and young people have returned from Christmas fit and well, following unprecedented levels of illness in December. A new year brings about opportunities for us to focus on new things and make changes to our lifestyles. For our children and young people, it could be time to think about committing more time to independent study and homework. For others, they could be aiming for 100% attendance this half term. It is well documented the impact of poor attendance on attainment and we want all of our pupils to achieve the very best they can.

Many of our children and young people will have the chance to experience new things in and out of school this term and the opportunity to push themselves out of their comfort zone. With so many exciting things happening in our schools, there is something for everyone and a goal to achieve this term.

What's been happening this term?

This term, we have been able to offer a range of extra curricular opportunities across our schools to broaden and enhance the curriculum offer. Park Fell have started their Forest School project and are regular visitors to Henderson's Wood. This is supported by primary and secondary staff to ensure the children gain as much as they can from this fantastic opportunity. Year 3 and 4 from Alston Primary and Nenthead Primary have taken part in the Indoor Cricket Tournament at Kirby Stephen Grammar School and were brilliant ambassadors for our schools. Nenthead Primary have welcomed AONB into school who delivered a workshop and assembly about rocks and soils. Nenthead are also in the middle of a Radio 2 500 word stories competition and are building stamina for writing every day. The primary teams are also working hard on new 'Passport of Experiences' to ensure all children have a wide range of experiences before they move on to secondary school.

We are also pushing forward with plans for the range of residential trips on offer to children and young people across all three schools and all ages. From Edinburgh to London, from museums and art galleries to outdoor education, there is something on offer for everyone. The local community have also supported these wider experiences as a number of our pupils have been able to access funding to ensure all of our young people can have the same opportunities outside of school. One particular residential is the Hadrian's Wall Challenge. A group of seven students are training three times a week to prepare for this and are hoping to raise as much money as possible for St Jude's Children's Cancer Research Centre.

A wonderful celebration of our Federation and all of the talented children and young people we have in our schools, was the Performing Arts Evening in January. It was a great success and really showcased our children from Reception age to Year 11 and beyond!

We continue to work with the wider community and have been able to host the ICT Skills course every week for members of the community to develop their computer skills. A consultation meeting and coffee morning for the former primary site is also planned in the school hall next month. This is in addition to all of the community groups who are able to use our schools in the evenings and weekends.

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We have had the first of the exams this year in January. BTEC Animal Care and Sports Studies and OCR Child Development all sat their exams and we eagerly await their results!

We continue to celebrate the successes of our children and young people. We hold half termly attendance rewards along with weekly Learners of the Week in the secondary and house points, Dojos and Headteacher certificates in the primary schools. All children and young people have also completed pupil voice questionnaires this half term so we can continue to give all of our pupils a voice and the opportunity to tell us how their experiences can be even better!

What's next?

As we move into next half term, we have more exciting things planned in our schools!

Year 4 will be taking part in an Inter-schools Maths Competition. Our teachers are working hard to take a Maths Mastery approach across Alston Primary and this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. The Ruth Miskin support for Read, Write, Inc in Alston Primary will come to an end next month. This has been a fantastic development in the teaching of reading and phonics to our youngest children and the impact has been phenomenal! The external support may come to an end but with such outstanding results and the training of new in-house Reading Leaders, there is no doubt that Read, Write, Inc will continue to help children learn to read and write for years to come!

A number of children from Year 3 to Year 8 across the Federation will be taking part in this year's Carlisle Music and Drama Festival. Alston's student council have been working with Chris Barry, Targeted Youth Support Officer to develop as a student council. They are taking a lead on Fairtrade Week and are holding an assembly and bake sale in March. Year 6s continue to work hard to prepare for their SATs in May. The after school club in Alston Primary started this half term and will continue through to Easter. Well done Year 6s for your commitment to this!

Year 11 students continue to be interviewed for their post-16 options with many now securing places for September. Samuel King's will be running two trips to a range of colleges to support students with these choices. Year 11s and GCSE Option groups also have the second round of mock exams in March. With GCSEs changing year on year, it is vital our students have the opportunity for as much exam practise as possible so they all fully prepared in May when the final exams begin.

We end the term with the PTA Easter Fair. Teachers, tutors, parents, children and young people from all three schools will host stalls and activities to raise funds for our schools so we can continue to support as many different opportunities and experiences for the children. More details to follow!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the families for their continued support this half term in what could have been an unsettling situation. The schools continue to move forward and offer as many experiences and opportunities as we can for all of our children and young people. Your support is key to this and on behalf of the three schools and our staff teams, thank you.

Yours sincerley,

S Timmons

Acting Headteacher

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