

# Welcome to High Spen Primary School



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The purpose of this booklet is to try and capture what makes our school special. We reap the benefits of excellent links with our families and wider community and cherish the relationships we develop between children and children, children and school staff and crucially the relationships we model between adults in school.

As you can imagine, giving a flavour of what makes our school special has not been easy, so let us know what you think... or what we have missed!

## 1 - Responsibly for each other

Our logo 'Looking out for each other' is very much a part of everyday life at High Spen Primary school. We recognise that children have extended roles and encourage children to develop their responsibility for their learning, school and each other. Recently we achieved the ACT award which is an award that recognises the extended roles and responsibilities our children hold. Throughout school, children accept and manage a wide range of responsibilities from Buddies, Plant Squad and Litter Pickers in the yard to Maths and Reading Buddies whereby older children support younger children in their learning.

**Eco-Warriors** – Children from both KS1 and KS2 ensure we save energy by switching lights off and managing recycling of waste.

**Dinner monitors** – supporting dinnertime staff with lunchtime duties e.g. setting up / tidying the dinner hall, supporting young children with their lunches.

**ICT monitors** – children collecting and returning laptop computers for classes.

## 2 - Whole child

At High Spen Primary, we believe it is important to develop the 'whole child' by providing opportunities for creative, physical and emotional development. We feel we contribute towards this with cross curricular lessons and through the following:

### Whole school Projects

Each year, staff plan and deliver a whole school project which aims to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world as well as developing new skills and interests. In the past we have successfully implemented Art week, Bird week, Waste week and Sports week.

### Visitors

As part of our whole school projects and to enhance our curriculum we have various visitors throughout the year. These visitors help to boost our curriculum and support teachers in delivering key skills. We have Artists who work with children but also lead intergenerational projects involving older members of our community, Sports Coaches who inspire children to get involved whilst developing new skills and Local Experts who are able to come and talk to children about how history has affected the life of children in High Spen.

### Class Enterprise

To develop children's economical understanding of the world, we challenge children to develop projects as a class to help raise money for special treats e.g. A trip to the Pantomime. Children have been very creative in their ideas which include making and selling Pizzas, Sponsored dog walking, making and selling Christmas crafts and even a chocolate themed Film night.

### After school clubs

Each week we hold a variety of after school clubs led by staff and outside agencies. We aim to provide clubs for children from Early Years through to Y6 which engage children's interests and develop a range of skills. Some examples of our after school clubs are:

Physical development – Football, Cricket, Bike rides, Multi-skills, Hockey and Netball

Language – School magazine, Spanish club and Sign Language club.

Creative – Dance, Drama, Gardening club.

### **3 - Annual events**

Throughout our school year, we hold many annual events. Here is small taste!

September – Robin Wood residential trip (Y5 and Y6), Whole school trip to the woods

October – Harvest celebrations at St Patrick's church & Halloween disco

November – Remembrance service at our memorial led by Durham Light Infirmary (DLI)

December – Christmas Fair, Lunch and Performances, Whole School Theatre visit

March / April – Easter service, Easter Event (whole school / mixed age) and PTFA Craft event

May – Residential trip (Y3 and Y4)

June – Bike ride and fun run in the woods

July – Strawberry teas, Sports week and whole school trip

### St Patrick's church

Rev. Barron provides many services throughout the year at our local village church. We visit St Patrick's church as a whole school for special Christmas and Harvest service. The children enjoy walking to/from the church in mixed age pairs and enjoy worshipping in the surroundings of a historical building.

### Chopwell Woods

The close location of Chopwell woods enables us to incorporate many events within its beautiful surroundings. As a school we aim to have three whole school trips each year to the woods. In the past we have had an Art day – making sculptures in the woods, Shelter building, bush craft and Orienteering. These interactive activities show children how natural resources can be used in a fun and educational way.

### PTFA

We are very fortunate to have an extremely active PTFA who are a great asset to our school. They organise key events throughout the year and raise funds for pupil treats! These events are further discussed in the separate PTFA booklet. We are ALWAYS looking for new blood!

### **4 - Curriculum in each phase**

#### Early Years

Our Early Years setting is theme based and develops children's learning through both an indoor and outdoor learning environment. We are extremely excited about the expansion of our 'pupil led' curriculum (fully implemented September 2014). This will see us moving away from long term plans written by class teachers; instead staff are responsible for delivering the EYFS curriculum by building experiences related to the observed interests of children. We have dipped our toe in the water this term and it is clear children are even more motivated in their learning.

## KS1

The transition from an Early Years setting to KS1 is eased through the organisation of our Year 1 class which include many different areas for learning e.g. role play, creative development in sand and water and cut and stick.

Both Year 1 and Year 2 lessons are planned and delivered in a cross curricular way making learning fun, interactive and meaningful. In the past, children have enjoyed topics like Aliens, Jungles, and Pirates.

## KS2

Lessons in KS2 are planned and delivered in a cross curricular way, providing children with a real context for their learning. In the past, children have enjoyed topics like Romans, Space and Waste busters.

## Intervention

As a school. we work closely with parents, aiming to engage them in the curriculum and their child's learning. Maths and English workshops have provided parents the opportunity to develop their understanding of how the curriculum is delivered and new teaching techniques used. Feedback from these workshops has been very positive and parents comment *"It's great to find out how to help my child as it is all different from my days at school"*

To develop children's reading skills, parents have volunteered their time to read with children on a regular basis. Parents also being invited into class to be part of lessons e.g. Technology and Art projects.

Teachers work very hard to plan and deliver 'booster groups' which aim to bridge the gaps in children's learning. We have found these small focused groups allow children's key skills to develop, which encourages children's confidence and ability to contribute within a whole class setting.

## **5 - Productive playtimes**

High Spen Primary school are very fortunate to have two yards with exciting equipment. All equipment is used safely under staff supervision throughout the day; however with parental supervision children are welcome to use the equipment before and after school.

### KS1 yard

Our KS1 yard has a tunnel created from willow and opportunities for gardening. There is also a raised seating area for small groups to read or chat. KS1 children thoroughly enjoy developing their balance skills using the wobbly wooden bridge, stepping between platforms and tightrope walking!

### KS2 yard

A large structure with many climbing and swinging features dominates our KS2 yard. We also have a climbing wall and cross trainers to develop children's physical skills and fitness. Basketball hoops and Football nets provide children opportunities for competitive games. For those who enjoy a sit and a natter or perhaps a page or two of a book we have three new large wooden picnic tables (provided by the PTFA).

## Future plans

Within the next twelve months we expect to have a new multisports area constructed on the junior yard and areas of much needed grass created on the infant yard.

## **6 - Community links**

High Spen Primary school genuinely is the heart of the village and provides an excellent base for members of our community to engage in activities and projects. Elderly residents are part of a group called Live at Home who are regular visitors to school. They stay for lunch and share their skills and experiences with children. In the past for example, children have enjoyed listening to wartime stories and making proggy mats. Not only does this intergenerational work help breed respect but is also an excellent opportunity for skills to be passed on from generation to generation as once our older children become confident with a new skill, they spend time teaching our younger children.

High Spen Primary is a special place to work and learn; its strength comes from the strength of relationships and the shared will to get the best deal for all children. Please get involved in the work of your children and where possible the wider work of school.