

# Norton & West Chinnock Schools

*Learning Together for Excellence*

[www.nortonandwestchinnockschools.co.uk](http://www.nortonandwestchinnockschools.co.uk)

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## Co-Heads Newsletter 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Welcome to the new look Co-Heads newsletter. We will produce one of these each half-term to help keep you abreast of current news items and information that is happening in the schools at a more strategic level.

### **Highlights this half-term**

There has been so much to celebrate this half-term. Firstly, the easing of many restrictions, has meant we have been able to enjoy assemblies together. Our value this half-term has been Respect and we have seen this promoted by children of all ages.

There are many positive benefits of children playing and mixing with younger and older pupils and it has certainly brought a sense of community back to our schools.

It has been a joy to see our new Reception pupils settle into school so quickly and we can see that this is, in part, because of the excellent example set by our older pupils.

In addition to the great learning we see taking place in the classroom, we are really proud of the extra opportunities our schools are able to offer. Clubs have been well attended and we have seen many pupils participate in fixtures representing our schools at football, hockey and cross country. Thank you to the staff, coaches and volunteers who give their time to make these co-curricular activities take place.

Our 4 and 5 pupils, have been going swimming weekly, using the Aqua Centre in Crewkerne for the first time.

Music and singing is filling our schools – listen out for the sound of trombones, trumpets, recorders, clarinets and many other instruments!

Last week, we celebrated our Harvest services at both schools. We were joined by Rev. Nick Clark who spoke with us about saying “thank you”. We were bowled over by everyone’s generous donations which have been delivered to the Lord’s Larder Foodbank; thank you to the kind parent who volunteered to take the full car load!

Finally, another highlight has been seeing the special events organised by our FONS and PFA. With the Autumn Fayre at Norton last week and the Welcome event at West Chinnock in September. A BIG thank you to all who give their time to organise, run and support these events.

### **Parent Survey**

At the end of the summer term 2021 you may remember we sent out a parental questionnaire, this focused on many aspects of the school and allowed us an insight into parental perceptions of the schools. Thank you to all of you who completed the questionnaire and shared your honest thoughts and opinions.

Whilst the majority of the responses were positive, the area of communication stood out from your answers and we recognise that this needs to be improved.

We are taking a number of steps to address this (outlined below) and have made Parental Communication a key aspect of our School Development Plan 2021, with two main points:

Firstly, to improve effective and timely communication within and across schools, and from school to parents. Secondly, to increase parental engagement and knowledge of curriculum, learning and homework.

### **New Website/Social Media**

Our new website has been launched [www.nortonandwestchinnockschools.co.uk](http://www.nortonandwestchinnockschools.co.uk)

The website News pages are being updated regularly as is the Calendar which will keep you updated and help you plan ahead. Curriculum Plans are soon to be posted on the website and there is information on the Class pages.

Our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are being used to promote activities and achievements too (see links on the website).

### **Newsletters and letters**

The Co-Heads Newsletter will be published half-termly and we are working with staff to ensure e-mails get out with plenty of notice (please do check that e-mails are not going into your junk box as some parents have found this happening).

### **Google Classrooms and Tapestry**

These are being used for school-home learning and as a platform to upload work if your child is isolating and for homework. Please note that teachers are not expected to respond to work during the evenings or weekends.

### **Parent Champions**

We hold termly meetings between the Co-Heads and a small group of parents to discuss any general issues that have arisen. Parents are encouraged to get in touch with the Champions if there is something they would like to be discussed at the forum. If you are interested in being a Parent Champion, please let us know, we are always looking for more to join.

### **Messages to staff**

In the morning, understandably teachers are busy setting up classrooms and getting ready for lessons. If you would like to speak with the teacher, it is best to make an appointment by calling or emailing the school. Please be reassured that the answerphone and school inbox are checked throughout the day.

To message a teacher, please do so by e-mailing the school office, [NortonSH@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:NortonSH@educ.somerset.gov.uk) or [westchinnock@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:westchinnock@educ.somerset.gov.uk). Teachers will aim to get back to you within three working days. Please note that Google Classroom and Tapestry are for learning/homework and not for messaging individual members of staff.

### **Parents Evenings**

We pride ourselves on the fact that all parents come and meet with their class teacher during our parents' evenings. These take place once in the Autumn term and once in the Spring term.

In the Summer term, you will receive your child's written annual school report.

### **Curriculum and Information Evenings**

Our curriculum and information evenings are extremely popular and are key events which allow parents and carers to develop their understanding of the curriculum and teaching methods. We look forward to getting back this year to doing these in-person, in particular our Phonics and Maths information evenings.

## **Staffing News**

West Chinnock has welcomed Mrs Donovan-Lowe as Class 2 teacher, she has really settled in well and has set the bar high with her expectations and new ideas.

We will sadly be saying goodbye to Mrs White after half term. In the short time that she has been with us, Mrs White has been an asset not only in the Infants Class at West Chinnock but across the school where she has contributed to many wider aspects especially the Art, Music and Forest School. She has helped transform and organise the outside area of the school and kept our spirits high with her singing during lockdown.

We will miss her but wish her all the best as she moves on to her new school. Hopefully, we will see her around the village on her electric bike and at the West Chinnock Christmas Crackers event.

Teaching Assistant cover at West Chinnock is being provided by Mrs Oakes who has been working in the Infants and Juniors as well as being on hand in the classrooms providing SEND interventions.

Ms De-La-Hey is working across both schools as a Teaching Assistant and in her capacity as an outdoor education leader, children enjoy working with her as part of Forest School.

Mrs Brimble is now fully integrated as Norton Class 1 Teaching Assistant as well as Miss Wilcock who also works within the Class as part of an Apprentice programme.

Mrs Hallett, a Higher Level Teaching Assistant across the schools, has been working recently on Google Classrooms with those pupils who are isolating. We are hoping that as this dwindles she will be supporting more within school.

## **School Development Focus**

Each year we put together a School Development Plan that outlines our key development areas for the year. This year, as well as improving Parental Communication, our main development points are outlined below:

### **1. Reading:**

- To ensure that a clear reading programme is embedded across the schools.
- To ensure that phonics is taught consistently across the schools.
- All staff to be trained in phonics teaching.
- That reading materials link with the reading and phonics programme.

### **2. Curriculum:**

- To ensure that there is a comprehensive curriculum plan across the schools.
- Curriculum leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they need to teach it.
- Leaders need to make sure the curriculum is planned carefully and sequenced logically so that it builds on previous learning.

### **3. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):**

- To ensure that pupils with SEND have an ambitious curriculum and that the curriculum leaders work with the SENDCO to develop the curriculum ensuring that SEND children are fully catered for.

## **Covid19**

Unfortunately, we are still spending a great amount of time dealing with Covid related issues. Information and specific details will be sent out to parents as and when needed as this is an ever changing situation.

We are at the lower end of the spectrum and talking regularly with Public Health England who are pleased with all the measures we are taking. We hope that after half-term things will further improve.

However, we must be mindful of safe staffing levels and should this be compromised we may have no option but to close a class for a short time. We are not at this level and have no intention of doing this but want you to be aware that if cases rise it might be a possibility.

## **Things to look forward to next half-term**

For next half term, though not an exhaustive list but definitely a plentiful one, here are some of the wonderful and important things to look forward to:

- **Wednesday 3rd November** - Schools' Open Day. Norton 9.00-12.00 and West Chinnock 1.00-3.00. Please share the date with any prospective parents.
- **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November** – West Chinnock Parent Champions Forum
- **Date TBC** – Norton Parent Champions Forum
- **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November** - West Chinnock Playschool Christmas Market at Norton Village Hall
- **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November** – Norton Parents' Evenings (sign up available first week back)
- **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November** – West Chinnock Phonics Information Evening (details to follow)
- **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November** – Remembrance Sunday. We will also be marking this at school on the 11<sup>th</sup> November.
- **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November** – West Chinnock Parents' Evenings (sign up available second week back)
- **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November** - Norton Phonics Information Evening (details to follow)
- **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November** - Children in Need (Non-School Uniform Day)
- **Date TBC** - Pre-loved Ladies clothes night organised by the PFA
- **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November** - School photographer
- **Date TBC** – Christingle
- **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December** - Christmas jumper day
- **Dates and times TBC** - Christmas nativities/Christmas services (details to follow soon)

Please continue to check the school calendar and the FONS and PFA Facebook pages as we are sure more things will come up (links on our website [www.nortonandwestchinnockschoools.co.uk](http://www.nortonandwestchinnockschoools.co.uk)).

A reminder that clubs continue the first week back after half-term. The multi-sports club at West Chinnock for Year 1, 2 and 3 will be on Tuesdays (not Thursdays) starting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

**A reminder that the schools are closed on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.**

**We wish you all a very restful and enjoyable break and look forward to welcoming you all back on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.**

Mr Caswell and Ms Stiddard