

ESKDALE NEWSLETTER



Autumn Half Term Newsletter

Dear Parent/Carer,

We find ourselves at half term already! It has certainly been a busy time for both the children and the adults, especially with a visit from Ofsted so early this term (more on that later!) Away from the challenges of inspection, the children have made a great start back after the summer break and have responded well to our focus on both standards and expectations at the start of the term. Time now for all of our school community to take a well-deserved rest and begin to look forward to the run up to Christmas after the two-week break.

European Day of Languages

We celebrated European Day of Languages once again this year at Eskdale with a week of themed assemblies focussing on the importance of learning a language and discovering that we have over 30 different language spoken at Eskdale Junior School with 11 of these European! Away from assembly, our school's meal provider Coombs provided an excellent Spanish-themed meal with pupils and Y3 parents tucking into Spanish chicken stew and patatas bravas. Mrs Hunter led an assembly to share with pupils the importance of learning a language and handing out certificates to all those pupils who had completed the Spanish challenges set over the summer break. A great way of starting a new year of learning Spanish at Eskdale! Well done to Mrs Hunter for her support for the children.



Year 3

Our Y3 pupils continued their induction to Eskdale this half term. It is always challenging getting used to new teachers, routines and a new school building however, the children have made a wonderful start, and are doing incredibly well and are now well on their journey to become Eskdalers!

Ofsted

It has been 11 years since our last inspection by Ofsted. Since November 2020 (the date that all outstanding schools ceased to be exempt from inspection) we have been expecting 'the call'. In July 2023, we were told to expect an inspection between January 2024 and January 2025. This changed this September and we were told to expect an inspection by the end of December 2024! As you can see, we have had rather a long wait for Ofsted to darken the school's doorstep! We had the call at 9:40am on Monday 30th September notifying us that we would be inspected over both Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd October with 3 inspectors exploring the school's work over the two days. Despite some of the recent press about Ofsted, we felt we were treated fairly and the inspectors really took the time to understand more about our school. At the time of writing, I am unable to share with you the outcomes (schools are not given an overall grade anymore) as the report needs to go through a quality assurance check with Ofsted. We hope to be able to share the report with you early in the second half of the autumn term. What I can tell you is that your children were truly amazing and aimed high throughout the two days, showing off in the most fantastic way. In addition to this, all staff at school worked tirelessly to ensure we were ready for the inspectors. It is almost too challenging to put into words what a huge team effort this was and I am so proud of all the children and adults coming together to truly demonstrate what a wonderful school we have.



Y3 & Y4 Bake & Read

We began the year with another strong focus on the importance of reading in school this half term and in particular reading for pleasure, as we invited parents/carers to donate a sweet treat and come and read with their son or daughter in school. It really is such a lovely atmosphere in the hall during these events and seeing both parents/carers and pupils sharing a book is particularly pleasing. Never think your son or daughter is too old to be read with-it remains a valuable experience. Many thanks to all those parents/carers who were able to attend and many thanks to Mrs Dorn who organised the event and all those other members of staff who were able to provide support! A special mention for the members of our new Library Squad who helped serving cake and sweet treats!

Literacy Volunteer Mrs Allery

Last month, Mrs Allery completed 10 years volunteering with us at Eskdale Junior School through her work with Literacy Volunteers. Mrs Allery has worked with many Eskdale pupils helping children to improve their reading and literacy skills, creating a love of reading. Emma from the Literacy Volunteers came to visit assembly and present her with some flowers to celebrate her fantastic achievement.



Y5 Musical Performance

We welcomed back musical performances this half term with Y5 kicking off the year, showing off their musical skill and knowledge with the support of Mrs Oakland. Over 100 parents and carers joined us in the hall as pupils demonstrated their understanding of the genre hip-hop, musical elements, played glockenspiels before rapping the 1990's Will Smith tune 'the Fresh Prince of Be-Air' from the TV series of the same name. It was wonderful to see the children performing with such confidence and skill. Many thanks to Mrs Oakland for her support for pupils and a thank you also to all those parents/carers who took the time to come and support their children.

Coombs Golden Ticket

Our meals provider Coombes have continued to provide a fabulous service for the pupils of Eskdale, this time celebrating Roald Dahl Story Day with their yummy golden ticket meal including 'Buckets Best' and 'Whipples Scrumptious Fudge Mallow Delight'. Joshua in Y6 was the lucky pupil to discover the golden ticket, winning the opportunity to be entered into a draw for a family visit to Cadbury World and a huge box of chocolatey delights! Thank you to Mrs Wharmby and her kitchen team, Mrs Dorn, Mrs Clowes, Mrs Arnold, midday supervisors and our wonderful team of pupil servers who made this a great event.

World Mental Health Day

We highlighted the importance of looking after our mental health in support of World Mental Health Day earlier this term. In assembly, we discussed what mental health is, how we can remain mentally healthy and emphasised the importance of talking and taking action when we all have moments when maintaining our mental health becomes a challenge. In addition to this, Mrs Armstrong-Lomas (our school's mental health lead) spoke to pupils all about TCC (Take Care Club), what type of activities children do there and its role in supporting pupil's mental health.

Y3 Library Visit

Y3 had their reading experience at Eskdale enriched with a visit to Beeston Library. Pupils travelled on the tram before being registered as members they then listened to a story and had the opportunity to check a book out to take home and read. Thank you to all those involved in organising the visits (a military operation in itself!) and well done to all those pupils who had a great opportunity to show off as Eskdalers!



Harvest

We had another great response to our Harvest this year. Once again, our whole school community came together generating a wealth of items that were then boxed up by our School Council for the Canaan Trust, who will distribute the items to those families in greatest need. Thank you so much to all those parents/carers and children who were able to support our Harvest collection this year. An excellent example of our 'take care' value in action! In addition to this, we had a number of fabulous 'Micro-Harvests' created by pupils across school, selecting a small number of home-grown fruit, vegetables or herbs and presenting it in a decorative box-see our 'X' account for a photo. A special mention to all those pupils who brought in chillies once again-a particular favourite of mine!



Black History Month

In assemblies this half term we celebrated Black History Month by looking at those significant individuals who have shaped not just Black History, but our History to date. Pupils found out more about those notable individuals who are more recognisable in Black History such as Rosa Parks but also found about those 'unsung heroes' of Black History who have been overlooked or forgotten. A special mention to all those pupils who completed additional research and work relating to the theme-a fantastic response!



Cycle and Scooter to School Week

We had another huge response to cycle or scooter to school week once again this year. Y6 pupils Nadiah, Alfred, Jessica and Chloe led the event, presenting in assembly and then ticking pupils sheets each day to acknowledge the number of times children had brought a bike or scooter. They also took on the unenviable task of writing on all the raffle tickets for our prize draw, where three randomly selected pupils were awarded a five, ten and fifteen pound voucher along with a water bottle from Cycle Inn in assembly! Well done to all those Y6 pupils who masterminded the event and a huge thank you to Cycle Inn in Beeston who were kind enough once again to donate prizes.



Smartphone Free Childhood

I'm sure we are all aware of the benefits of a smartphone however increasingly there is evidence highlighting the detrimental impact on pupils owning a smartphone during their childhood. Smartphone Free Childhood (Smartphone Free Childhood) have set out a campaign to raise further awareness of the harms of smartphones and empower parents/carers and schools to take collective action and begin change. A number of parents have brought this initiative to my attention and a number of local schools have already begun to show their support. After half term, I hope to get Eskdale involved. In the meantime, search smartphone free childhood for more information.

Eskdale PTFA Events

Pupils were invited to enter a Halloween-themed colouring competition for just 50p this half term. A huge number of pupils took part and all children were treated to a small gift for participating. The PTFA then had the tough task of selecting winners from each year group across school. Well done to Y3: Kayson, Y4: Izzy, Y5: Seren, Y6: Rio whose ghoulish entries were chosen as the winners-each were presented with a Halloween-themed goodie bag. Parents/carers could then view both the winners and entries in a fab display in the school entrance foyer. In addition to this, the PTFA held a 50/50 Lottery, Halloween costume sale, made up of kind donations from parents/carers. From these 3 events our PTFA raised a combined £174.83!

More on the annual Halloween disco after half term!



Reminders!

Wednesday 6th November Year 6 Bake & Read.

Thursday 7th November Year 5 Bake & Read.

Monday 11th Remembrance Lunch

Friday 15th November Children in Need

Have a relaxing two-week half term and we will see everyone back in school on **Monday 4th November.**

Yours sincerely,
R Scruton
Head Teacher