

# Alston Moor Federation

## Newsletter October 2022

### A message from the Headteacher

Dear parents and carers,  
We've had a good half term in the three schools of Alston Moor Federation, with pupils settling back into the routine of school in new year groups extremely well. Samuel King's School had a very pleasing OFSTED report to share with our parents and the wider community—more details later on in this newsletter. The two primary schools have continued to go from strength to strength too. As we come to the end of this first half term, we are emphasising our commitment to supporting the good mental health of our pupils by celebrating World Mental Health Day. As well as wearing "mellow yellow", we also welcomed Cinders and Jessica, dogs belonging to Mrs Wheatley and Mrs Chapman, to highlight just how important animals are for our wellbeing.



I would like to offer my congratulations to Isabel Ferguson, a year 11 student, who is one of our very talented artists. Isabel achieved 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Junior Artist of the Year with The Society of All Artists with her gouache painting of flowers.

Isabel attended the private view and awards ceremony at the beginning of October to be presented with her award and her painting will continue to be exhibited in Nottingham throughout this October as part of the celebration. I hope to see many more of Isabel's creative achievements in the future!

With my very best wishes.

Mrs Gill Jackson

## Ofsted at SKS

Every school in England is inspected every four or five years. SKS welcomed the inspection team in early July, and were able to distribute the published report at the end of September.

When you have read the report, I'm sure you will be joining me in celebrating what this school achieves, and the accolades from the inspector. The report emphasises the many strengths of the school and comments that this school is "small and welcoming...like a family". The inspector also comments on the range of activities we offer which "broaden pupils' horizons and deepen their understanding of the world." Quite rightly, the inspector praises the pupils at Samuel King's School and recognises their contribution to the local community, as well as commenting very positively on their behaviour and ability to "conduct themselves well".

As is usual in all inspection reports there are areas for improvement identified. In this report there is only one, which is to provide pupils with opportunities to revisit and practise their learning in some subjects. I am confident that we will be able to make the changes needed to meet this target very quickly.

I am delighted with this report, which reflects the school's many strengths. My thanks to the staff across the Federation, whose high expectations of our pupils are specifically praised. Such a good inspection report only happens when there is an excellent staff team working together.

"Pupils enjoy attending this small, welcoming school."

"Teachers' expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour is high."

"Pupils behave sensibly and have fun during social times."



Ofsted  
Good School

"Pupils value the opportunities that staff provide outside lessons."

## **News at APS and SKS**

### **Asbestos in school**

If you have been near to the school site in Alston in the past few months, you will have seen that we are hosting builders, who are doing some major work on our school roof.

The work to remove all the asbestos was completed in early September, and the replacement of the roof is now being done.

Unfortunately, this work is overrunning by approximately three weeks. The builders tell me, that this is due to supply issues. They are experiencing problems getting the new roofing panels into the country and onto site. The project will be further delayed by work to repair and refurbish the main school hall. This will add an additional two weeks onto the project.

None of these delays are unusual in any large building project, but are frustrating, none the less. We will continue the current arrangement around lunch times and PE lessons until the end of the autumn term.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the pupils in both Alston Primary School and Samuel King's School. They have taken this disruption in their stride, and just continued to get on with their school life, as if everything was normal. They really are a credit to their families and their schools.

## **Learning News at SKS**

### **Focus on Citizenship**

#### **Every Life Matters**

As part of the Every Life Matters initiative, years 8 and 11 have been taking part in an 8 week programme which is exploring the effects of mental health and suicide prevention. Here are some year 8s presenting about feelings and emotions and how we can promote healthy minds.





## Learning news at SKS

### Focus on Art

GCSE Art and Design technology trip to Glasgow

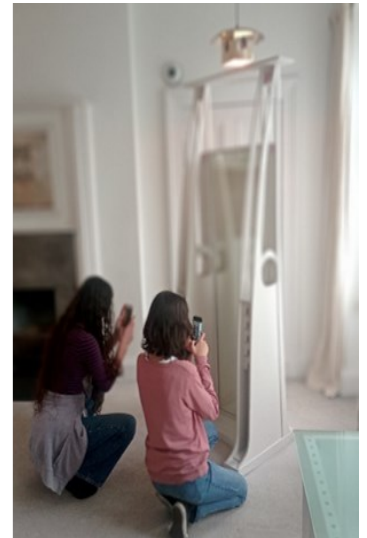
The GCSE Art and Design technology students had a really full and busy day whilst visiting Glasgow this term.

The purpose of the trip was to allow students to have an exciting day out in a busy city, whilst providing the opportunity to visit the Charles Rennie Mackintosh house, part of the Hunterian Museum and art gallery. The Mackintosh house is a meticulous reassemblage of the principal interiors from the Mackintosh's Glasgow home.

Students arrived in Glasgow by train, had an early lunch and made their way to the museums via the underground train. The weather was kind with only a little rain as we made our way to the Hunterian and nearby Kelvingrove Museum and art gallery, which houses a huge variety of exhibits from taxidermy, to artwork by artists such as Van Gogh, Salvador Dali and Renoir.

Students had the tangible experience of seeing work first hand, opposed to internet research whilst visiting the museums.

As expected Samuel King's students were model pupils and a credit to the school and parents/carers. A great day out was had by *us* all.





## Learning news at SKS Focus on Science

In science it has been a very busy start to the year with GCSE classes going full steam ahead to introducing the new 7s to the science lab and staying safe in this environment.

The year 9s, 10s and 11s were taken on the Aira Force trip to look at the ecology. The pupils completed 2 main activities during the trip which were looking at



patterns of plant growth, counting types of flora and a river flow test and looking at the types of flora along the river. All the pupils really enjoyed the outdoor classroom experience in comparison to the traditional classroom.

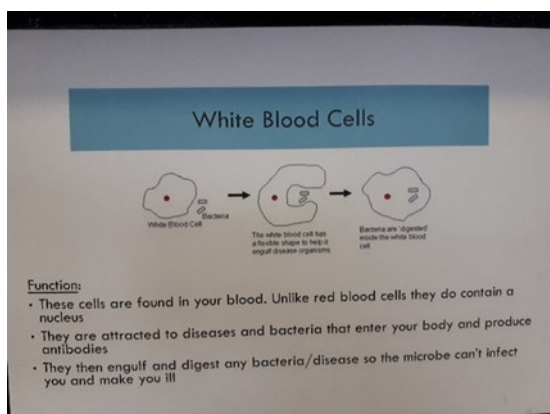
During lessons we have been looking at cells and specialised cell functions. The year 9s are being introduced to the GCSE curriculum.

The pupils spent time working in groups to learn the main different types of specialised cells and their individual functions. They were fully engaged with this activity and saw it as a competition to see who could complete the task the quickest and to the highest standard.



The GCSE Chemistry pupils have been discovering the different techniques of chemical analysis. Making observations for positive and negative ions, pure and impure substances and tests for different types of gases. You can see here that they are completing the chemical

tests for positive ions – the pupils are mixing a chemical compound solution with sodium hydroxide and if a precipitate (solid) appears then this is the positive test for positive ions.



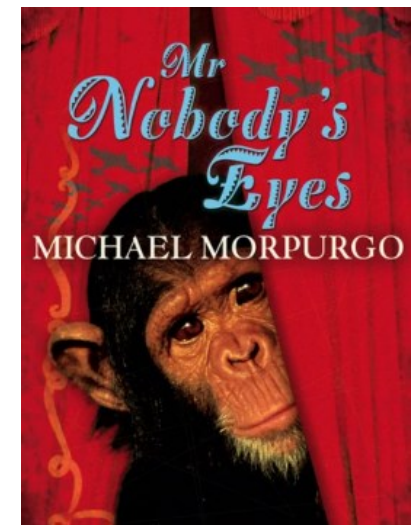
## Learning news at SKS Focus on English



On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October, Claire from Hexham's Cogito Books came to visit year 7 and 8 English classes to recommend a few books in order to complement the English curriculum. Pupils have already begun to borrow books from the collection and have been reviewing them. Here is one review:



"I like this book because it is like the proper life of a person. It makes me think that she is a real girl and this is actually happening. I would rate this book 5 stars and I would like to read more of the collection"  
Scarlett, year 8.



Willow, also in year 8, also wrote this review:

"My Opinion on the book **Mr Nobody's Eyes**

I really enjoyed reading this book, I loved this story. The idea of it is effective for the younger generation of children who love to read!

This story is about a young, curious boy called Harry. He's a shy kid who is in trouble at school, and at home.

It seems like he can't do anything to please his greedy stepfather, and his mother is too preoccupied with her new baby that she has no time for her eldest. Harry is lonely and devastated, until he meets a new friend, one that will change his life forever. He befriends a monkey named Ocky, who came from the circus, but he made everything for Harry better. But suddenly, Harry's horrible stepfather found out about his unique friend, and soon, they are on the run...

I recommend this book for family and friends to know that anyone can be your friend."

To promote reading for pleasure and reading for fluency, pupils and staff in SKS have been 'dropping everything and reading' once a week.



## Learning new at SKS

### Focus on MFL

With the new term well underway, students in KS3 are seeing some great progress in Languages. The new Year 7 class have settled well and are getting to grips with our weekly learning homework tests. Those in Year 8 are also doing these tests for the first time, but the Year 9 students are used to learning these words at home.

Here's a little information about why we do our languages homework like this at SKS, and also some tips for learning the words each week.



#### Learning Words and Phrases in a Foreign Language



##### What's the point?

Learning words and phrases at home will help you in your lessons. It means we will have more time to focus on **skills** such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. If you choose a language in your options, it will train you to be able to learn French words and phrases in the same way you would when revising for your exams. Looking at this vocabulary outside of lessons will help it stay in your memory for much longer.

##### How often?

Little and often is the absolute key to doing your homework successfully. 10-15 minutes a day is enough. Trying to learn the words the night before will not be enough to embed them into your long term memory. Remember, we're not just learning them to be used that week then you can forget them – if you decide to do a GCSE in French or German, you will need these words then too!

##### KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Language learning happens over time, and although there are some tips on the other side of this to help you, you must remember there is no quick fix.
- Be prepared to put in a little effort each day – you will soon see the benefits of this.
- Make it part of your daily routine – 10 minutes in the morning, or on the school bus, or before bed. It'll become habit rather than a chore.
- If you find a particular set of words difficult, then you will need to work harder on them. Saying they're too hard is no excuse!

I've asked students to do their best with this as I understand some find learning new words harder than others. Those who consistently do well with this type of homework have told me they use the 'little and often' approach and getting someone at home to test them really helps! I appreciate any support at home, so thank you to those parents and carers who take the time to do this.

In terms of topic areas we are currently covering, you can always see on their half termly vocabulary sheets (stuck in the student planners) what we are studying.



## Learning new; at SKS Focus on MFL

Year 7 have been looking at the topic of *School* in French. We have looked at school subjects, giving opinions about them and describing their school. We have done tasks in all four skill areas – listening, reading, writing and speaking, and even had a go at playing Battleships in French!

Year 8 have been looking at *Healthy Living* in German – so far we've covered basic food items, drinks, fruit and vegetables. We've also worked on giving



simple opinions about foods and drinks and done a short speaking task on this in the form of a class survey. We have also made use of the computers to do a research task about Traditional German Foods where students presented information about the ingredients and

origin of some German dishes, and gave their verdict on whether they would like to try it themselves. I think we all agreed the cakes looked the tastiest!

Meanwhile in Year 9 our topic this half term in German has been *Hobbies & Interests* – we've looked at a wide variety of sports and hobbies and done a lot of work on giving opinions, as well as justifying them. I've been pushing the Year 9 group with some tricky grammar points and challenging translation tasks to prepare them for the kind of level they will be working at should they choose a language at GCSE. Considering this is their first term learning German, I've been really pleased to see how many of them have risen to this challenge.

Unfortunately, there's not much to report in relation to the Berlin Trip planned for July 2023. As I previously explained, at the moment I am unable to give out accurate prices, as flights for July won't be released until November. In the meantime, I will keep checking the website with anticipation!

## Learning news at SKS

### Focus on Maths

#### What's being taught?

**Year 7 and 8** have got off to a flying start solving problems with addition and subtraction. This has included developing formal methods and using in context such as perimeter and everyday life financial problems. Students are now developing their understanding of formal methods of multiplication and division and using in context of both area of a variety of shapes and the mean of a set of data.

**Our year 9s** have been able to finish off work started in the summer term on straight line graphs. This focused on the understanding that  $y = mx + c$  and interpret gradients and intercepts from real life graphs. They have developed a good understanding of substitution through code breaking activities. This finished with rearranging 1-step and 2-step formulae.

**Year 10** started the year with congruency, similarity and enlargement. The main focus started with completing work on positive, fractional and negative enlargement of shapes putting the previous knowledge of coordinates to good use! Students also have a good understanding of the difference between congruence and similarity and are able to solve related problems. We have just finished a unit of work on Pythagoras and trigonometry! Both groups have been very successful with these activities, understanding the tangent, sine and cosine rules when finding lengths and angles of right-angled triangles.

**Our Year 11s** have focussed on solving problems with linear graphs at the beginning of term. They have then further developed their understanding of simultaneous and quadratic simultaneous equations and being able to solve linear simultaneous equations graphically!

#### Parents Challenge

We have decided to run a competition in each newsletter for parents and carers. All you need to do is answer the questions in the box above by the 11<sup>th</sup> November and hand in to Reception. All entries will be put into a hat and a winner will be drawn to receive a prize! Good luck everyone!!!

- 1 **Factorise**  $10x + 15$
- 2 **Simplify**  $x^3 \times x^3$
- 3 **Work out**  $0.35 \times 0.22$
- 4 **Work out**  $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{2}{5}$
- 5 Find the **nth term** 10, 14, 18, 22
- 6 **Work out**  $60 \div 0.5$
- 7 **Solve**  $7x - 5 = 5x + 9$
- 8 **Divide** £144 in the ratio 5 : 7
- 9 **Express**  $\frac{3}{5}$  as a percentage
- 10 What is the **gradient** of the line  $y = 5x + 2$ ?

## Learning news at SKS Focus on Pastoral Care

Well done to all of our students for remembering to bring their equipment to school each day. Bringing a pen, pencil, ruler, planner, uniform and reading book earns house points every morning. Every week the top ten students with the most house points are entered into the half term draw. The prize this half term is a one 4 all voucher. Every house point earned gets you closer to the prize.

Equipment can be borrowed or purchased on the door



*Celebrate 100% attendance*



We celebrate Samuel Kings' pupils with 100% attendance this half term. They will be able to enjoy cake and hot chocolate during the school day. Attendance really matters at school

### Why does attendance matter?

- You fall behind in work and lessons.
- You have lower motivation to be here at all.
- Your enjoyment of learning is less.
- You have less chance of achieving GCSEs.
- You're more likely to show poor behaviour
- You miss out on the social life of school and extra curricular opportunities and experiences.
- It effects your ability to have or keep friendships.





## Learning news at SKS

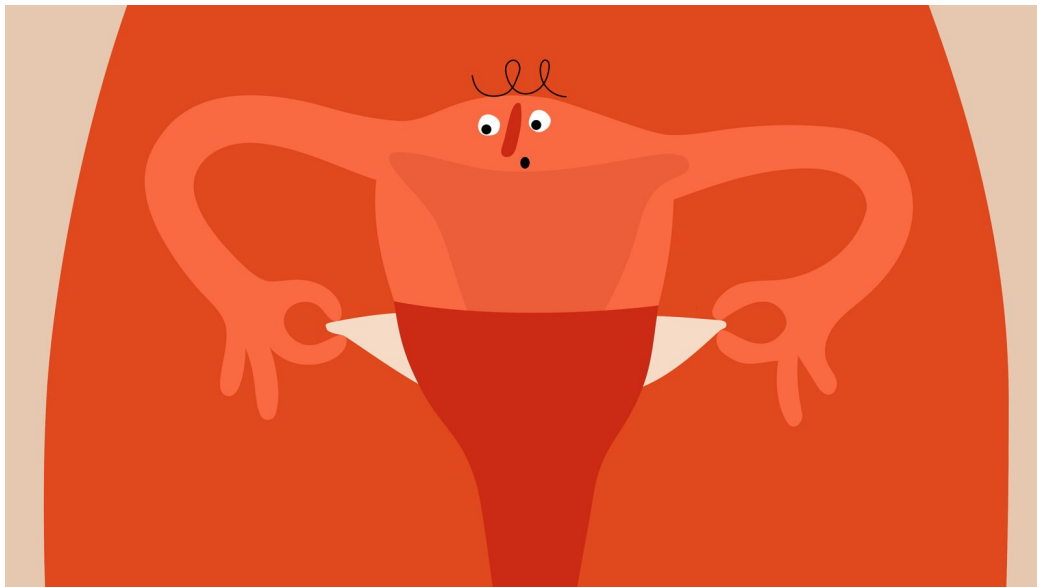
### Focus on Pastoral Care—Overcoming Period Poverty

Period poverty is a real issue with “around 11% of girls in England missing school days due to a lack of affordability of period products”.

We continue to make free sanitary products available in school for all students. Sanitary products can be found in the girl's toilets and in the pastoral office for students to help themselves to as many as they require.



It is worrying that "35% of girls aged 13-18 have taken time off school or college because of their period. We would like to support our female students to not be part of this statistic and encourage our students and/or parents to contact the pastoral team if this is causing an issue so we can work on solutions to support students to be in school and able to access their learning comfortably.



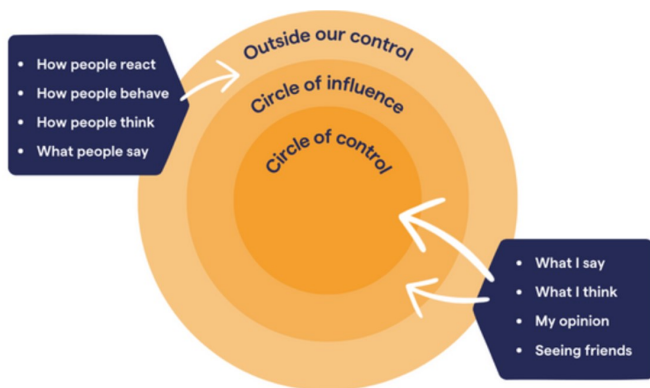
## Learning news at SKS

### Focus on Pastoral Care—Good mental health

On Monday, 10th October Samuel King's students and staff joined in to raise awareness of the importance of our own mental health and sharing ways to support us in looking after ourselves. The staff marked the occasion by wearing yellow as part of the HelloYellow mental health campaign with YoungMinds to show our young people that they are not alone. Throughout the day the conversations focused on recognising we all have mental health and can take positive action to look after ourselves. We encouraged students to reflect on what makes a difference to them and raised awareness of support that is available.

A key message was thinking about, What's in your circle of control?

When thinking about how to look after Number 1, a great place to start is visualising what's in your 'circle of control'. What aspects of your life can you make a priority? What brings meaning and comfort in your life? Are they within your control?



You're sure to find something that's within your circle of control that can bring about a positive impact on your mental health.

The day started with a welcome from two visiting dogs, Jessica and Cinders who spent the day socialising with our students.

Animals can provide a wealth of support to students that are struggling and can give them a non-judgmental partner with whom to share their worries. One of our year 11 students commented "If every day was a dog day, I would never be sad". We were thrilled to see how positive our students interacted with our visitors both in and out of the class.

All students were invited to start the day well with a free breakfast of fresh fruit and pastries. Having the right start to the day can make a real difference to concentration and emotional wellbeing. Our students enjoyed the selection with a year 7 commenting "I loved the pineapple, it's my favourite".

At the end of the day all students reflected on the day and class conversations to make a personal promise to tie to our promise tree for a change that will help to make a difference to their own Mental Health. Small changes can make a big difference.

More information can be found on [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)



**Learning news at  
SKS  
Focus on Pastoral  
Care—Good  
mental health**





# Learning news at SKS

## Focus on RPE

At the beginning of term all our Year 7 students took part in an Outdoor Exploration day as an introduction to their Religion Philosophy and Ethics lessons. The day was led by Paul Rose from the Diocese of Carlisle and consisted of a walk round Lacey's Caves, Long Meg and the surrounding Eden valley; stopping at various points to consider the history of the area and the questions which it poses for us today. Students were encouraged to consider questions such as who or what has influenced the person they are today and what they would like to be remembered for.



The length and nature of the walk also serves as a good introduction to the theme of pilgrimages which are a key part of most religions. Parts of the walk were tiring and required the support of classmates, whilst others seemed easier and more enjoyable; just as it would be on a religious pilgrimage (however their journeys are much longer than ours was!)





## Learning news at SKS

### Focus on PE

On 20th September our Year 7 and 8 students embarked on an ambitious run. The students ran from the school to the viaduct just beyond Slaggyford train station.

The students were nervous before we set out having not covered such a distance as the 6 miles it entailed before. All of the pupils succeeded in getting to the viaduct with smiles on their faces and a huge sense of achievement. They were accompanied by Mrs Allinson, Miss Alison, Mrs Chapman and Mrs Jones. The weather was very kind to us and the students enjoyed a few stops along the route to look at the local scenery and wildlife and to enjoy a picnic. Once we made it to the viaduct we returned back to Slaggyford station where we took the train back to Alston. An enjoyable day had by all.



## Learning news at SKS Focus on PE



Year 7 Cumbria Schools Athletic Association Cross Country at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School

7 students from our year 7 group ventured to Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Penrith.

They competed against 25 other schools from all over Cumbria over a 2.2km course.

All of the pupils tried their best and pushed themselves out of their comfort zones to compete.

The students represented the school fantastically and were a credit to themselves and the school.

Well done to all of the students who took part.



## Learning news at SKS

### Focus on PE



Samuel King's School has recently purchased a new and more up to date 'away' sports kit to be used by our students when representing Samuel King's School at various sports events. This was the result of a request from the School Council to invest in a more modern and 'smart' looking kit.

Our house captains led the students along with our governor, Mrs

Sheila Wyatt, in seeking out local sponsors for the kit.

The kit is to be worn when the students are representing the schools, as they wanted to look smart when representing Samuel King's School.

Our new year 7 students were the first to wear the kit at the Cumbrian Schools Athletic Association Cross Country held at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School and the students were very proud to wear it.

Comments from the students included how nice it was to 'look like everyone else' and 'now everyone knows who we are'. The students also commented on how comfortable and smart the kit is.

It was made possible because of the generous sponsorship of local businesses who have donated the funds to enable us to successfully complete this important and worthwhile initiative.

Our grateful thanks go to:

- Weardale Private Hire
- Alston Moor Parish Council
- Countryside Consultants
- Moorlands Candles Ltd
- J C Brown
- Henderson's Garage
- Moredun Garage
- Alston Oils
- Pennine Ways



## Learning news at SKS

### Focus on Geography

On the 20<sup>th</sup> September a joint trip with the Geography, Business Studies, Science and Art departments went out to National Trust Aira Force in the Lake District.

We, somehow, managed to land upon one of the few dry days in September which made the visit much more pleasant for everyone.

The focus for the Geographical aspect of the visit was to examine river characteristics at a number of different locations in the vicinity. We measured the width and depth across at various locations, whilst measuring the depth there were some more adventurous students who balanced on rocks in the middle of the stream. We also calculated the discharge by measuring flow velocity, some of the students became very adept at throwing dog biscuits into the fastest flow of water.

With respect to the Business Studies, we visited the tourist centre and café to look at how visitors are catered for, the impact seasonality has on the running of the business and how local businesses and enterprises were represented in the produce being sold. It was fascinating to see how a national organisation operates on a small scale in local establishments.





# House news at AMF

## Focus on Catering

### Year 7

Year 7 began their SKS Catering by considering kitchen safety rules and routines for their practical lessons. In recent weeks they have started some practical sessions, most recently their 'chopping challenge'. After half term they will be let loose in the kitchen and will begin making some practical dishes! I can't wait to see how they do.



### Year 8



In Year 8 we have been focussing on food labels using cheesecake as our focus food. We have made our own cheesecake as one of our practical sessions. We have also considered what the food traffic light label would be for it and any allergens it might contain. We will then consider how our cheesecake could be modified to make it healthier or to suit a certain dietary requirement.

### Year 9

Year 9s have been learning about the food science of raising agents; looking at the function of a raising agent and the different types we might use in cookery. We have begun performing a series of food science experiments to see the effect of a raising agent as well as using them in our practicals to see first hand how they work within food. This links into the content of the GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition course, giving students an idea of the type of things they might cover if they choose it for their options next year.





# House news at AMF

## House Teams



Meet the new school council for Alston Primary School. They are very much looking forward to working with the Nenthead and Samuel King's councils on some federation events.

Our new house captains are ready and raring to go in leading their houses this academic year.



Attendance for Alston Primary School is sitting at 95.43%. Well done to all who have an improving or high attendance this term.

It has been great to see so many SKS students wanting to be considered for positions of responsibility in school. Our student leaders play a vital role in the school and are already making a difference. The House Captains have been working with their tutor groups to appoint KS3 student council members and Mental Health Ambassadors. They have been researching charities and have selected a local, national and personal charity that we will actively support to raise both awareness and funds for this year. They have also supported in guiding what extra incentives and rewards we should put in place to recognise student achievement. A busy first half term with more fantastic ideas to come.

## Learning news at NP5

In Literacy this term we have been reading 'The Odd Egg'. We even had a gigantic egg that mysteriously appeared in our garden! The children thought it could be a dinosaur egg or an owl egg so we had to learn how to look after it just in case it's parents came back.

We have been looking at non-fiction texts so we read 'The Street Beneath Our Feet'. We made dioramas and wrote information about what you would find underneath the ground.

We were very lucky because we went on a trip to Killhope and were able to go down the mine to find out more about what is under our feet in our local environment.



In maths we have been looking at place value, addition and subtraction. We have been working hard on our number bonds and learning more about numbers up to 100.

Our topic this term has been dinosaurs. We have been learning about being a Palaeontologist and discovering fossils, drawing ammonites, creating our own fossils and making dinosaur skeletons.



In Science we have been looking at materials. We have had lots of problems to solve like 'How to fix a broken umbrella?' 'How to keep a dinosaur dry in the rain?' and 'How to test the absorbency of different papers when a dinosaur has had a wee on the floor?'

We have also enjoyed Action Ants day with APS and testing our skills on new challenges and having lots of fun.



Well done to EYFS who have settled into school life with enthusiasm.



## Learning news at NP5

### Trips and Visitors

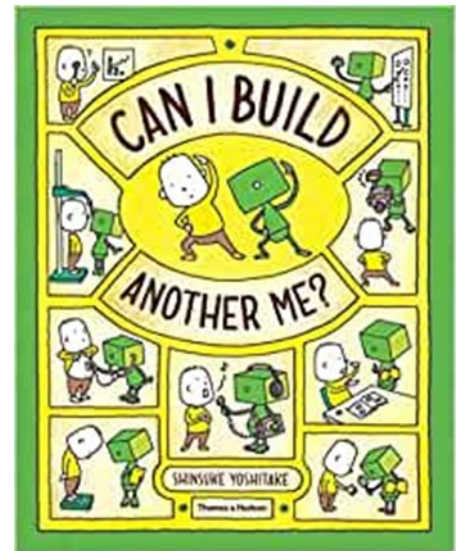
So far we have been off to Killhope and a Sports Festival for EYFS and KS1 and to the Great North Museum for KS2. As always, it is wonderful to use our local area as a resource for our learning. Weather stopped our whole school fossil hunt but we will not be deterred and will be out there when we get a suitable day. The year 5/6 have been thoroughly enjoying their transition/taster sessions at the Alston site and Mrs Hinkley has been with us from SKS making a glossary for our Stone Age work.

### We Have Been Reading..... Can You Build Another Me?

"...a child's hilarious, wildly inventive train of thought as he decides to make a clone of himself – and starts to ponder what makes him HIM. Is it the scar on his knee or his sticky palms? Is it his love of acorns or the way he winks? The more he thinks about it, the more complicated it becomes."

It was great fun thinking about what makes us UNIQUE and our personalities, even the not so good parts.

Everyone always remembers that Mrs B has hairy toes and loves Brussel sprouts!



We've also been reading The Wild Way Home.

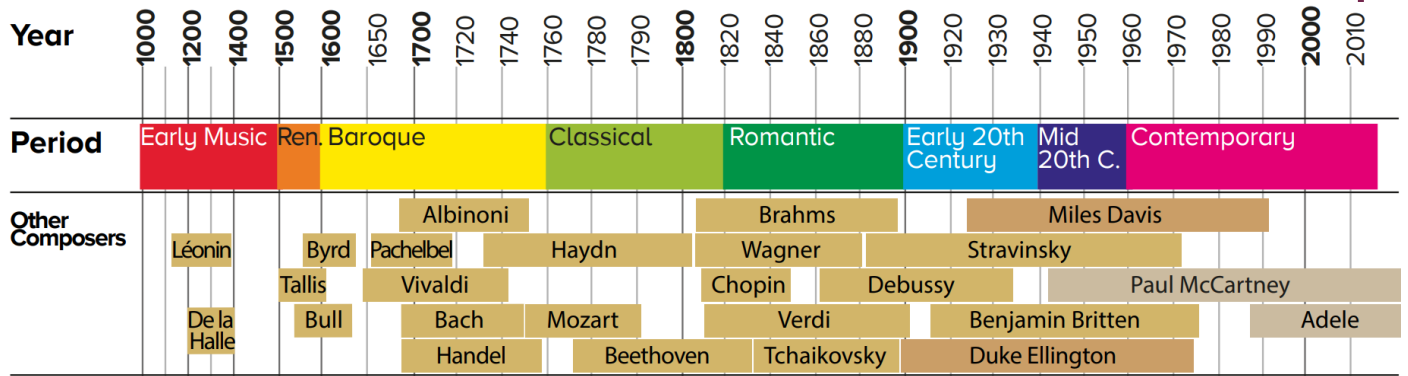
We cannot give much away as we are only half way through...

So far we are predicting time travel, a quest or mission and a happy ending to a traumatic family event.



# Learning news at NP3

## Music



We have been travelling back in time and investigating some of the sounds of our musical past. So far, we have listened to music from the Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque and Classical period. We have learned how music has developed from its beginnings of 'plain chant' (music sung in Latin in churches) to the complexities of Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony. We have listened to all the wonderful instruments that defined those periods including the harp, sackbut and serpent!

## Science

Both KS2 groups have been finding out about classification so far this half term. They have sorted and grouped animals and plants according to their characteristics, researched the animal kingdom, created branching data bases and under controlled conditions grown some very impressive mould!

## Initial Teacher Training

Every year we welcome student teachers from the University of Cumbria to work alongside us in order to complete their degrees. Miss Ella Barker will be with us until Christmas. Over the course of her training she will teach individuals, small groups and work up to whole class teaching. We are very proud to be helping shape the teachers of tomorrow.



# Learning new; at AP;

## Park Fell Highlight; continued

We have 16 new Reception children in Park Fell from 3 different Nursery and Pre-school settings. Our topic is 'I wonder who I am' and they have all settled well, learning the rules and routines of their new school.



The children have been exploring the different areas both inside and out, building friendships and beginning to take part in adult led learning.



Forest School sessions support cooperative play, gross and fine motor skill development and communication and language development.



Through PE, with Mr Lynch from Newcastle United, and Music and Movement, with Miss Alison, the children are developing their listening skills as well as their gross and fine motor skills. The parachute and ribbons are a highlight of the Music and Movement sessions!





# Learning news at APS

## Cross Fell Highlights

We have had a very busy start to the year in Cross Fell, it has been so lovely to see everyone settling into their new class group, making new friendships and learning our new class routines.

Our topic this term is houses and homes- The Great Fire of London and we have really enjoyed being inspired in our art sessions by this historical event and have been working in both 2D and 3D.

This year as a new addition to our timetable we have been extremely fortunate to begin having weekly music sessions with Mrs Tuffin a music specialist who has been teaching us how to play the recorder, it is wonderful to have such enthusiastic specialist teachers sharing their skills with us and we look forward to sharing our recorder playing with you all soon.



We are continuing to enjoy taking part in a range of PE activities and were very proud to wear our new PE tops to represent the school on a trip to Culgaith. We really enjoy working alongside other schools to develop our skills and continue to be complimented our own sporting attitude and fantastic behaviour- we really are wonderful ambassadors for our school.





# Learning news at APS

## Middle Fell Highlights

This half-term has flown by in Middle Fell! We have all been working very hard across all of our subjects to develop our listening skills and independence, taking collective responsibility for our learning and each other's wellbeing.

We have been exploring the topic of the Stone Age throughout our curriculum, but perhaps most in depth during our History lessons. We have: established when the Stone Age took place; enquired about what remaining evidence tells us about life back then; considered what food was available to humans at that time; compared homes now to homes back then and designed our own Stone Age style tools.



Our Art sessions have also been heavily inspired by this theme, through the medium of chalk, charcoal, oil pastel and mashed up berries.

In Literacy, we have been practising our writing across a range of genres, but most recently we have focussed on creating non-fictional presentations using PowerPoint and Canva in preparation of sharing our research surrounding our favourite inventor or invention with Cross Fell and Park Fell. We are all very excited to share what we have learnt with our friends! Our SPAG has focussed mainly on the use of suffixes and prefixes and how these change the meaning of root words.

During our Guided Reading sessions, we have begun to develop our comprehension skills by reading *Stig of the Dump* together and by discussing this text in more depth. We read either independently, to a partner or with an adult every day and enjoy spending time in our two cosy reading caves.

Claire from Cogito Books has also stoked Middle Fell's passion for reading by curating a selection of books tailored to this class' interests. We often discuss our likes and dislikes surrounding the books we're reading and we are grateful for this most recent injection of interesting texts into our classroom.



# Learning news at APS

## Middle Fell Highlights

Place value has been the focus of this half-term's Numeracy lessons. This has involved learning how to partition up to 4-digit numbers, working out patterns on number lines using our times tables and estimating values on number lines. Our Year 3s have been such super stars that they've even been covering the Year 4 topic of roman numerals... and have been relishing the challenge!



As part of our promotion of STEM education for all, we have used our Science lessons to become practising Petrologists and Geologists by investigating the properties of rocks to determine what they are classified as and how they were formed. We have also begun to explore how fossils and soil are made, getting our hands dirty and our curiosity fired up in the process.



For our Computing lessons, we have: learned the part names of different devices; practised how to log into different applications; begun to search simple but safe terms on a browser; created original digital art; generated animation videos; and organised our research into digital presentations using professional software.

For our RE lessons, we have been learning about Hindu worship, beliefs, festivals and symbols. Middle Fell have been especially enthralled with the religious story of Rama and Sita, which underpins the Hindu festival of Diwali.

In our Music and Performing Arts lessons, we have developed our dance and movement skills with Miss Alison as well as our ukulele skills with Miss Tuffin. Check out Class DoJo for a selection of videos from both of these wonderful sessions. We have also been practising our singing for the Harvest Festival with Mr Percival.





# Learning news at APS

## Flinty Fell Highlights

Our topic for this term is the magnificent and eclectic world of Ancient Greece! This topic is already turning out to be one of our all-time favourites, as we delve into the magical myths and legends that have inspired storytelling and compelling characters for over two thousand years! Additionally, we have been exploring what is meant by the terms 'trade', 'civilisation' and 'empire' and discovering how, towards the end of the ancient Greek period, Alexander the Great grew an empire resulting in the Greek civilisation spreading even further.



When learning about daily life in ancient Greece, we have studied what life was like for different people who were enslaved during ancient Greek times, as well as exploring the differences between life in ancient Athens and ancient Sparta. This led us to the concept of early democracy in Athens, and how many of the ideologies that were developed during this era, helped influence politics in the modern age. In our Art and DT sessions, we have used ancient Greek pottery as a primary source to help us gather evidence about the ancient

Greek Olympics and make comparisons between the ancient Games and the modern Olympics. In addition to this, we have learned about the beliefs of the ancient Greeks, and produced fact files and posters about the Greek gods. The Greek gods have truly captured our imagination, and we can't wait to write our own myths inspired by these fascinating characters!

Our Maths topics this term have seen us work on Place Value, and begin our studies on the Four Operations. I have been highly impressed with all the children's dedication and enthusiasm during our sessions in Maths this term. This work ethic will no doubt help us achieve new and exciting levels.

In Literacy, we have written some truly



emotive diary entries in role as Odysseus, as we read and study the brilliant 'The Adventures of Odysseus' novel by Hugh Lupton. We have loved reading and analysing the story so far, and it has inspired us to write some superb pieces of our own, including character descriptions and scenes from a playscript.

## Learning news at APS

### Flinty Fell Highlights

It is also important to mention the wonderful visit we had from Claire Grint at Cogito Books in Hexham. She is so generous and engaging with the time she spends with us, and her visits always inspire us to try out new books to develop our reading habits even further. Thank you, Claire!



In our Science topic this term, we have been tackling the highly engaging topic of 'Animals Including Humans'. We have been analysing the importance of diet, exercise and lifestyle in the way that our body's function. We have been learning about the three main parts of the circulatory system, the job of the heart, as well as discovering what blood is comprised of and how it is transported around the body. We carried out an investigation to explore how heart rate is affected by exercise, discussing how to plan a fair test, and measure and record accurately. Going forward in this topic, we will apply our understanding further by discussing different people's lifestyles, and how this can affect their bodies, specifically in relation to the circulatory system.

In singing assembly, the children produced some brilliant renditions of the seasonal classics 'Autumn Days' and the 'Harvest Samba' in preparation for our performance at St Augustine's for the Harvest Festival. In our Music sessions, we have loved beginning our learning journey with the Ukulele, thanks to the talents of Miss Tuffin. We are really enjoying our Tag Rugby sessions with Mr Lynch in PE, as well as studying and performing a number of myths and legends in Performing Arts.



Finally, the SKS transition days have been a great success and an exciting window into the world of secondary school. We would like to thank all the teachers in SKS for their time and efforts, and for producing fun and action-packed lessons for us to take part in!



## School Attendance Matters

Attendance is a high priority across Alston Moor Federation; we aim to have all students attending at 96% or above. We are working hard to address any issues that arise with individual students and believe that our students can do amazing things if they have the opportunity to be where the learning takes place. We continue to recognise good attendance with rewards and incentives in school and appreciate the support from home to encourage high levels of attendance across all year groups.

### Why is it important for children to attend school?

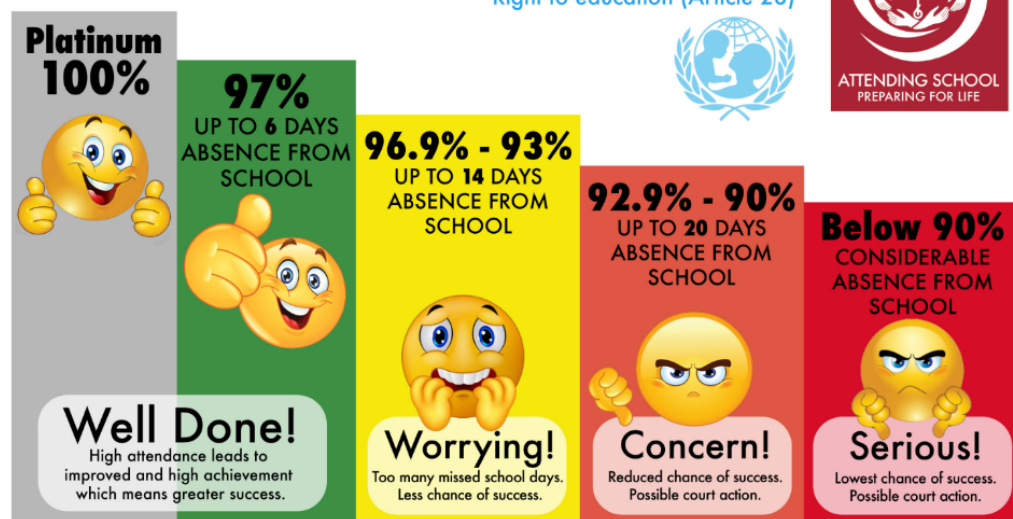
Most parents want their children to get on well in life. Nowadays, it is more important than ever to have a good education behind you if you want opportunities in adult life. Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly.

If children do not attend school regularly, they may:

- Struggle to keep up with schoolwork. In a busy school day, it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up on the lessons that they have missed.
- Miss out on the social side of school life. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships: a vital part of growing up. Be unable to take part in trips and extra activities.

## WHAT IS YOUR ATTENDANCE?

Right to education (Article 28)



There are 175 non school days a year.  
That's plenty of time to go on visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.

### The world is run by those who turn up

- Attending school every day = 100% attendance.
- Attending 4 ½ days a week = 90% attendance = 20 days missed a year.
- Attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance = missing over half a term.
- An average attendance of 90% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing over a whole year from school.

# Did you know?

## 1 in 5

UK parents never talk to their child about online safety



### **From the NSPCC...**

**It's not always easy to start an important conversation with your child...**

This QR code takes you straight to the NSPCC's webpage with lots of ideas about how to talk to your child about online safety.

Please work with us to keep your child safe online by talking to them about this important issue.



# Alston Preschool

## Newsletter

### Dates for your diary

- Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October – Last day before half term
- Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October – Return to Preschool, Come in your Halloween outfits!
- Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November – PTFA lantern procession and fireworks night

### Owl Babies and Autumn Adventures

This half term we have been reading owl babies. We have had lots of fun making our own fluffy owls and collecting materials to help us make a nest.

We have loved exploring on our autumn adventures to Fairhill, Tyne willows and the forest to collect leaves, conkers, and twigs for our autumn collages.

### Baking

The children have been working on their baking skills this half term. We have worked hard to share, take turns, mix and measure out our special ingredients to make some delicious rock buns and lemon biscuits. We have explored different tastes, smells and textures whilst baking.



### Setting in

We are so pleased with how all of our new starters and returning children have settled in at Preschool. We can't wait for more adventures next half term as we celebrate Halloween and prepare for Christmas!

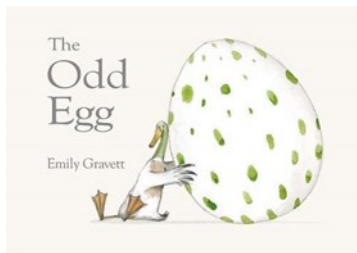
A big thank you to our wonderful parents for the continued support.



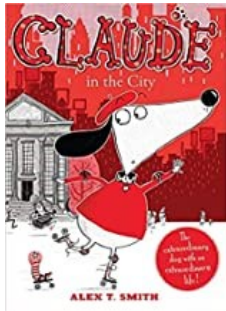
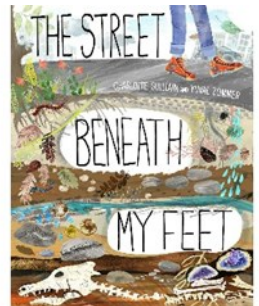


## Recommended reads

(Remember there are always audio books, which can get your child enjoying a good story if they don't yet enjoy reading—also great for car journeys)



This half term, we have so many great books to recommend. NPS pupils have been enjoying **The Odd Egg by Emily Gravett** and **The Street Beneath my Feet**. This is an amazing illustrated book which adults and children will both enjoy poring over.

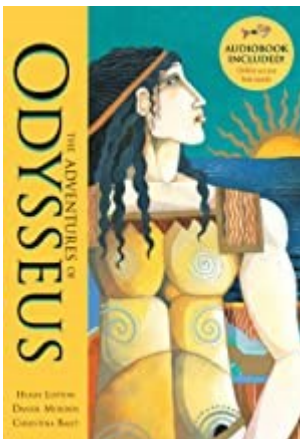


Cross Fell love the Claude books by **Alex T Smith**, and have been really enjoying **Claude in the City**. Mrs Brown recommends these fun books.



Miss Hill recommends **Hello Friend by Rebecca Cobb** for younger children, and also says they will enjoy **So Much by Trish Cooke**

For KS2 children **David Walliams** has just published a new book, **Spaceboy**. Mr Percival says that this is a really good book, with David Walliams back on form. Mr Percival would also like to share **The Adventures of Odysseus by Hugh Lupton**. Flinty Fell have been loving this book as they find out more about life in Ancient Greece.



**The Murderer's Ape** is such a treat! Told from the perspective of a Gorilla, this adventure story takes you around the world, solving mysteries along the way. Although a large book, it is so well written that you will find yourself lost in the story and before

you know it, you've read five chapters! It's a magical book for all ages. I would highly recommend it.

**Orphans of the Tide** will have you hooked in from the very first page. A girl called Ellie cuts open a whale to reveal a boy called Seth and together they have to face dangerous inquisitors to prove he is innocent. This book is dangerous and exciting. I hope there will be a sequel!

