

Alston Moor Federation

October 2021 Newsletter



A message from the Headteacher

As we are coming to the end of the first half term of this school year, I do hope that all our families will be able to take advantage of the half term. Even if you don't manage a change of scene, I hope you manage to have a break and a rest.

I am aware that many families are struggling with Covid at the moment, with many of our young people self isolating or waiting for PCR tests. I am very grateful to all the families that have continued to test their children so diligently, so we have been able to spot symptoms quickly, and do our best to minimise the spread of this nasty illness. I'm also very grateful to our young people for getting back into the habit of wearing masks etc so quickly. They have been so sensible and responsible.

We have had to make changes to our planned Harvest Festival, but I am very grateful to Miss Alison for putting together a lovely service which we hope we can live stream so parents and friends can join us. Thank you for the many donations to the food bank which have been coming into school. I know these gifts will be very gratefully received.

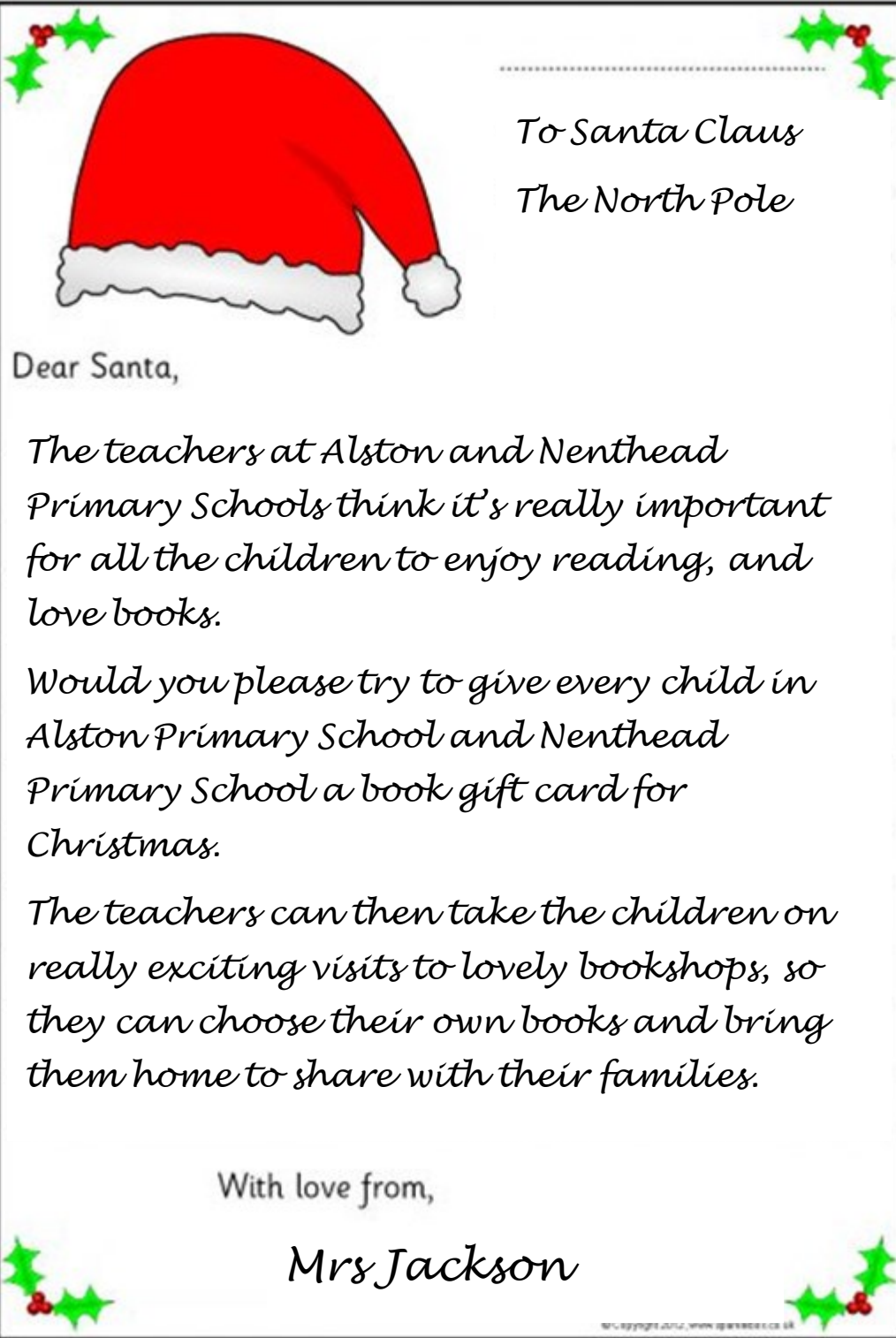
The shops are already reminding us that Christmas is coming. I've written my letter to Santa, which is on the next page! I know that relatives often ask for present ideas, maybe this could provide some inspiration for you. (www.nationalbooktokens.com)

The clocks change during half term, and the children will be coming and going to school during darker mornings and evenings. Please could you take some time to talk about road safety with your child. Even the older ones need some reminders, as a group of teenagers are not always the most sensible around traffic! A little bit of reflective material on coats and bags goes a long way to making your child more visible to a car driver on a dark morning. Please help us to keep your child safe as we go into winter.

With my very best wishes

Mrs Gill Jackson

Mrs Jackson's letter to Santa



To Santa Claus
The North Pole

Dear Santa,

The teachers at Alston and Nenthead Primary Schools think it's really important for all the children to enjoy reading, and love books.

Would you please try to give every child in Alston Primary School and Nenthead Primary School a book gift card for Christmas.

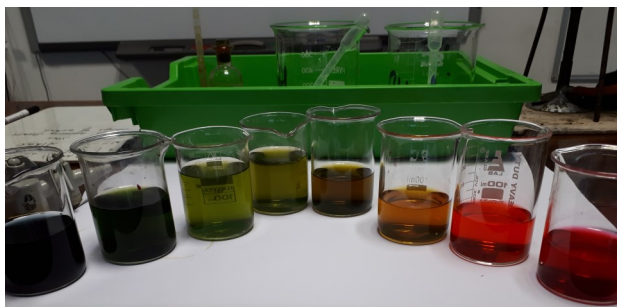
The teachers can then take the children on really exciting visits to lovely bookshops, so they can choose their own books and bring them home to share with their families.

With love from,

Mrs Jackson

Learning news at SKS

Focus on Science



Exploration has been the theme of science lessons during October.

Pupils in year 7 and 8 have been learning about the pH scale, investigating the properties of an acid and an alkali and where we can find them in everyday life. A colourful rainbow of the pH scale was created by adding various amounts of

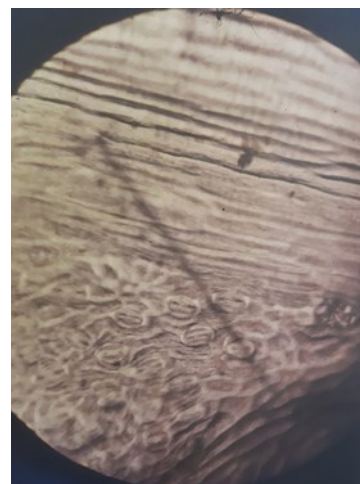
alkali to an acid. The amounts of acid to alkali change the colour of the solution. This is possible using universal indicator. The students enjoyed the challenge of creating the full spectrum of colours. They gained knowledge of neutralization by adding equal parts of acid to alkali turning it green. This is essential foundation learning for GCSE Chemistry.



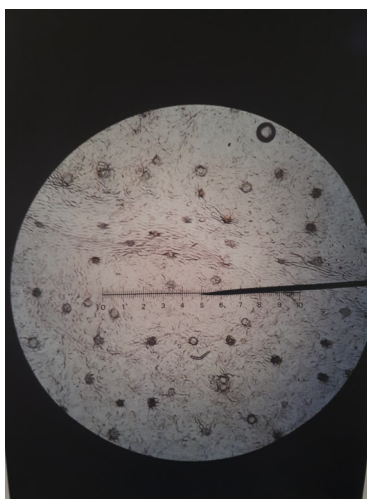
Older students have been using microscopes to find out about plants

Students coated the underside of a leaf with clear nail varnish. An imprint was then taken from the leaf using clear tape, this was attached to a glass slide and viewed using a microscope.

The first photo shows a fantastic image of the stomata (holes in the bottom of a leaf). Stomata regulate gas exchange between the plant and the air and they also control water loss by changing in size.



The second photo shows the xylem and phloem tissues. They transport water and sugars through the plant.



Learning news at SKS

Focus on PE and Sport

We're delighted that Mrs Allinson was successful in making an application to a government fund to broaden the offer of extra-curricular and out of school sporting activities available to pupils and the wider community.



Mrs Allinson managed to secure the amazing sum of **£6971** for PE resources at SKS. A huge thank you to Mrs Allinson.

This enabled us to purchase a new trampoline and refurbish our existing one.

We've now restarted Trampoline Club for Samuel King's students and can double the number of students able to attend the club. These pupils are now working towards their Trampoline Proficiency Awards. We are looking at putting on extra trampoline clubs on to then allow more pupils from across the Federation to access the club.

The money was also used to fund the purchase of Dodgeball training and Dodgeballs. This has enabled Mrs Allinson and Mr Fletcher to complete their Level 1 Dodgeball coaching qualification after Pupil Voice said that this was a sport the pupils wanted to develop. After half term we are looking forward to starting Dodgeball Club.

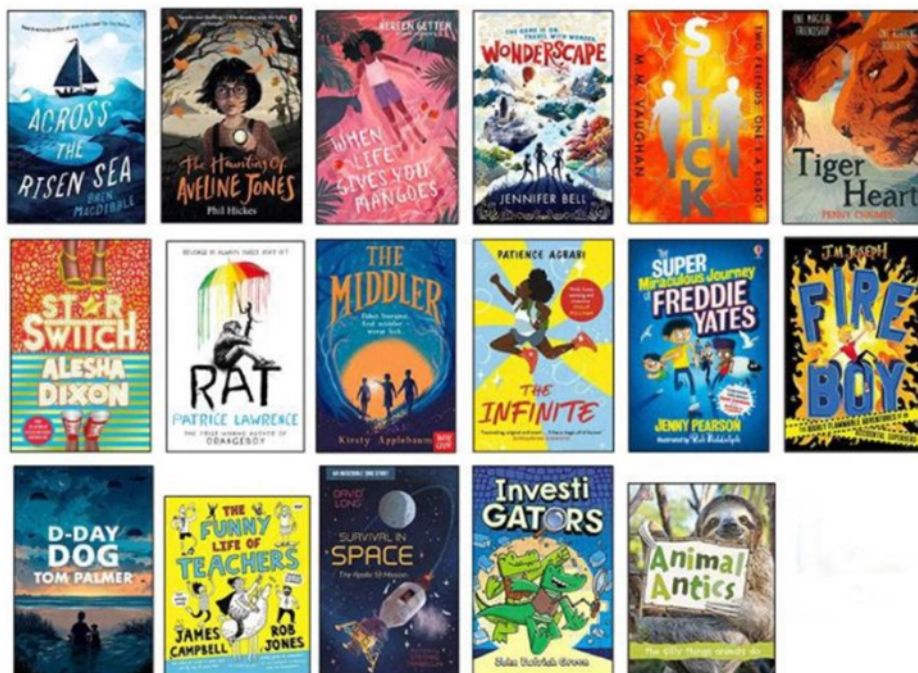
Focus on English

This half term, year 7 and 8 have been 'buzzing' about reading. Pupils have chosen a brand new book from *The Book Trust*. They have thoroughly enjoyed having the time to read in their English lessons and during tutor time. Here is what some of the pupils said:

Ethan (year 8) says 'Slick' by M.M.Vaughan is 'gripping and mysterious. It's exciting because it's like a game in your head and as you're reading, you have to figure out the answer to the next part of the story'.

Ryan (year 8) likes 'Investigators' by John Patrick Green because 'it's a funny, adventurous story as two alligators investigate the disappearance of Chef Gustavo. The writer tells a lot of jokes so it's entertaining'.

Jess (year 8) recommends 'The Middler' by Kirsty Applebaum as 'although it takes a while to get into the story, it is good', Ellie (year 7) says 'if you like war and you like dogs, 'D-Day Dog book is for you' and Madeline (year 7) says 'this book was really good. It had lots of facts about the war and it was really interesting. It didn't take long to read either. I would give it 4 stars!'



A big "Thank You" to the PTFA for funding this project.

Learning news at SKS

Focus on Geography

The GCSE Geography course students are currently looking at issues and benefits of the Western Desert in the U.S.A. We have analysed the adaptations people, plants and animals have made in order to survive in a hostile and fragile ecosystem.

Students were asked to make models of the traditional housing made by native Americans and the newer ones made by European settlers highlighting the features used to help live in the arid environment. I haven't seen the students so engaged on a task in a long time! Everyone managed to make a dwelling which resembled the examples given and they really understood why the features were there.



Learning news at SKS

Focus on Food Technology

Our GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition group have been busy planning their coursework this half term. The coursework accounts for 50% of their final grade and is a fantastic opportunity for them to showcase their culinary skills in the kitchen! They are planning, preparing, cooking and presenting a range of dishes from Italian cuisine. They have started their research of this beautiful country and its wonderful food and have started cooking their trial dishes. We have seen an eclectic mix of pasta dishes, gnocchi, dough balls, pizza and biscotti demonstrating pasta and dough making skills, sauce making skills and knife skills to name a few. Why not have a go over half term yourselves and cook up an Italian treat for your family! Delicious!



Learning news at SKS

Focus on Design Technology



Year 7 students have been using the sewing machines to stitch their tote bag this week.

This project has encouraged students to analyse products in more depth, thinking carefully about a products target market and how designers consider a client during the design process.

The year group have been busy pinning, ironing and designing their own motifs to suit their clients' likes and wants whilst learning how these designs can be applied to fabrics.

Fantastic work being completed by our students!

After school clubs at APS



After school on Thursdays, 18 KS2 girls have been putting their football skills through their paces at Girl's Football Club! This half term we have been focusing on dribbling with the ball, passing the ball and how to change direction quickly. Miss Sisson has been particularly impressed with the amount of goals we have been scoring every week in our games! Who knows maybe we have the next Kelly Smith here at Alston Primary School?!

AMF being dramatic

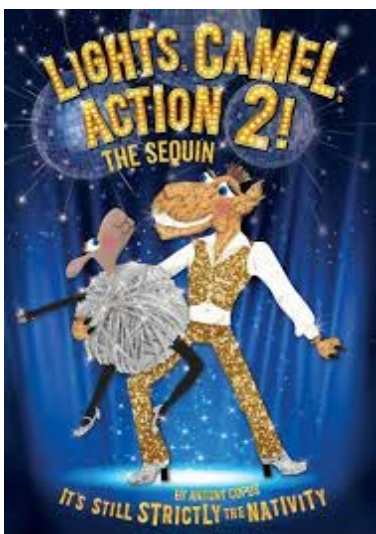
Hairspray the Musical

Our BTEC Performing Arts Dance students are all ready to perform their 'Hairspray' the musical inspired routine after half term. This is part of their practical assignment for the BTEC qualification. They have enjoyed not only learning the choreography, but also researching the musical discovering more about the themes, historical background, characters, storyline and production roles. They are thrilled that on the 11th November they will all be going to see the musical live at the Manchester Palace Theatre. It is sure to be a memorable trip for all involved!



Peter Pan

Year 8 at Samuel King's are currently rehearsing their own version of 'Peter Pan' in Performing Arts. With plenty more flying practice, some more pirate antics, a bit more rehearsal and a sprinkle of fairy dust from Tinkerbell they will be ready to share this with families. Their performance is likely to be scheduled for the New Year but we look forward to seeing them in action.



Lights Camel Action 2 The Sequin!

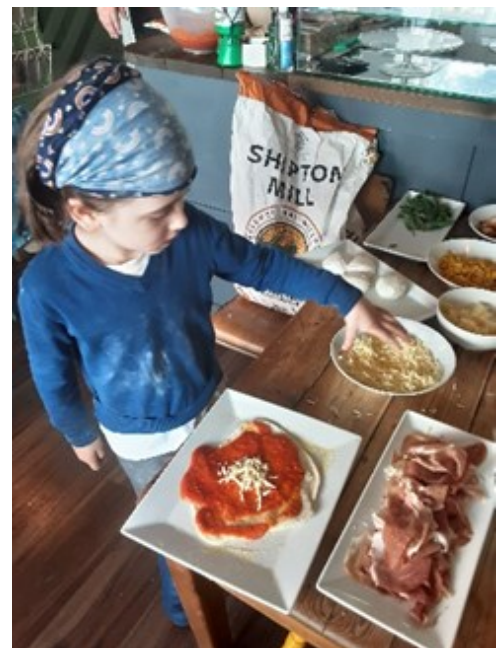
Our recent primary auditions were very successful, and we have now cast our whole primary production of 'Lights Camel Action 2 The Sequin'. The children have been learning their song words and dance moves and we can't wait to dazzle you with our 'Strictly' inspired production. There are judges, hosts, camels, Roman soldiers, Nazareth neighbours, shepherds, sheep, wise people, stars and of course a host of angels. Nothing quite makes Christmas like a primary production so the date for your diaries (all being well) is Thursday 2nd December. We are planning a 2pm and 6pm show in AMF hall. Further details on costumes to follow after half term. Well done to APS for making such a positive and enthusiastic start on their performance.

Learning new\$ at NP\$

This month we had a fantastic opportunity to visit Saddlers café in Alston to link in with our topic on food. Ricky and Hayley helped the children to prepare homemade pizza. The children had to make their own dough and had a wonderful variety of fresh toppings to add. The children also had to design their own pizza boxes to take their pizzas home for tea. To be honest, some of the pizzas never made it home as they were so delicious!

Ricky and Hayley also helped the children to decorate buns and provided the ingredients to make different coloured icing and a variety of cutters so the children could design their own bun.

A thoroughly wonderful experience for the children. Thank you so much to Ricky and Hayley for the enormous amount of ingredients and time they provided.



Learning news at APS

Middle Fell Highlights

In Middle Fell our topic this term is Ancient Egyptians! So far, we have thoroughly enjoyed learning how to write using hieroglyphics, why the River Nile was so important to the Ancient Egyptians and we've even turned ourselves into Pharaohs in art! In a recent topic lesson, we learnt about the foods that were available at this time and had a go at making Egyptian pita bread! We all agreed it tasted delicious!

As a class we have just finished our class story 'The Time-Travelling Cat and the Egyptian Goddess' by Julia Jarman which we learnt a lot about Ancient Egypt from.



Activities for Half term—Miss Sisson Recommends:

If you would like to take your learning further this half term you could read 'There's a Pharaoh in our bath!' By Jeremy Strong...it will definitely make you smile!



Learning news at NP3

Rivers

As part of our Rivers Topic, children in KS2 conducted field work along the River South Tyne to investigate the features of a local river and have learnt some technical language such as meander, erosion and confluence! We also learnt that the source of the river is located by Tyne Head Fell, about 4 miles south of Garrigill and is marked by a rather unusual sculpture.

Our Year 4 children have been creating a river system out of papier mâché. They have been exploring the journey of a river from source to mouth and looking at some of the physical features along the way.



They have pulled together all their knowledge from class work and field work and will be using this information to label 5 of the features they have included and explaining all about how rivers are formed.

If you would like to learn more about rivers you can visit:

www.dkfindout.com/uk/earth/rivers/

and

[The River Tyne - History, Origins & Future | Tyne Rivers Trust](#)

Learning news at APS

Cross Fell Highlights

We have had another few incredibly busy weeks in Cross Fell, here is a snapshot of what we have been up to.

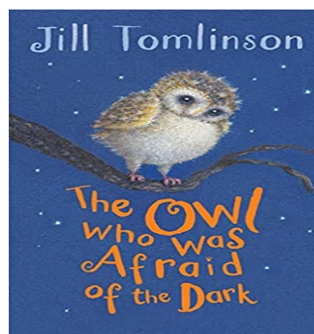


In maths we have really enjoyed using some of the lovely new maths resources that have arrived in school. We have been learning about addition and subtraction and also looking at how to represent numbers in different ways. We have really enjoyed explaining our thinking using mathematical vocabulary.

We have also enjoyed getting to grips with Times Table Rockstars and enjoyed a launch session with Miss Sisson, we are getting better every time we play and our confidence is really growing.

To take that next step in our learning we need to keep logging on regularly and playing a jamming session practising counting in those multiples of 10.

We are really enjoying sharing a range of new books from the library service , we are continuing our daily vote to pick which book we would like to hear and are also enjoying reading our class story 'The owl who was afraid of the dark'



On the last day of term we are also excited to be taking part in a zoom author visit where we will learn more about what it takes to write exciting stories and enjoy listening to the author Rachel Morrisroe sharing one of the books she has written. Experiences like this really help to build our love of reading and help us to continue to build a love of books.

Learning news at APS

Park Fell Highlight:

In Park Fell this half term we have been wondering 'Who am I'. Exploring what we look like including naming parts of our body, our family structure, our likes and dislikes and the places where we live. We had a virtual walk around Alston using Google Earth, even stopping to visit some homes along the way. We have discussed how our similarities and differences make us special and that it is okay not to like the same things. This week we have introduced Harvest and have made bread hedgehogs.

Children have settled well into the school routines and are beginning to make progress with their new learning.

Activities for Half term—Miss Hill recommends:

Keep practising speed sounds over half term and when you have a walk out look at the places which make your home and area special to you.

Book – Supertato by Sue Hendra and Linnet Paul

Film – Cinderella (2021)



Learning news at APS

Flinty Fell Highlights

In Flinty Fell this month, we have taken our learning further in our Rainforest topic with our highly successful and enjoyable trip to Durham University's Botanical Gardens. We had a wonderful tour of the gardens studying plants and tree from a range of different countries such as Brazil, China, Japan, USA and of course the UK! Also, we were very fortunate to go in a Rainforest climate simulator, looking at the different species found in the different habitats, and experiencing the humidity and heat of the rainforest.



As well as our trip, we have been studying the effects of deforestation on our planet, particularly in the Amazon rainforest, where we are putting our campaign together to help raise awareness of the dangers of over farming the world's vegetation (posters will start popping up around school soon!).

Next steps for our learning in Topic: Consider how human behaviour (not just over-farming), can contribute to the destruction of our planet's forests.

In our Maths mastery sessions, we are developing our multiplication knowledge by studying the area model and the column method to solve problems involving 3-digit numbers.

Next steps for our learning in Maths: Habitual practice of times tables facts, to support knowledge when working through column method and area model questions (up to 3 digits x 2 digits).



Learning news at APs

Flinty Fell Highlights, continued ...

In our writing sessions this half term, we have written our own Greek Myth, written a set of instructions designed to guide Middle Fell through the process of writing their own Greek Myth, as well as writing a recount of our trip to the Botanical Gardens at Durham University.

Next steps for our learning in Literacy: Consider how effective and precise use of punctuation helps develop a solid structure to sentences and paragraphs (SPaG focus).

Continue to develop your love for reading by reading your chosen book every night, and pass on any recommendations to your peers, explaining how the book made you feel and a precise summary of the plot.

Activities for Half term—Mr Percival recommends:

- A local place to visit in half term: Lowther Castle, Penrith. The Exhibition is superb and takes you back to 1150, when a Viking descendant first settled in Lowther. The Gardens are stunning and contain The Roman Bath and stone columns, providing reminders of the mid-Victorian period, while the Rock, Japanese, Sweet-Scented and Iris Gardens hark back to the early Edwardian Period. Also, there is an adventure playground. What's not to love!



- A book to read: 'Kensuke's Kingdom' by Michael Morpurgo will take you on the journey of a lifetime without leaving the comfort of your bed or your favourite chair. Classic Morpurgo, emotional and life-affirming.
- A film to watch: Disney: Disney Pixar's 'Inside Out'. If you want a brilliant metaphorical representation of a 'Growth Mindset', then this is the place to go!
- A conversation to have: Talk to your adult about what your keen interests are. Why do you hold a passion for these activities? Where can these interests lead you to?

Harvest 2021



This year we will be celebrating Harvest at St. Augustine's Church in Alston. The children from Alston, Nenthead and Samuel King's have been working hard on their contributions for the service. Many thanks to Alison Horn and Rev. Mark Nash-Williams for their organisation of the service. Unfortunately, due to high rates of Covid we will not be inviting parents to take part in the service, but we will live stream it for families to join us virtually. We are incredibly disappointed about this however, we will be taking plenty of photos and recordings which will be shared through Class Dojo. Thank you for all of the donations that have been sent in for the Harvest collection.



A message from APS School Council

Last month at Alston Primary School nominations and elections took place for our new School Council. The purpose of the first meeting was to decide which charities we will support this year. The council agreed on supporting a local, national and international charity.

- Autumn term 2021 - Children in Need Friday 12th November
- Spring term 2022 - Comic Relief Friday 18th March
- Summer term 2022 - Great North Air Ambulance date TBC.

The School Council also agreed that they would celebrate World Book Day on Thursday 3rd March 2022. The newly appointed secretary Sophie, will be writing to the children to explain the plan for supporting charities over the next year.

Junior Warrior!

On Wednesday 29th September the KS1 children from both Alston and Nenthead Primary Schools enjoyed a fun packed afternoon out of school at the Junior Warrior festival. The event was organised by Active Ants and included a range of activities and physical challenges.

This was the first event in the calendar of activities, which we will be taking part in alongside local schools. Thanks to Mrs Allinson for organising and to Culgaith School for hosting, it was awesome!



Calling all toddlers!

Barnardos are now running 0-4 year old sessions in school. Find out more at the Barnardos East Facebook page or ask Hollie in the school office for a copy of their newsletter.

Let's Get 0 – 4 years

Take part in a range of fun and fulfilling play activities; first steps to lifelong learning. From painting and craft, dress up and construction to puzzles and outdoor play- there is lots to do! Join in with your favourite stories and rhymes and play alongside your children.

**** Booking required for all sessions 01768 899901 ****

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for session updates

**Alston Children's Centre, Alston School,
Church Road, Alston, CA9 3QU**

Wednesday 6th, 13th and 20th October

3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th November

1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd December

10:30am – 11:30am

TIMES TABLES ROCKSTARS

Let the battle commence ...

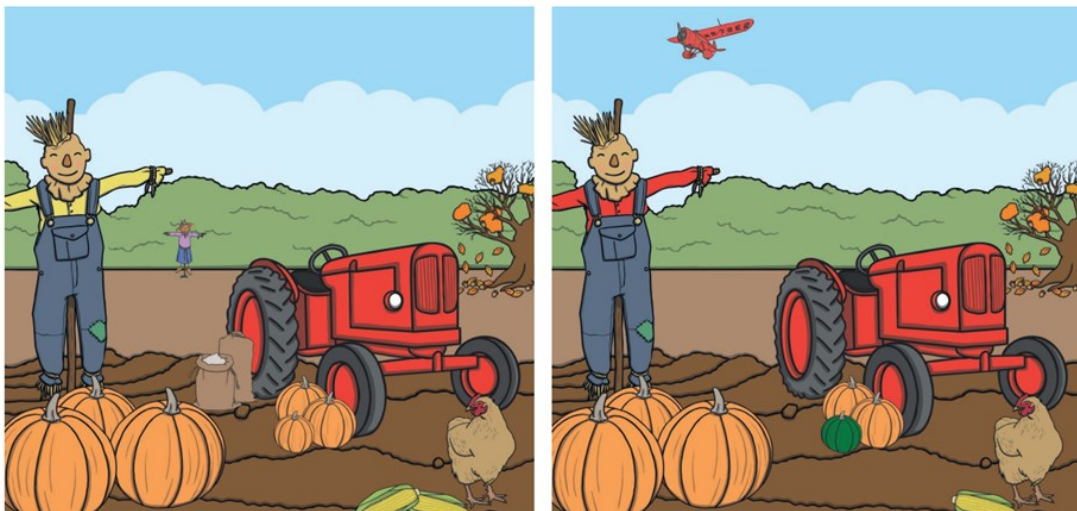
When it comes to times tables, speed AND accuracy are important – the more facts your child remembers, the easier it is for them to do harder calculations.

TT Rock Stars is a fun and challenging programme that we use at Alston Primary school, to help students master the times tables!

Battle of the Bands – Each month we have a fun competition called Battle of the Bands where different groups compete to earn the most points. So far we've had Girls vs Boys and this month's competition is Cross Fell vs Middle Fell vs Flinty Fell!

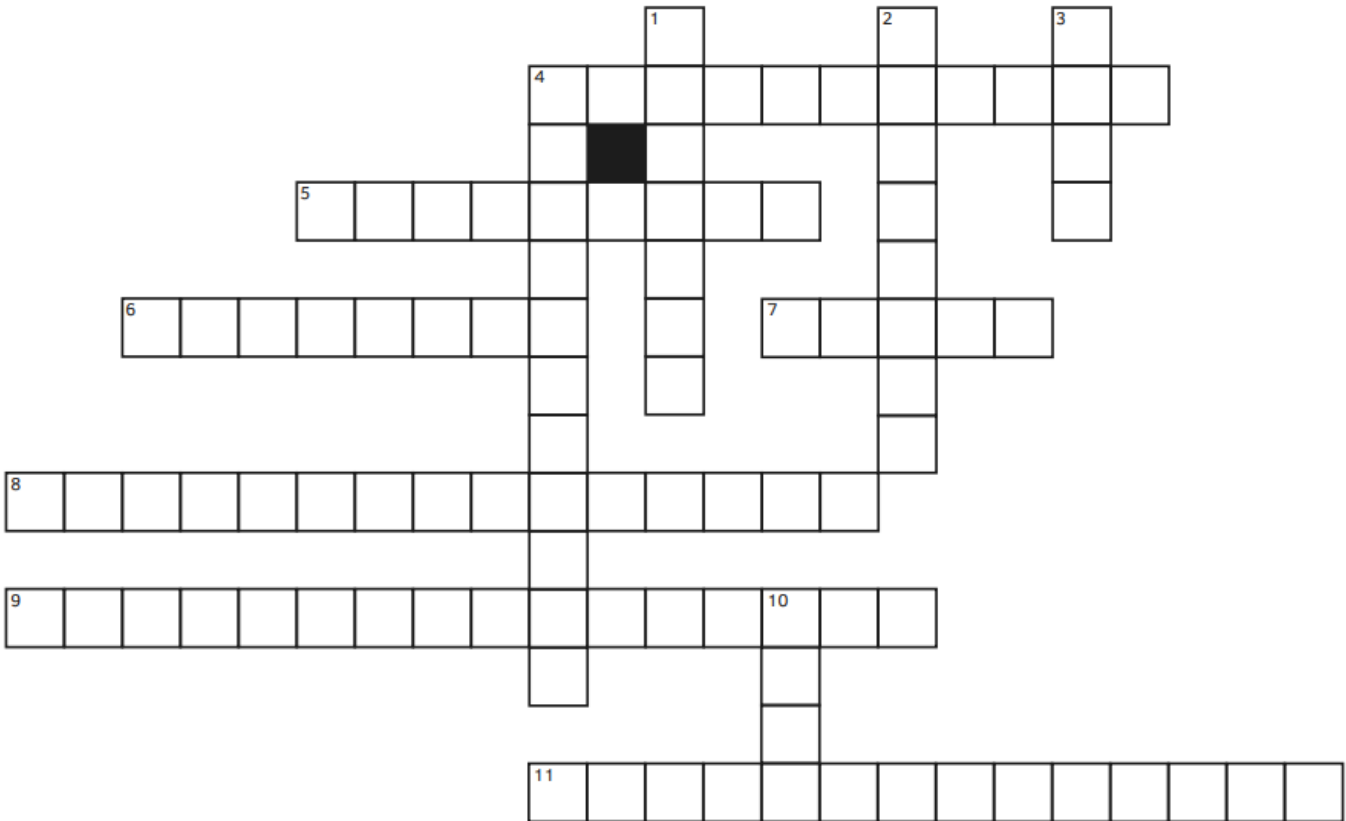
Spot the difference in the Pumpkin Patch

There are six differences in the pictures below - can you find them?



Try our Book Quiz

<u>Test your knowledge of Famous Authors in this crossword</u>	
<p>Across</p> <p>4. The central character of J.K. Rowling's novels.</p> <p>5. Johann _____ invented moveable typeface and so is the father of the printed book.</p> <p>6. Agatha _____ is the world's bestselling fiction author.</p> <p>7. The Brothers _____ were responsible for the collection of many of our favourite fairy stories.</p> <p>8. The bestselling author of 'Noughts and Crosses'.</p> <p>9. The semi-autobiographical novel by Charles Dickens.</p> <p>11. Writer of 'The Gruffalo'.</p>	<p>Down</p> <p>1. Theodore Geisel is the real name of which author?</p> <p>2. The bestselling author of the 'Alex Rider' series is Anthony _____.</p> <p>3. The pseudonym false last name used by the Brontë sisters.</p> <p>4. The bestselling series by Suzanne Collins is The _____.</p> <p>10. The only Jane Austen novel in which the central character's name is eponymous (her name is in the title).</p>

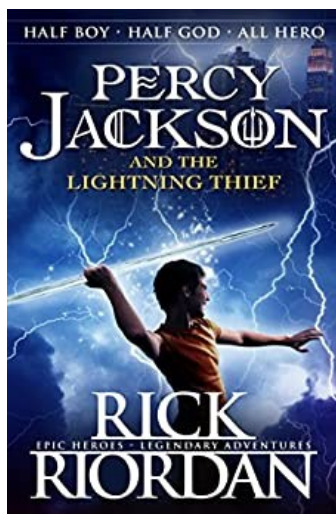
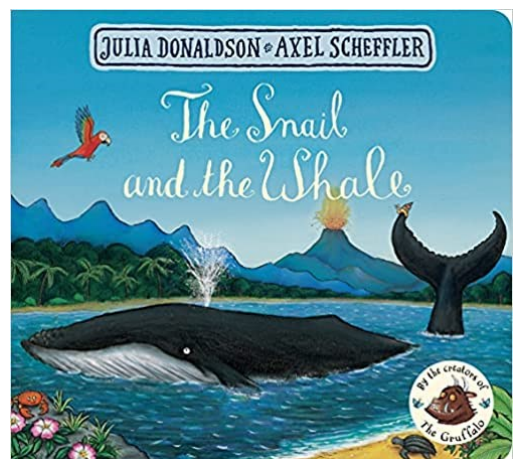


Recommended reads



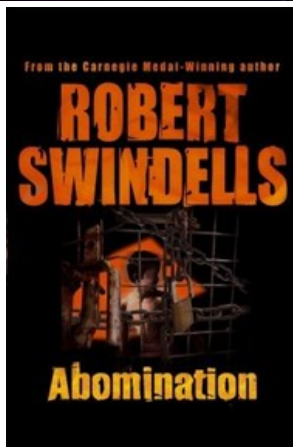
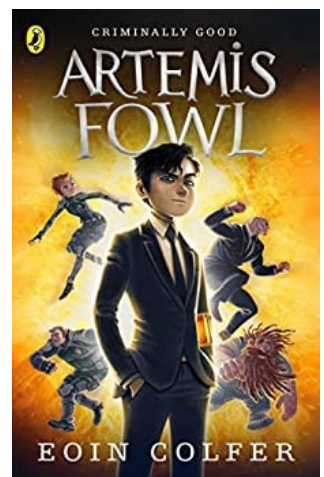
For the youngest children, why not read them **Julia Donaldson's The Snail and the Whale**.

Also highly recommended is Sue Hendra's **Supertato**.

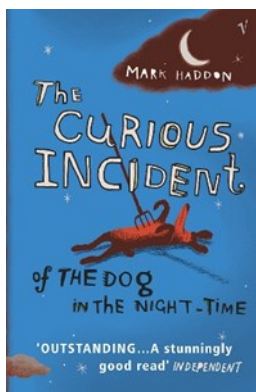
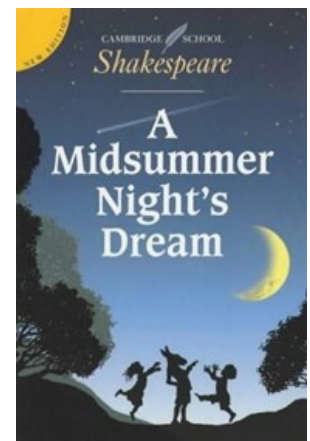


For young people aged around 9-12 years old we recommend **Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief**. The book is MUCH better than the film. The audio book read by Jesse Bernstein is also very good. The children in Flinty Fell have been studying Greek myths, so this would be a great choice for them.

If your child likes a bit of magic then how about exploring Eoin Colfer's **Artemis Fowl** books. Again, don't bother with the film, the book is much better. Gerry O'Brien's audio version of this book is wonderful—highly recommended if you're doing a car trip during half term.



For KS3, Mrs Hinkley recommends the thriller novel 'Abomination' by Robert Swindells and for a fantastical play, William Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.



A KS4 favourite is the brilliantly funny 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time' by Mark Haddon. Mrs Hinkley adds "I would also recommend an inspirational autobiography 'Becoming' by Michelle Obama." *Adapted for younger readers.*

(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 short car journeys)

