

# Alston Moor Federation

## September 2021 Newsletter



### **A message from the Headteacher**

Thank you to the many parents who have welcomed me to the Federation. Having lived in Hexham a number of years ago, I am so pleased to be back in a part of the world I call home. I am looking forward to getting to know people over the next few weeks and months as we are able to get out and about and also open the school up more to visitors.

I have very much enjoyed my first few weeks in Alston, meeting the children and getting to know the staff. I am very impressed by what I have seen, and hope that I can help the schools maintain and develop the excellent education we offer to the young people of the area.

As you get to know me, you will realise that I talk a lot about the importance of reading. In an assembly with the primary children last week we discussed that reading is important because it helps us to do well at school, and also when we leave school to go to work, but that there is real joy in snuggling up with a good book. I know that Christmas is approaching and parents will probably be asked by relatives for present ideas. How about suggesting a book or a book token? I know class teachers will be happy to share ideas of books your children will enjoy, and there are some ideas later on in this newsletter

It's been a very busy start to the new term, as you will see from the many events which have happened in the first few weeks of term. I am so impressed by the way in which the children and young people have thrown themselves into these opportunities. They've conducted themselves so well when we have been out of school. They really have been a credit to their schools and their families.

We have arranged to have a number of important events in St Augustine's Church this term, and I'm very grateful to Rev. Nash-Williams for welcoming us. We do hope to be able to include parents, but will wait until closer to the time to make a decision about who we can invite, depending on Covid rates in the area. We will be celebrating Harvest Festival on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Our Remembrance Service will be on 12<sup>th</sup> November and we are planning a Carol Service on 16<sup>th</sup> December. We will send more details nearer the time.

With my very best wishes  
Mrs Gill Jackson

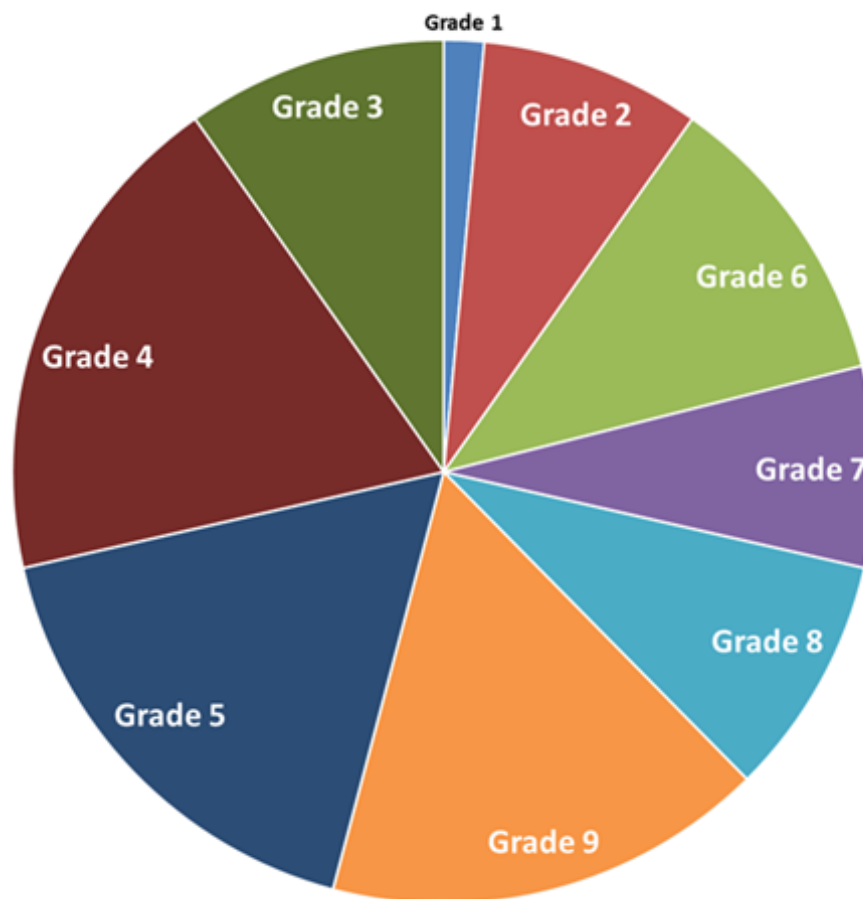
## Achievements for our young people

The report which gives inspectors and school governors information about children's progress in their early years has now been published. APS had a very impressive set of 2020/2021 results. As a school we are above the national average scores in most areas of development. Our overall 'Good Level of Development' results were 9.4% higher than national average. Very well done to the Park Fell 2020/2021 team for achieving this during such a difficult year.

Samuel King's School used a different system for deciding the grades for our GCSE students this year. Teachers collected evidence and recommended a grade to the exam boards. These grades were then scrutinised and the evidence was checked.

Our GCSE results this summer are incredibly impressive. Over 1/3 of grades were the top 9-7 grades (equivalent to A/A\* in old money) and over 85% of grades were 4 or better (grade C or higher in old money!) Well done to everyone who worked so hard to achieve these life-enhancing exam results.

Samuel King's  
GCSE Results 2021



## A day in the life of ... students at SKS

Mrs Jackson went for a walk around school on a September morning and this is what she found our young people doing..

The science lesson was definitely hands-on. Students in Biology were exploring the anatomy of the heart, by dissecting pig's hearts. Definitely not one for the squeamish!



In maths, KS3 students were learning about Pythagoras and how to correctly identify a right angled triangle before applying Pythagoras' theory.

A food technology lesson in KS4 was a practical session, with students cooking a meal suitable for a young child. The cooking smells were delicious and made everyone feel hungry.



The RE class had a visitor, Ruth Evans, from NISCU (Northern Inter Schools Christian Union), in their lesson. They were having an interesting discussion with someone who is living out their Christian views and beliefs.

A KS3 history lesson was looking at city life in Victorian England in preparation for learning about Jack the Ripper. They were concentrating deeply, deciding whether living in a rat infested house was better or worse than living in a single room with your very large family.



The students in the English lesson were refining their written explanation and description skills. The photo shows one student trying to wire a plug following the instructions written by his friend. It wasn't as easy as it sounds!



## Learning news at NPS

We have had an action-packed start to the autumn term with trips, events and lots of learning. It has been so focused that it has been hard to believe that the children have been away.

After so much time confined to school, we decided to start our teaching sequences by going off to explore further afield. Fieldwork skills were the focus in geography with Mrs Venus, finding out about Ancient Egypt through artefacts at the Great North Museum and KS1 are planning a restaurant visit to further their knowledge about healthy eating.

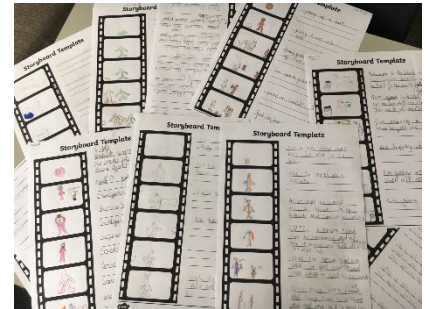
'It was the best thing I have ever done at school,' commented a year 4 boy. "There was a real mummy!'



Over the first few weeks, all the federation children were reading books to help them understand the importance of our local environment and what we can do to protect it. KS1 constructed their own wildlife area and KS2 had an unexpected letter from the local council to prompt their writing skills and put their learning into a meaningful context. Sorry for anyone who thought there were really fifteen houses being built on the school field!



Our proudest moment so far has been starting to experiment with Stop Go animation. Some of you may remember Morph from long ago. The story boards are done, characters made and we have begun experimenting with different applications.



Watch out for our own version of 'Arcimboldo' inspired art on display in school as well.



## Learning news at APS



Mr Percival writes...This term so far in Flinty Fell, we have enjoyed our work with the 'Daft as a Brush' charity. We have submitted our artwork to the charity, which will be developed and displayed on to an Ambulance called the 'Alston Allstar'.

Our work with our Rainforest topic has included developing our own movement routines based on performance poetry that we have written in our Performing Arts sessions. The children are creating a portfolio on a case study of the Amazon rainforest, and

we are putting together a campaign to raise awareness on the dangers of extreme deforestation.

Singing Assembly has been an absolute joy to lead and get the whole of APS signing along to 3 Harvest classics.

KS2 Choir is growing by the week (we are up to 15 enthusiastic members) making Monday evenings a special time of the week. They are all passionate about the song 'Autumn Days', as well as making great progress with their understanding of Musical Keys and notes.

Miss Sisson has been so impressed with how many children in Middle Fell have shown commitment to their learning by joining the Times Table Rockstars lunchtime club. The competitiveness for the first battle of the bands competition has been amazing but who will win; girls or boys?!

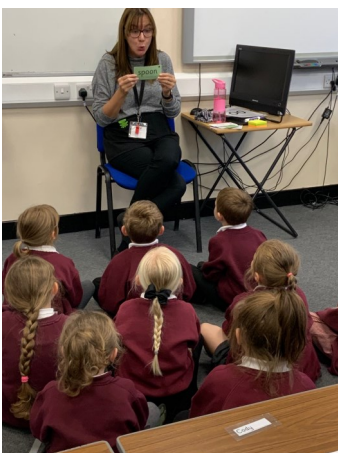


'In Middle Fell we have been lucky enough to have a zoom call with a dietitian who taught us all about how to eat a balanced diet to keep our bodies healthy. We have also been using the eat well plate to help us understand which foods belong to each food group.'

Miss Hill reports that Park Fell have been busy learning the routines and rules of school life and joining in with new experiences and events. They have really liked the Forest School sessions in our new garden area.

Reception and year 1 have been enjoying some action poetry sessions. Here is one for you...

'Chop, Chop, Choppity Chop,  
Cut off the bottom and cut off the top.  
What you have left, we put in the pot,  
Chop, Chop, Choppity Chop,





## More from APS

Mrs Brown reports...What a busy and fun-filled start to the Autumn Term we have had in Cross Fell! We have taken some time to settle back into school, getting used to our learning environment and making new friends. We are really enjoying our new topic of food and harvest.



We have especially enjoyed spending time in our new reading area and have loved voting on which book we would like to hear each day by placing beads in the jar of the book we want – democracy in action!

This term we have already shared so many amazing books and have been on some fantastic adventures without even leaving the classroom. It has been lovely to see the books being read in storytime then being enjoyed again independently in the book corner- even the dolls have enjoyed listening to us reading!

As part of our new topic we have been tasting a range of fruits so that we can start to design and then make our own healthy fruit salads. The different fruits went down really well and really inspired us to get creative with our recipe designs- we can't wait to get on to the making stage!

In art we have been learning about colours and colour mixing, Mrs Brown set us a challenge to make three new colours using only the red, blue and yellow paint we had on the table. We dipped a finger into each of the colours and mixed them together and were amazed to discover that we could make green, orange and purple- it was great fun!



## Gelt Gladiator

Thank you to Mrs Allinson for organising Gelt Gladiator on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September. This event was postponed last year so it was fantastic to see it so well supported by students and their families. Another extra-curricular event we are able to offer our young people which is so important for their physical and mental wellbeing.



## Daft as a Brush

Flinty Fell had a wonderful Zoom call with Brian Dixon and Dave Harrison from the 'Daft as a Brush' charity, about how we can help cancer patients attend their appointments in the 'Daft as a Brush' ambulances. The ambulances have designs on that are created by children in primary schools and we are very fortunate to be involved in designing our own ambulance for the charity! Here are some of the children's wonderful designs.



## School clubs

A welcome back to all of the extra-curricular clubs and experiences that haven't been as possible as normal over the last 18 months! As a Federation, we are able to offer a wide range of breakfast, lunch, after school clubs, trips and experiences which is down to the commitment of staff. This photo shows how pleased the children are to be back in clubs and experiencing the wider curriculum!



The APS TT Rockstars Club, Girl's Football Club, Park Fell enjoying Forest School in the newly revamped garden and NPS KS1 children in the wildlife garden they created.



## Tour of Britain Cycle Race

It was fantastic to see all three schools supporting the Tour of Britain last week. Such an exciting event to come through Alston and Nenthead and a wonderful opportunity for the children and students to experience a major sporting occasion. A thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all!



The Hive at Nenthead supported the children in their preparations for the Tour of Britain. The yellow t-shirts are a real show-stopper!





## NUFC at APS

There was a very positive start to the NUFC programme. Thanks to everyone for helping Craig to settle in. He mentioned to staff that he had a really good first day with us. Children from each class really enjoyed the sessions developing their skills in fundamental movement and football. Thanks to Mr Percival for sharing these photos.





## NPS exploring rivers

The children from NPS spent last Thursday exploring the South Tyne as part of their Geography work on rivers. We found the source of the Tyne at Tynehead, noticing the jagged rocks and narrow river bed. We then saw how the river changed as we met it again at Eals. We measured its width, its depth and the speed of the water flow. We noticed how the river eroded its banks and wore away the stones it carried downstream. Finally we met the river again at its confluence with the North Tyne, as it carried on into Newcastle as the River Tyne. During our day we gained a much deeper understanding of the mighty river that plays such an important role in our region.





## School Councils

It's great to see new Student Councils in all three schools formed and up and running. Their first job was to decide which charities they would like to support this year – a local charity, a national one and a global one. We also have a student who will be on the Parish Youth Council and will link community and school to promote the voice of young people living on the Moor.

## Improving the schools' environment



We had a busy summer holiday in terms of works at both sites. Thank you to Gary and the teams for supporting the improvements in Alston and Nenthead.



Thank you to Miss Hill, the PTFA and an army of volunteers for working so hard on phase one of the wildlife area on the Alston site. The area has been cleared and work started to develop this part of the grounds. There are exciting plans ahead to make this area accessible and fun for outdoor learning and Forest School.

Both schools will be able to use and enjoy this space for years to come.

Watch out for raised beds, seating area and a wild flower area!



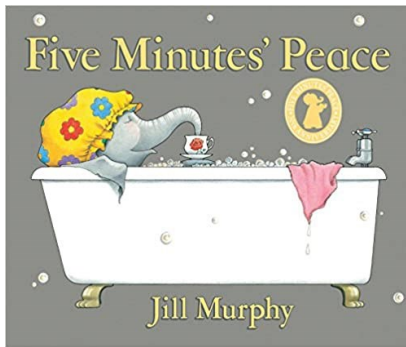
## Summer Dance School

The return of the Dance School holiday club this summer was welcomed by many of the children from the local area. Thank you to Miss Alison for sharing some lovely photographs of the dancers thoroughly enjoying themselves!





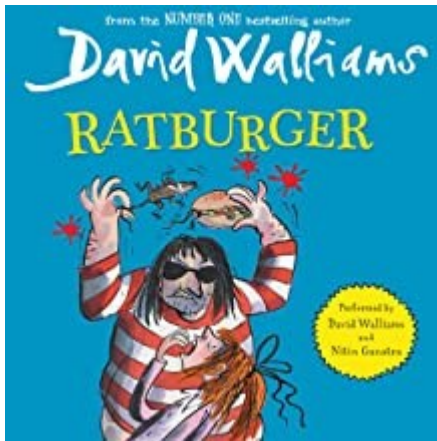
## Recommended reads



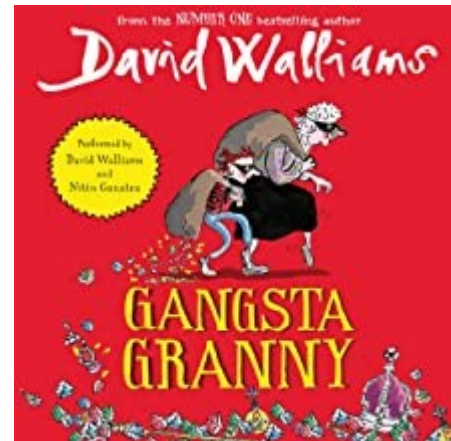
For the youngest children, why not read them **Julia Donaldson's The Scarecrow's wedding**. It will fit very well with the Harvest theme of this term's work.



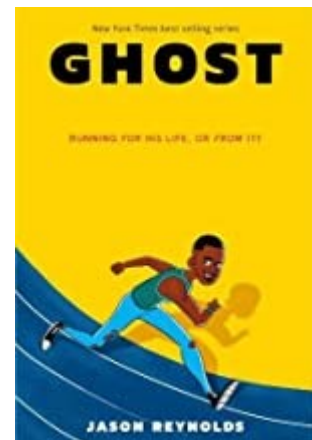
Parents might also empathise with Mrs Large when reading **Jill Murphy's Five Minute's Peace**



KS2 children will love anything by **David Walliams**, but we particularly recommend **Ratburger** or **Gangsta Granny**



Young people in KS3 could try **Ghost** by **Jason Reynolds** or **The Dog Runner** by **Bren MacDibble**. We think they will really enjoy these great stories.



Mr Birtwhistle recommends KS4 students to read anything by **Bill Bryson** but particularly **Neither Here Nor There**, and he also suggests **The Garbage King** by **Elizabeth Laird**. (Bill Bryson's writing regularly appears on GCSE exam papers—he's that good!)



(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 long or short car journeys)

**For our community...**

# Grief, Loss & Hope

in a time of Covid

**Fri 1<sup>st</sup>- Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

**The last 18 months have been hard:**

We've experienced fear and isolation, anxiety and grief,  
hardship, illness and death.

**But there have been good things too:**

Support from friends and neighbours,  
community spirit and online friendships,  
vaccines and medical breakthroughs.

**Come and share your experiences, painful or good:**

**St Augustine's Church is open for you,**

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> and Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 10am - 5pm,  
and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 12pm - 3pm.**

we offer a safe space and a listening ear,  
a cup of tea and a slice of cake.

a chance to remember your loved ones by name, or with a photo  
to draw or write your thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears.

**Join us for a service on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 3pm**

in which we can grieve the past,  
honour the memories which have been shared,  
light a candle for those we have lost  
and look forward with hope to the future.

**Everyone welcome - no charge - just drop in.**

[www.alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/worship](http://www.alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/worship)