

February '22

Whoever thinks January is dark and dull should come and spend a few hours in school; our pupils certainly know how to shine bright in short, winter days. The new January Nursery starters have settled in extremely well and it is always a pleasure to see how the older pupils embrace the responsibility of nurturing the wide-eyed new faces. After having 'survived' the last year and a half with very few Covid cases, this term has been a challenge for pupils, parents / carers and staff. The shortened isolation period has reduced pupil absence and teachers continue to provide online learning to those recovering at home. With Covid cases in staff, it's a case of helping each other and covering where possible, and I can't thank the staff enough for their support, compassion and positive spirit in such difficult circumstances. A truly inspiring team to work alongside and one which I am extremely proud to work alongside. Members of St James' Church are an integral part of the Arnside team and our shared Christian vision is a constant source of strength.

Outside activities have continued to go ahead and the pupils have enjoyed a whole range of events. The cross country season is well underway and teams of pupils entered the Sedbergh and Dallam races. Mrs Shipperd, PE co-ordinator, even managed to organise 60+ pupils to race at Dallam – a military exercise and a fantastic opportunity for so many pupils. The cold, mud and rain didn't deter anyone and their performances and conduct were a credit to themselves and the school. A special mention must go to Isla Stewart, Y6, who managed to gain selection for the County Cross Country at Penrith; a superstar runner in the making. Sports coaching sessions this term have focused on alternative sports and the pupils have had the opportunity to experience Ultimate Frisbee, Yoga, and even fencing!

Under the guidance of Mrs Hartropp, our Eco Club goes from strength to strength, and their recent audit has given the school several areas to focus on. Ideas such as additional food recycling, reducing plastic usage at lunchtimes, energy free hours throughout the week, and monitoring the light usage are just a few initiatives the pupils have presented to the Senior Leadership Team. Pupil voice is a crucial part of our school vision and the pupils are certainly demonstrating their love for the environment. With passion and drive like this, our environment is in safe hands.

Our local area is a truly stunning resource to utilise and the infant classes made the most of the short rail journey to Silverdale to spend a morning at Leighton Moss. The rangers were very inspiring and the pupils loved learning about the birds and their habitats found at the reserve. Thank you to all the RSPB staff for their help and support with the trips – the pupils loved them! Later this term we are extremely excited at the prospect of all our pupils working alongside the National Trust on Arnside Knott. We're hoping the 'mini ranger' activities will help develop skills and knowledge, and a deep love and understanding of the rich biodiversity of our local AONB.

School finished the half term with a fantastic Wellbeing Week. The pupils enjoyed mindfulness sessions, yoga lessons, meditation and relaxation sessions, all designed to help the pupils reflect on their mental wellbeing. Alongside this, Miss Addison and Mrs Brough organised several HeartStart lessons which taught the pupils a range of vital first aid techniques. Healthy eating was promoted throughout the week and the older pupils also had a 'resilience' session run by Paul Edwards. The week culminated in all the classes going on a 'Walk for Wellbeing' and enjoying a few hours exploring the local area. The summer activities are just around the corner and pupils are very excited at the prospect of residential! Adventures outside the classroom are a vital tool to help develop independence, confidence, and priceless, life-long memories.

"The greatest adventure is what lies ahead." JRR Tolkien

Take care, Mr Sharp.