



MORPETH
Stobhillgate
FIRST SCHOOL

December Newsletter

Introduction

"Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."— **Nelson Mandela**

I'm not sure about you, but I still wake up every now and then and think to myself 'is this really happening?'. Last January, I knew I had a busy year ahead and I was extremely excited for the 'challenge' ahead: my wife and I were preparing for the birth of our second child and as a school, after months of planning and preparation, we were finally about to join the 3 Rivers Learning Trust. Then in the blink of an eye, on the 23rd of March, lockdown, all of our lives were turned upside down and how different life has been ever since.

Over the last few years, we have experienced, numerous challenges and this again showed just how resilient we are as a school. Our Stobhillgate family is stronger, we stick together when things get tough and as the above quotation states we 'get back up again', roll up our sleeves and we 'crack on' with the job in hand and for that I will be forever grateful.

I think this year can be perfectly summed up by our school's defining principles of:

- Inspiration
- Empathy
- Collaboration
- Excellence

This year, we don't need to look too far to be **inspired**. The selfless hard work, resilience and sacrifice of the country's front line workers is a daily inspiration. I know that our Stobhillgate family and the wider community is full of these special people. I am personally aware of many parents who have worked tirelessly at the front line of this pandemic. On behalf of Stobhillgate, I thank you. We appreciate this and will never forget the vital role you have played in trying to keep us all safe.

At Stobhillgate, we always try to stress the importance of **empathy** to our children by thinking about how others may be feeling. Again, this year empathy has clearly been extremely important. Over the last year, we have seen many examples of people putting others first. Over the last few months, our school community has made incredible donations to the Wansbeck Food Bank and I am sure that these kind donations will go a long way in helping families in our local community enjoy Christmas. As staff, can we also thank you for your kind words during these difficult times. Since March, we have been inundated by thoughtful messages of support and appreciation and I would like you to know how much these words mean.

2020 has emphasised the importance of **collaboration** throughout the world: from local communities working together to support vulnerable residents to international pharmaceutical companies

collaborating to create a much-needed vaccine. At Stobhillgate, I was blown away by the togetherness, positivity and can-do attitude of our team. They have truly been sensational. I would personally like to thank every single member of the school staff for their hard work and dedication to our children.

Albert Einstein famously said: 'in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity' and our staff have shown this at every level. Since returning to school in September our staff have delivered a new exciting curriculum. Over the last few years, we have dramatically improved the way in which we deliver English and Maths. However, the broader curriculum (History, Art etc) has now been redesigned to ensure our children are receiving high-quality provision in all subjects and a true reflection of our principle **Excellence**. The children have loved their new curriculum and have learnt so much! Year 1 was bursting with enthusiasm about the Great Fire of London; Year 2 have created incredible animations in Computing; Year 3 couldn't wait to tell me about Mr Innes' live mummification and only just this week Year 4 blew me away with their DT skills that they developed to design and build a fairground ride. This is only the beginning and the staff have a wealth of exciting learning opportunities up their sleeves. Watch this space!

So as 2020 comes to a well-needed end, can I on behalf of everyone at Stobhillgate wish you a Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year. We hope you have a relaxing, well-deserved break with your families over the holidays and we look forward to seeing you again on Tuesday 5th January for the start of another exciting term at school.

Kindest regards, Glen Whitehead.

Welcome to our first Academy Council Update

Back in April Stobhillgate became a part of the 3 Rivers Learning Trust, it has provided the school with clear guidelines and support through a very difficult time which could not have been better timing. Being a part of the Three Rivers has also changed the way in which governance happens at school. We are now called an academy council and we are given assurances from the Trust Board which we discuss and share evidence that the assurances are being met. Alongside this, we look at ways which we can improve and also provide challenge to the school leaders to hold them to account for how the school runs.

So far this academic year we have completed numerous virtual visits which include looking at staff wellbeing, safeguarding, reviewing the broader curriculum, reviewing our SEND provision and many more.

We have plans for the coming term to complete further visits looking at pupil premium, also gathering some feedback from students and parents.

As an Academy Council we are always looking for ways to engage with our pupils and parents so if you have any ideas for this please get in touch via the school admin email address. The Three Rivers is always looking for volunteers to join an

Academy Council and if this is something that you would be interested in please contact Fiona Ewart for more information or alternatively, take a look at the Trust website, www.the3rivers.net/our-governance/governance-recruitment.

May I also take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing support during a very challenging time in school. I also look forward to speaking with some of you in the New Year.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Sarah
Chair of Academy Council

Stobhillgate Academy Councillors

Sarah Watson (Chair)	<p>I have worked as an Occupational Therapist in the NHS for 18 years and currently work within major trauma at the RVI. It has provided me with numerous skills that I utilise when being the Chair of the Academy Council.</p> <p>I have been a part of Stobhillgate's governing body now for approximately 5 years and during that time I have been actively involved in all aspects of the school, from budget planning to recruitment. All three of my children have been through the school and on into Chantry and eventually KEVI.</p> <p>Stobhillgate is a fantastic school and I am passionate on ensuring that we continue to grow and flourish providing an amazing experience for all students who come through our doors.</p>
Louise Banfield	<p>I have worked in education for the last 20 years in both schools and the private sector. I qualified as a Geography Teacher in 2008 and I am currently a Head of Department in a large comprehensive secondary school in Newcastle. I am also a designated SLE (Specialist Leader in Education) and in this role have worked on outreach support with other schools in the city to help improve educational outcomes for all young people. I strongly believe that all children should be inspired and enthused by their time in the classroom and encouraged to achieve their full potential irrespective of their background. I am link Academy Councillor for SEND, helping ensure that pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are included in the full life of the school.</p> <p>My husband grew up in Morpeth and I have lived here for 15 years. My children are 9 and 6 and have both attended Stobhillgate First School where they loved every minute of it!</p>
Milly Matheson	<p>I have worked as a small animal veterinarian for 15 years and am completely new to being an Academy Councillor.</p> <p>I am very excited to be part of the Three Rivers Learning Trust and part of Stobhillgate Academy Council. I am passionate about every child being given the opportunity to enrich and develop their learning experience, and to be able to offer support to the children. I have 3 children who are also part of the Three Rivers Learning Trust and I am proud to be involved in some way.</p>
Lynne Bush (Staff)	<p>I have worked at Stobhillgate for over 20 years supporting pupils. I am passionate about our children receiving the best education and care which I firmly believe is what Stobhillgate offers.</p> <p>I was co-opted onto the governing body in 2016 and have been a governor for 4 years. Being a part of this school for such a length of time has helped develop my knowledge of the local area and I have established an understanding of the community especially with our parents.</p> <p>I am passionate and enthusiastic about the school and its future and by being an Academy Councillor; I can make positive contributions to the children's education and value their beliefs, attitudes and aspirations.</p>
Hayley Herbertson	<p>I qualified as a teacher of Geography in 2004 and took up my first teaching role at Harton Academy where I taught for 14 years. During my time at Harton I took on the role of Advanced Skills Teacher, Lead Practitioner and was designated as an SLE (a Specialist Leader of Education) in January 2012. As part of these roles I carried out outreach work within the authority as well as providing training and support to many trainee teachers as part of both the PGCE and School Direct programme. I didn't think that I could find another school that I would love working at as much until I applied for a job at Chantry Middle School. I was delighted to join Chantry in January 2018 and I am very proud to say that I am the Subject Leader for both Humanities and RE at Key Stage 3. As a teacher I am a strong believer in making every lesson a valuable learning experience and I believe that young people should be inspired, enthused and challenged to become lifelong learners and be encouraged to reach their full potential. I consider it to be a privilege to be part of the Three Rivers Learning Trust and I am delighted to take on the role as an Academy Councillor for Stobhillgate First School. My daughter currently attends the school and is enjoying every minute of it.</p>
Paul Carvin	<p>I have been involved in education all my working life. I started out as a Geography teacher and had experience as a senior leader in a large secondary school. I then moved into advisory and inspection work, including for Ofsted. Before retiring, I was Head of Education for Gateshead Council. I am Chair of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Education Committee of The Three Rivers Learning Trust and am interested in promoting high standards and ensuring that all students receive the very best curriculum to suit their needs and expectations. I have two grown up children, both of whom attended KEVI.</p>

What is a new normal?

As we try to manage the day to day routines of the school, not only do we need to be mindful of keeping our children and staff safe and well, we also need to consider the children's social and emotional development that they gain from routines and shared experiences in school.

With this in mind, we will adjust the drop-off and pick-up times across the school. Therefore from Tuesday 5th January, the drop off and collection times will be as follows:

Drop off

08:50 - EYFS, Year 1 and Year 4

08:55 - Year 2 and Year 3

Collection

15:10 - EYFS, Year 1 and Year 4

15:15 - Year 2 and Year 3

We will also be reintroducing 'hall based' assemblies in school, which will mean a small number of children can come together in the hall and still safely remain in their class bubbles. There will be a mixture of both face to face and virtual assemblies across the school week.

A similar approach will be used for lunchtimes where a small number of children will be able to use the hall to eat lunch while still safely remaining in their class bubbles. Time in the hall, together at a dining table, is an important skill and experience we feel is key to developing the 'whole' child here at Stobhillgate First School. **Please ensure your child has a water bottle in school daily as they will be using this during lunchtimes.**

To bring our Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children closer together, we will be moving classrooms so the children have a fresh start when we return to school in January.

EYFS will be using both rooms in their unit, but will still be going into school through the same door.

Year 1 will be moving classrooms to the former Year 4 classroom, but will still come into school through the gate they currently use.

Year 2 will move to the current Year 4 classroom.

Year 3 will remain in the same classroom.

Year 4 will move to the current Year 2 classroom.

School staff will be outside to help direct you when we return to school in January and notices will also be on display to assist you.

What has been happening this half term?

Forest School

Our children had a brilliant time during our recent Christmas themed Forest School Day. They made some brilliant Christmas decorations using natural resources, party games and enjoyed a warming snack around the fire pit.



Library Donation

Thank you to everyone who has made a donation to the school Library fund. We have raised £700 so far, plus the additional donation of many books, some of which have already been added to our home-school reading library.

If you would like to make a donation please go to School Gateway. Alternatively, if you would like to make a donation of good quality books, these can be dropped off with your class teacher. Thanks again.

Christmas Performance

As I'm sure you are aware the Christmas Performance is the highlight of our year here at Stobhillgate and this year we weren't going to let anything like a worldwide pandemic stop us performing!!

So for the past couple of weeks each class have been rehearsing songs and our fantastic year 4's have stepped up and learnt lines, sorted costumes, narrated, acted and adhered to a grueling socially distanced filming schedule to bring you their very own version of the nativity story. So if you have 20 minutes free over the holiday visit our [website](#) and watch The Stobhillgate Coronativity!

We are sorry we can't have you into school to watch the show this year but we have big plans for summer if restrictions allow, so watch this space!!

Merry Christmas!

Mr Innes

