



Headteacher Newsletter January 2023

Dear pupils and parents,

Christmas seems such a long time ago now. I hope you all had a lovely break. It was lovely to be able to have the children performing in the church again ahead of the holidays. The children have settled back to school so well this term. The staff are also very pleased that the daylight hours are starting to increase and we are hopeful of being able to spend more time outside again.

I thought that it might be very useful to bring you all up to speed on events at school.

Diary Dates

Monday 30 th January	Sports Coaching in school for all classes
Tuesday 31 st January	Cross Country Final for qualifiers
Wednesday 1 st February	8.30am - 10am Headteacher drop-in session
Thursday 2 nd February	Class 3 visit to St Helen's Church
Thursday 2 nd February	3.15pm - 4.45pm Headteacher drop-in session
Tuesday 7 th February	Safer Internet Day
Wednesday 7 th February	PTA meeting 7pm The Sir William Pub – All welcome!
Wednesday 15 th February	Severn Trent Assembly - Whole School
Friday 17 th February	Bag2School Collection
Monday 20 th February to Friday 24 th February	Half Term – School Closed
Monday 27 th February	School re-opens

Headteacher drop-ins

I am offering two headteacher drop-in sessions this half term;

Wednesday 1st Feb 8.30am - 10am

Thursday 2nd Feb 3.15pm - 4.45pm

These are informal sessions where you are welcome to pop in to ask any questions you may have. Younger siblings are welcome to accompany you if this helps and this does not replace our "door is open" policy! As a drop-in session – there is no format and you are free to dip in and out as suits your own busy lives.

If you want to make an appointment to see your child's class teacher, or to see me at another time, please email Beccy in the office to arrange a time info@grindlefordprimaryschool.co.uk

As always, outside of the cycle of parents evenings, if you do have any concerns about your child or their learning, please do let us know and we will find a mutually convenient time to talk about your concerns and hopefully be able to offer support.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Review Meetings

If your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), your child's class teacher should be in contact with you to arrange a SEND Review Meeting. These are opportunities for you to review progress with the teaching team and to identify next steps for learning. The session aims to allow time to look collectively at what is working well and also to determine any changes needed to support the plan. If your class teacher has not contacted you to arrange this by the end of the term, please message them via Class DOJO or email the office.



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Curriculum

The team has been busy reviewing and updating our curriculum map in conjunction with auditing and updating the learning resources we have in school to support the children and staff. We have recently updated our website pages with additional curriculum information but a short summary is outlined below:

Maths

As Mr Petts continues to be absent from school, Mrs Gemmell and the team have undertaken a review of our Maths curriculum and until Mr Petts returns to school, Mrs Gemmell will be the nominated curriculum lead for Maths. We continue to follow a Maths Mastery approach to the Maths Curriculum which was introduced by Mr Petts. Having looked at the needs of the school and reviewed our previous maths outcomes, we have made some minor changes: Key Stage two and EYFS staff have been trialling the use of the White Rose Maths (WRM) Curriculum and have found this to be really helpful. Our Maths Curriculum continues to follow the National Curriculum but the WRM scheme has been developed by specialists to ensure breadth and depth of curriculum and maps progress clearly. We have made the decision to move fully to White Rose Maths from 2023-2024 (all KS2 year groups) – supported by any additional resources that the team find useful in meeting needs. For this year, the team has chosen to delay the transfer to White Rose Maths for KS1 until the next academic year. This decision was taken on the basis that the Infants were already changing the reading and phonics scheme and we needed to ensure that our capacity for change was managed carefully. The KS1 team are therefore continuing to use Maths No Problem for a final year with additional input from the White Rose Maths and other resources.

The EYFS / KS1 team have also participated in the Maths Mastery support programme for Early Maths which is being delivered by the Sheffield Maths Hub. Feedback from staff and pupils has been very positive and they are getting to grips with their new REKENREN equipment to build good foundational number skills.

Reading

The EYFS and KS1 children are now following the **Little Wandle** Synthetic Phonics Scheme and resources. This is now delivering good results and the children are showing some good progress. This investment (£9000 of resources) has been possible through a grant that we were able to secure from the Sheffield English Hub and their advice and guidance has been very helpful. Further information about this scheme is available on the school website.

We also reviewed our approach to reading in key stage 2 and have invested in Accelerated Reader. This allows staff to ensure that children, once they leave the phonic reading stages for early reading, continue to have access to quality reading resources in a way that is age and stage appropriate. The children undertake short 'on-line quizzes' for each book read and this provides the team with feedback to support assessment of reading skills. This scheme of work ensures that children are able to continue to develop their reading skills effectively. It is particularly useful for staff as it allows us to ensure that our resources cater for all needs and interests whilst ensuring that children continue to be challenged in reading. We have been busy buying new books so that all children may have access to quality books to bring home and the children are keeping Mrs Gemmell and the team very busy with their suggestions for further books.

Writing / Spelling and Phonics

We continue to embed our use of 'The Write Stuff' – a scheme of work developed by Jane Considine. This was introduced to school last academic year by Mrs Boulton. The team continue to use and develop this methodology for teaching writing / spelling and grammar in school. Staff report that they are enjoying this scheme of work as it allows flexibility to use resources that fit with our curriculum and our school context. They also feel that the children are enabled to be creative through this approach which provides very careful scaffolding for writing.



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PSHE

School is introducing a new PSHE Scheme of work which will help us to ensure that our teaching and resources are up to date and appropriate for our school setting. We are also working towards the BERT award – Building Effective Relationships Together. This is an award programme to develop our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provision in-line with statutory requirements of the OFSTED Framework. This is an award that is being promoted and led by specialists at Derbyshire County Council and we will update you as we progress! Our first meeting is in February 2023. If this is something that you feel you might like to be involved in, please do contact Mrs Gemmell via the office.

Science

We continue to use the National Curriculum to shape our science curriculum map. In order to ensure that our teaching and learning is good, we have joined the **Hope Valley Enthuse Partnership**. This partnership is a two year programme for the schools, funded by a £20,000 bursary from STEM. This bursary is to provide schools with access to appropriate and bespoke continued professional development. The project is in its first year and was started last year by Mrs Gemmell when she was at Bamford Primary School. Most of the local primaries are involved. Part of our ongoing work is to review our Curriculum Provision and look at ways that we can ensure that we tailor our curriculum to specifically meet the needs of our pupils. If you are someone who is working in a STEM related job and wish to get involved further (or are already a STEM ambassador) – please do let us know. Mrs Gemmell is hoping to organise Assemblies for each half term with a different STEM focus.

Computing Curriculum

We have recently updated our Computing Policy and curriculum and are now using the Teach Computing curriculum which has been amended to meet our mixed aged classes. Further information can be found on our Website and on our curriculum map. We would like to thank the PTA for their very generous donation of 13 brand new iPads which are helping us to deliver the curriculum effectively. We can also use them in other subjects!

Updates to the Premises

We have updated the flooring on the bottom corridor and the stairs up to Class 3 which had become very tired and a health and safety risk. We have also replaced the carpets up in the Music Room and Class 3. Next we are hoping to update and re-purpose the staff room so that it can be converted into a nice workspace.

Class 1 also has a new Interactive WhiteBoard in their room and we have also purchased some new BEEBOTS for the younger children.

Staffing Updates

School continues to work in partnership with Bamford Primary School. This is proving positive and the two governing boards are working together to explore the possibility of (including benefits/pitfalls) of continuing this through a federation approach. Nothing will happen without consultation with all stakeholders, including parents. I am sure that you will have read our Chair of Governor's recent letter to update you on the process.

Nominally, Mrs Gemmell continues to be based at Grindleford on Mondays and Wednesdays and Bamford on Tuesdays and Fridays. Thursdays are more flexible but in practice, she is normally on site for part of Thursday and/or Friday and appointments can be made outside of this timetable as there is flexibility within the partnership. To support Mrs Gemmell, Miss Moore has now completed her training and is the school's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mrs Slack has agreed to be the nominated Senior Teacher on site (given Mr Pett's ongoing absence).

PPA Cover



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PPA cover continues to be provided by Mrs Bacon.

Class 1 - Wednesday afternoon

Class 2 - Tuesday afternoon

Class 3 - Thursday afternoon

School Information

Please ensure that you continue to tell us about any changes to medical needs for your children. You should also email the office with any changes to your contact details (e.g. email / phone numbers, addresses etc).

Dojo

We have recently launched Class Dojo across the whole school. Thank you to all those that have already completed the User Agreement form and are now linked to their child's account. We have had some amazing feedback and hope you are enjoying your children's learning through this platform.

For more information please see the November Newsletter regarding School Communication which was emailed on 9th November 2022, the newsletter can also be viewed on our website

<https://grindleford.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/head-teacher-dojo-letter-november-2022.pdf>

If you haven't completed The User Agreement form to sign up to Class Dojo please use the link below

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScq8oUkb5YJy17PHexzsDWH_5_DVYuFdL_fAPJDnDL_5tCNSQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Can I please remind parents about the protocols for using Class DOJO:

- Class Stories – are for your whole class. Everyone linked to your class can see the Class Story and any messages. This is where you will get a feel for what the class have been learning about and helps you to follow the curriculum
- Messages – are for short and brief communication with the teacher or TA. This might include a brief message to pass on information but should not be in depth or personal. It is helpful for example to message if:
 - You need to arrange a meeting or conversation
 - You have positive news that you would like to help your child share
- Portfolio – can contain images of your child at work. You can equally upload pictures from home to show us – for example if you have visited somewhere linked to learning or achieved something at home.

You should continue to contact school via the telephone (01433 630528) or email

info@grindlefordprimaryschool.co.uk for the following:

- Change of details (address, email, phone etc)
- To notify an absence
- To contact Mrs Gemmell
- Emergency contact

Please do not post anything onto DOJO that you consider urgent or very personal.

We know that DOJO messages can become all consuming. To support everyone, I suggest that you:

- Turn off notifications and/or set quiet hours
- Limit the times that you access the app – nothing is that urgent that it can't wait
- Do not expect an answer on DOJO – it's main purpose is to message and inform. Teachers endeavour to respond quickly but it may be 24 hours or more so if you require an urgent response, please use the school office.



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To maintain a healthy work-life balance, staff are not required or expected to look at DOJO outside of their working hours or at weekends. If you send a message to your child's class teacher – only their class teacher can see it. Please also keep messages short and procedural. If you need to talk to someone then you should use the DOJO system to schedule a conversation.

Please remember that the DOJO system is a closed system by invite only. In using the DOJO, parents agree not to copy or distribute information from DOJO outside of the system. Anyone breaching this agreement will be removed from access.

Please also remember that the school website contains a lot of information for parents – including a diary of key events for your diary.

School Website

We encourage you to use the website frequently as it contains a wealth of information, particularly about the curriculum that your child studies and the formal information that schools are required to publish.

School Uniform 2022-2023

This is a polite reminder that we expect children to be dressed in full school uniform. Many of the girls choose to wear plain dark leggings instead of tights with their skirts and shorts – which seems sensible and helps to protect knees.

Please can you check that all items of clothing have your child's name in – we have plenty of black sharpies that can be borrowed if you need to renew the markings!

The PE Uniform is:

- Tracksuit, jogging trousers or legging in black or blue
- A fleece in blue or black or a round necked school sweatshirt
- Round neck t-shirt in white or blue (we would **prefer** a school logo on the t-shirt but it is not a requirement)
- Navy or black short (advised for Spring / Summer)
- Trainers or plimsolls in a dark colour (and a pair of socks if your child is wearing tights!)

We welcome donations of clean second-hand uniform in good condition. Remember, you are welcome to come and look through before buying anything new! Contact Beccy in the office. Please note that you are able to purchase non-branded items in place of the items with the school logo.

Earring wearers

Please remember our earrings policy, that no earrings should be worn during any PE lesson. This again is standard practice, so please send your child with a little pouch or purse to put their earrings in or don't send them with earrings in on PE days. For Class 1, Monday and Fridays. For Class 2, Thursday and Fridays. For Class 3 Thursday and Friday.

School Attendance

Good attendance at school is critical to success in learning. This includes being on time for lessons in the morning as children who are 'rushed into school' or habitually the last to arrive can find this very unsettling. Please do try to be on time although we do understand, there are always 'those mornings' when things do go wrong. Your child will not be told off for being late so please do reassure them of this if needed. If you are struggling with arriving on



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time, please contact the school as support may be available.

The full guidance on term-time absence is available on the website or on the Government [School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance-and-absence-overview)

The rules regarding term-time holidays have not changed and only in exceptional circumstances are these allowed. There is a form to complete if you need to request time off during term time and this is available from the office or on our website. Please note, 14 days' notice is required. If you are unsure about the rules, please contact the school office.

School Opening:

Gates open at 08:30 and close at 08:55. The doors open to pupils at 08:40 and the children are encouraged to enter class to settle themselves and to complete any morning work. Registration is from 08:45 closing at 09:00 for all children.

Parents are able to supervise their own children on the grounds from 08:30 and a member of staff will come out to the yard at 08:40. Once parents leave, children are expected to enter the building.

Collection at 15:15

Music

Our range of musical instrument tuition continues and we can offer lessons in the following:

Cello - John Parson

Wind instruments: flute, clarinet, saxophone, recorder - Frances Callaghan

Keyboard - Isabel Hesper

Please contact the school or the music teacher directly if your child is interested in lessons. It is also very worthwhile completing the form 'Begin making arrangements for instrument tuition...' on the Derbyshire Music Education Hub website to enquire about lessons as there are a several different subsidies for lessons available - your child's information will be checked against subsidies.

After School Clubs

We are pleased to inform you that we will be introducing some After School Clubs **starting after half term**.

Tuesdays with Miss Moore 3.15pm - 4.30pm

Lego Club - Open to all - Max number 15 - £17.50 per child for 5 weeks

Wednesdays with Mrs Slack 3.15pm - 4.30pm

Board Game club - Open to all - Max number 15 - £17.50 per child for 5 weeks

Thursday with Miss Grant 3.15 - 4.30pm

Crochet Club - Open to children from Class 2 and 3 - Max number 8 - £17.50 per child for 5 weeks

After school clubs close at 4.30pm. Staff appreciate prompt collection.

If your child is already in After School Provision and they would like to join a club on that day then please let Beccy know and they will join the club and then rejoin After School Provision if they are staying until 6pm. There is no additional charge. If they don't join a club but are staying for afterschool, it will be child-led play.



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Places will be allocated on a first come basis and if your child misses out due to numbers they will be placed on the waiting list for next half term. Please contact Beccy to make a booking beccy@grindlefordprimaryschool.co.uk

Safer Internet Day

Safer internet day runs on 7th February. The children will take part in numerous activities on this topic throughout the week.

Absences

Please ensure that all absences are reported to the school office by phoning 01433 630528 or via info@grindlefordprimaryschool.co.uk. This should happen before 08:30.

Healthy Schools

Please send your child to school with a bottle of water (no juice please). Keeping hydrated is shown to have a positive effect on learning. All children in Class 1 are offered a fruit snack for break times.

For those who prefer to bring their own snack, please keep it healthy. No sweets, crisps or chocolate please.

PTA

The next Grindleford PTA meeting is on Wednesday 8th February at 7pm in the Sir William Pub. Come along to meet other parents, find out about what's happening at school and support the PTA.

All warmly welcomed!

For more details, contact Jenny Garamszegi.

National Strikes

You may be aware from media coverage that The National Education Union (NEU) have declared strike action, which is scheduled to take place on the following four dates in our region: February 1st 2023; March 1st 2023; March 15th 2023; March 16th 2023.

The strike is happening because of a national dispute between the union and the government over school funding and teachers' pay.

We can confirm that on this occasion, following a risk assessment and taking into account staff members wishes and union direction, that the school will remain open as normal on February 1st 2023.

We cannot advise at this time, whether or not school will be open on the further three planned strike dates. Staff in school have given this full and careful consideration. The school will not frustrate disruption caused by legitimate strike action.

We will endeavour to give you as much notice as possible.

Sept 2023 Intake

Applications for September 2023 intake have now closed. We are looking forward to welcoming our new little ones in the Autumn.

Thank you all for your continued support,

Kate Gemmell (Headteacher)