

Topcliffe C of E (VC) Primary School

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Growing, believing, achieving together

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of this academic year I would like to thank you for your continued support. I also thought it would be a good time to write to you and look back at the school year and share some of the work the Governing Body have been doing in school.

As a Church of England, voluntary controlled school we have strong links with St. Columba's and hold our special services in Church. Rev. Susanne Jukes is a regular visitor and friend to the school and we also receive regular visits from Jen, from the New Life Baptist church and Methodist Minister Rev. Kathie Heathcoat. The year 6 children were once again invited to serve Lent Lunches to the community at the village hall. They were all highly praised and represented the school admirably. Our Christian Ethos and Values are important to us and are used to underpin everything we do in school.

We have had such a busy term and I hope you have been able to attend some of the many exciting events that have taken place.

The school hosted an action packed Sports Day, where the children competed both individually and together in their house colours in events that included sack racing, egg and spoon, relays and hurdles. With refreshments provided by FOTS and ice creams for all the children at the end to help them cool down.

The fabulous Zulu Nation Theatre Company visited school, they taught the children a lot about their country, culture and language. They also gave all the children an opportunity to join them in singing, chanting and African dancing, with a roof-raising showcase at the end of the day. We had a puppet theatre day, which saw over one hundred puppets take over the school and encourage the children to approach storytelling and communication in a very different way, with a dragon themed story presentation for parents and carers at the end of the day.

Musical Topcliffe-

Pupils visited the Sage in Gateshead to watch the critically acclaimed 'Ten Pieces' performed by The Royal Northern Symphonia Orchestra.

Pupils joined with other schools in our cluster to learn and perform a selection of songs at St Mary's Church in Thirsk.

Topcliffe's Got Talent showcased what an amazingly talented school we have, gymnastic displays, comedy duos, stand-up comedians, martial arts experts, singers, dancers and even a magician. Not to be outdone the teaching assistants joined in. Check out the photo gallery on the school website.

Pupils who learn instruments in school, taught by our visiting peripatetic teachers have been regularly playing in Good News Assembly, our Friday Collective Worship.

We also had the wonderful, West End worthy 'Wind in the Willows' Key stage 2 production. This gave many of the year 6's their first opportunity to sing and dance solo and most of the children were actively involved in the prop making, choreography, and staging of the musical. Parents and Governors have commented on the outstanding performances of all the children and we are proud of the high standard of musical achievement within the school. A resounding success for Miss Stanwix and all that supported her to produce this ambitious action packed production.

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Sporting round up-

Sport is another strength at Topcliffe. We employ a dedicated sports teacher, Mrs Rebecca Clay and offer a wide variety of sports and opportunities for pupils to compete at cluster, area and county level.

4 Key Stage 2 pupils made it through to the County Cross Country Finals, which is a fantastic achievement.

In Gymnastics, at cluster level the Key Steps 1 team won the overall silver with an individual bronze medal and the Key Steps 2 team won overall gold with 2 individual gold medal winners, they went on to beat 53 other teams in the area finals. They won overall silver with 2 individual gold medals. An outstanding result for our school gymnastics teams.

The year 3/4 Hockey team won at cluster level, then at the area finals which took them through to the County Finals. Congratulations to the whole team.

In Football, the team, wearing their new Team Topcliffe kits, won the cluster competition and qualified to make it through to compete in the finals.

Year 3/4 pupils took home bronze medals in the Tennis area finals.

There have also been opportunities for our Key Stage 2 pupils to take part in the Thirsk High School mini Olympics and then for the Key Stage 1 pupils to have a go too supported by our class 4 pupils in young leader roles in their own mini Olympics.

Academic-

Governors monitor closely the progress your children make both academically and socially. The Summary Year 6 SATS information reported was very pleasing indeed. We are now working to the Government's new curriculum: a 'life without levels' which also comes with raised expectations across every year group on the skills pupils should have mastered. Although the figures are still provisional, it seems that the school has managed very good attainment compared with the national averages, with a substantially larger proportion of children achieving the 'expected' levels. This was a particularly challenging year because of the considerable changes in the assessment papers themselves and the discontinuation of the standardised 'levels' of attainment that we were all familiar with in previous years. The school has put in place some very effective in-year assessment systems and opted to use additional tests to track from baselines.

The Year 6 SATS results for 2016 are as follows:

Spelling, punctuation and grammar	–	National 72%	Topcliffe 79%
Reading	-	National 66%	Topcliffe 86%
Writing *	-	National 74%	Topcliffe 86%
Maths**	-	National 70%	Topcliffe 64%

The national average for combined reading, writing and maths is 53% and ours is 64%.

*Writing has been moderated and validated by the Local Authority.

**It is also worth noting that 2 children missed the age related pass score by only 2 points in maths. Each child counts for 7% therefore if the 2 children that scored 99 had scored 100, it would have taken us to 78% in maths. In our GAL assessments (which are external tests), 100% of children gained at least a 4c (and 13 children a 4b+) or better which, last year, would have been at national age related expectations.

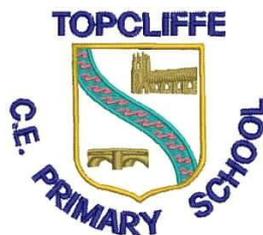
The work of the Governing Body this year-

I hope you have seen that there is a strong governor presence in school. Between us we have been present at The Queen's Birthday celebration, Sports Day, SPAG workshop, Collective worship, Christmas Nativity, Cookery Class, Topcliffe's Got Talent, School production, Easter Service, Lent Lunches, Parent lunches. We have also conducted pupil voice sessions with the School Council and other pupils. Taken Literacy learning walks and Health and Safety visits. We have attended a Challenge review, subject leader meetings, parents' evenings, staff well-being meetings, and invited an independent Review of Governance and a Local Authority School Review.

We have a Governor strand on the School Development Plan and a three year strategic plan. We have held 10 Full Governing Body meetings, with additional small focus group meetings as and when needed. We regularly spend time discussing data reports to track pupil achievement and progress, so that we can be sure that each pupil is

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making good progress and reaching their targets. We also focus on specific groups of children and monitor how the Pupil Premium Fund is being spent by the school and the impact this has on their outcomes.

We are grateful to those who completed parent surveys. The feedback is always highly valued and helps identify areas for further development or where your experiences do not match up with what we are trying to achieve. 98% of parents that responded say their child feels safe at school, 91% agree that their child is making good progress and 92% of parents agree that their child is taught well at this school. However, it also indicated some parental concerns regarding behaviour in class, with 23% of responses indicating that they believe their child's lesson are being disrupted. We are satisfied that strategies to make rapid improvements in both general and learning behaviours are being actioned by Mrs Clay and the teaching staff. This will be a school and governor priority next year and we ask for your support as we work together to raise expectations in behavioural standards, underpinned by our Christian Ethos and Values.

The governors have approved the Start Budget and reviewed and agreed the Outturn Budget and can report that we are in a very healthy financial position. School has developed the library and it now functions as a breakout class room. A new Smart Whiteboard was purchased alongside classroom furniture and this has greatly improved the use of this space.

The Governing Body has reviewed and approved 18 policies this year and we continue to check that school practice adheres to the policies that are in place and that they are fit for purpose.

Welcome back, thank you and goodbye-

Welcome back to both Mrs Clay and Mrs Bottomley from their maternity leave. Thank you to Mrs Porteus, who started off the academic year and so kindly agreed to stay with us for an extra half term. We wish her all the best in her retirement. Mrs Veakins has finished her contract with us and has been a supportive addition to Class 3 this year. We welcome Mr Michael Simpson who has been newly appointed as an Advanced Teaching Assistant and will be supporting Class 3 with Mrs Johnson from September.

From the Governing Board we say thank you and goodbye to Mrs Dale who after standing down as a Foundation Governor, was appointed for 1 year as an Associate Member to support the Christian Ethos and RS in school and be a community link for Dalton. We also said thank you and farewell to Mr Knowles who due to work commitments sadly stood down from his post as Parent Governor. Following the Parent Election we then warmly welcomed his wife Mrs Knowles to the Board. She has taken on the role of Health and Safety Governor and as she has four children in school she can strongly represent the voice of parents in school. We also welcomed Rev. Susanne Jukes as our Ex. Officio Foundation Governor who took over from Mrs Molyneux at the end of the last academic year. Mrs Molyneux had been with the Governing Body for many years and held the position of both Chair and Vice Chair on more than one occasion. She had decided to step down at the end of 2014 but stayed an extra year to support and aid transition for Mrs Clay and myself following both appointments. We made two other 1 year Associate Member appointments. Mrs Wilson, who is Assistant Director at the Department of Education. She provides a wealth of experience, advice and challenge in the area of pupil progress and raising attainment. Secondly Mr Kildin, to work with Mrs Hartley, updating the school website and support the school in an ever increasing and challenging I.T focussed climate.

I'd like to close this end-of-school-year update with some much deserved thanks. All the staff have worked extremely hard this year, working with the changes in assessment, embedding and developing the new curriculum, enriching the pupils with extra curriculum activities, including the Class 4 residential to East Barnby,

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offering after school clubs and organising school trips. Thank you to Mrs Hemmingway and the catering team providing fresh, nutritious school dinners.

I would also like to thank the FOTS fundraising team for all their hard work and support over the last year, with particular mention to the Chair Mrs Rose. FOTS enables the school to purchase special items that enrich the pupils' learning environment. The latest being the high visibility vests for school trips. They hold meetings in school, usually with childcare provision and would welcome and appreciate new members to join the team.

We wish our year 6's, who are moving on much success and happiness in their new secondary schools and hope their time spent at Topcliffe Primary has been an enjoyable and rewarding one. Equipping them academically and socially but also enriching and preparing them to be good and caring citizens. Our thanks go to our excellent and dedicated staff and our wonderful pupils and I wish you all a relaxing summer break.

Very best wishes

Mrs Janette Yates
Chair of Governors

On behalf of the Governing Body