



## Another half term is (almost) over!

With Christmas and New Year a very distant memory, we're now looking forward to Spring bursting back into life properly after a busy start to the spring term.

Blossom, tulips and crocuses should all be on their way to accompany another busy five weeks on the other side of the half-term break. Have a great week!

## FOCUS ON PHONICS

Systematic synthetic phonics now underpins the teaching of reading in all primary schools, but can be a bit of a mystery to the majority of adults.

A number of parents have expressed an interest in finding out more, so Janette will revisit phonics for the adult learning theme next half-term.

This is an opportunity to learn about the principles of phonics, and how the monster phonics scheme supports learning to read at Fir Ends.



Parents of pupils in years R-2 will also see a subtle change to the way that Monster Phonics decodable books are deployed after the break which will bring this in line with the scheme design and enhance the way the monsters support our early readers.

**ADULT LEARNING** Mondays 1.30pm – 3:00pm Starts 6<sup>th</sup> March

## WORLD BOOK DAY AND SPONSORED READING WEEK



The annual celebration of reading falls in the first week back after the break. As is now traditional, we ask pupils to create a book based diorama (scene in a box) to enter in our World Book Day competition.

Parental support with this is encouraged, but children should be actively *involved* in the making! Examples of last year's entries can be seen on the school website on the galleries page (School News – Photo Galleries). These should be brought into school on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and prizes will be awarded to the best in each class.

To complement this we've also partnered with Usborne Books to set up a sponsored reading week. All funds raised will be spent on new books for our class libraries, and if we raise an average of £6 per child we will receive a bonus of an additional £360 to spend! The details are attached to this newsletter.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE UPDATES

Target for the year: 95%

Current school average *year to date (102 days)*: 94.7%

Average for the *Spring term so far*: 96.3%

Attendance	Learning days lost so far	Alert level	Means...
>96%	Up to 4	GREEN	ON TARGET
91-95%	4-9	AMBER	AT RISK
<91%	9+	RED	MUST IMPROVE

## SPRING B DATES

- 27 Feb – Back to School – start at 8:55am
- 27 Feb – 3<sup>rd</sup> March – Sponsored Reading week
- 2 March – Book Day diorama competition
- 6 March – Focus on Phonics Adult Ed starts
- 8 - 9 March – Year 5&6 York trip
- 10 March – Class 2 U:Dance
- 13-24 March – Year 5&6 intensive swimming sessions
- 18 March (Sat) – Lanercost Cross Country
- 26 March – Clocks forward!
- w/c 27 Mar – Easter Egg decorating contest
- 29 March – Easter Disco (tbc)
- 31 March – End of term



Check the school jotter app for outdoor ed sessions, etc

**8 school weeks to KS2 SATS**  
9-12 May

## PTFFE AIR AMBULANCE

Bags will be collected from the school on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. All donations welcome.

## IDEAS WANTED: RAISING LOTS OF MONEY TO UPGRADE KS2 TOILETS

Built in 1968, our KS2 toilet block is woefully outdated and too small to update to modern standards. We want to extend but estimate costs between £60-100k!

Ideas mooted so far include a buy-a-brick scheme and PTA fundraisers to bring in some of what's needed.

Can you think of others? If so, please pass them on!



Online  
Safety

Over half term, children will inevitably fill some of their time with online pursuits.

Whilst this can be a very useful way to keep them occupied, please remember that appropriate supervision and adequate home network precautions are essential to make the internet a safe place to play.

Parents can find e-safety information on our website at <https://www.fir-ends.cumbria.sch.uk/e-safety>

### SEASON OF CLIMBING, DANCE AND GYMNASTICS

The sporting calendar this term has included a lot of indoor activities. This week we have had teams representing the school in local climbing and gymnastics competitions, and hoping to progress to the next rounds...

Next term Class 2 will be representing the school in the U:Dance festival, with the majority of pupils performing in the evening extravaganza!



### ART, DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY LEARNING

Over recent terms we have been implementing new approaches to teaching the subjects of Art & Design and Design & Technology. We're still developing these curriculum areas, but some of the work across the school has been very impressive so far.

Year 5&6 have contributed watercolour and collage paintings inspired by 'Where the Wild Things Are' to the hall, and created 'Skellasauruses'. KS1's output has included wobbling toys and lollipop castles.



### MUSIC TUITION – SPRING & SUMMER

Mr Hemingway, who has provided woodwind and recorder tuition in recent years has decided to commence a well-earned semi-retirement. For the remainder of this school year, Mr Draper will take over recorder tuition, which will move to Thursdays. To take full advantage of his other skills we've also asked him to turn KS2 into a choir. We hope they will be ready to perform in the summer!



### REMEMBER TO PRE-BOOK

Please remember you can use the Schoolgrid app to pre-order meals many weeks in advance.

Children who do not pre-order at home have to queue up at the office door to do so, missing valuable learning time.

• respectful • ready • focused • sensible & safe • caring • BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

### NEU STRIKE ACTION

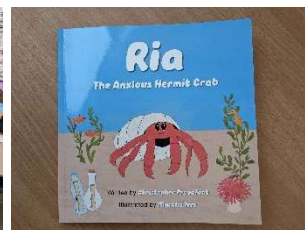
The NEU has called for strike action by teachers on several dates in their national dispute with the government over pay and school funding.

The next date affecting this area will be 28<sup>th</sup> February.

Although we do **not** anticipate that strike action will directly impact Fir Ends on the 28th, contingency plans for remaining open to pupils on strike days are ready if the situation changes.

### AUTHOR VISIT

We were joined by local author Chris Proudfoot who spoke to children about his journey to 'becoming published' and conquering anxiety as he shared his book, 'Ria the Anxious Hermit Crab' with us.



There is a second story in the pipeline, about an octopus experiencing bullying, so we may see him again after that one rolls off the presses.