

NEWSLETTER



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Welcome back to the second half of the school year – it's frightening how quickly time flies when we're having fun!

For me the past thirty years have flown by and now I'm looking forward to my last half term as Head Teacher here at Swansfield. I feel very privileged to have nurtured the school through so many exciting times, especially the change from Alnwick South First School to Swansfield Park Primary School and the creation of the "Purple Standard" both in terms of achievements and expectations while still fostering a warm and happy atmosphere for pupils and staff.

There have been many highlights such as performances at The Playhouse, the exhibition at Baliffgate Museum, residential visits, pantomimes, christingles and harvest festivals, and at all times our children have risen to the occasion. I have witnessed many memorable events such as the opening of The Alnwick Garden, The Queen's visit, The Olympic Torch relay and The Tour of Britain. Every time we go out of school we are certain in the knowledge that we will receive compliments about our wonderful children, their enthusiasm, politeness and respect for others.

My favourite time of the school day has to be morning drop off as I meet and greet not only our children but the parents and families - so many of whom I remember teaching as well. It is wonderful to see and hear of everyone's successes in so many different walks of life and it's very special to have so many of my former pupils working alongside me now.

I feel so fortunate to have had such a fulfilling career, working with exceptional children, staff and governors but most importantly being at the heart of a thriving community.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone past and present for all their friendship and support.

With very best wishes for the future

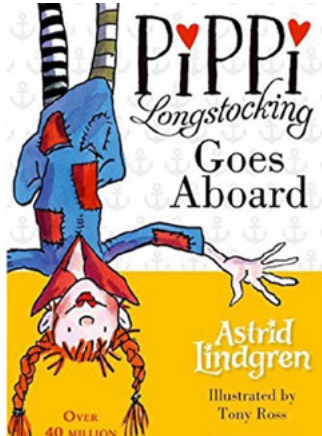


Jenny Smith



World Book Day

We look forward to celebrating World Book Day on Friday 3rd March. Children are invited to dress as their favourite book character as we know that they love to do this but can we reiterate once more that this does not need a bought costume. Why not encourage your child to be Pippi Longstocking, The Billionaire Boy or one of the Mr Men/Little Miss characters - just to name a few costume suggestions that could be put together from items children may already have.



During the day, children will have the chance to read with a buddy from another class within school. Our older children tell us that they enjoy reading with younger friends and our younger children love nothing better than getting comfy with a big friend to share a book together.

With a theme of 'find an ally', children will also explore which book character they might choose to be their best friend. We will be giving away some Barter Books vouchers to children across school who can identify a fabulous 'best friend' and more importantly, explain why!

As always, children will come home with a World Book Day token that they can exchange for a book at many local stores

- Sainsbury's, Morrisons and WHSmith within the town.

Sharing stories regularly with children is one of the best ways to ignite a love of reading, build vocabulary and develop essential communication and language skills for life! It is because of this that we have daily dedicated story times in each class across school from Cherry Class right up to Year 6. We encourage you to find regular times in your family schedule to share stories together. It doesn't matter how old your child is, curling up with a book is still enjoyable and so beneficial. We know that lots of children enjoyed listening to the stories that staff members shared for Storytelling week in January - they are still on the website if you

want to watch them again. We also thought you might like this link to lots of video stories from the World Book Day website, there are some great stories to choose from!



<https://www.worldbookday.com/share-a-story-corner/>

WORLD
**BOOK
DAY**

Sharing stories together

Children love spending time looking at books with adults. It makes a big difference to their futures to **spend 10 minutes a day sharing a story**. There are no right or wrong ways to read out loud but sometimes it can be tricky to know where to begin. Here are a few tips and ideas to get you started:



- **I wonder...**

Ask open questions about how characters are feeling or what might happen next or why things are in the illustration.

- **Bring the book to life...**

Make faces, use voices, include actions – have fun together!



- **That reminds me of...**

Make personal connections.

- **What have you seen there?**

Follow their interests.

- **That's made me feel...**

Let your child know how the events of the story have affected you.



- **Oo look at that!**

Let them know what you have noticed.

- **Again, again...**

Re-reading is a great source of comfort for children – and a chance to spot things that you didn't see first time round. Challenge yourself to spot something new each time.

This guide is based on the work of The Open University. For further tips and advice on how to enjoy sharing and reading stories together, visit their website [here](#) for helpful videos and resources.



SPONSORED BY



Changing lives through a love of books and shared reading.

World Book Day is a registered charity funded by publishers and booksellers in the UK & Ireland.

#WorldBookDay

Exciting Times at Swansfield

Our first half term of 2023 was jam packed full and we thought you might like to hear directly from the children about some of the highlights...

Little Manfred - Alnwick Playhouse

On the 8th February Maple, Chestnut and Willow class went to the Playhouse to see **Little Manfred**. This Michael Morpurgo story set in the summer of 1966 was brought to life through puppetry.

"My favourite bit was when they were on the boat and they were building it." (Erin)

"At the half time rest they showed us the puppets. I got to touch the dog, it was warm and fuzzy. I think it was made of felt." (Ryan)

"My favourite part in the story was when Grace was told about her mother and her grandparents. The grandparents acted so strange – it was weird but funny. It was sad when he threw the skimming stone and it was really an explosive bomb." (Marisa)

"I liked it when they showed everyone how to control the puppets and I liked it at the end when the little dog wagged." (Evie)

"I liked it when the little girl said 'the weird dog is wagging its tail'". (Liam)

What does a gritter do and how does it work?

Our EYFS children were keen to find answers to these questions when they were visited by Chris with his very large yellow gritter in February. The children had the chance to listen to Chris as he told them about the important job that he does when the weather is icy. They learnt that the grit is stored in the tank and that with the press of a button it can be sent down the chute and onto the road to stop vehicles from slipping. The children particularly enjoyed climbing into the cab and seeing the control panel with their own eyes!

Let's hear from some of our Plum Class friends to see what they thought...

Alice said *"I liked going inside and seeing the shoot to spread the grit around the roads"*.

Jacob said *"the gritter sprays all of the grit all over when it's icy"*

Jake said *"I like sitting in it like a driver"*



Make life kind movement with Kema Kay

Let's hear about the experiences of our Y5 and Y6 children when Kema Kay, an influencer whose mission is to tackle stigma and drive wellness & diversity into schools, came to visit Sycamore, Larch and Rowan classes back in January.



Kema Kay, who is a rapper and has even appeared in a movie, came into our school. He came in to talk to Year 5/6 about racism and bullying and how they occur. It was very informative and we got to act out a scene as if it was a real life situation, where we were trying to turn the three bullies (actors) into friends for the person who was being bullied. Kema Kay also told us that he was bullied as a child just because he was black. This made him feel so depressed that he didn't want to go to school. He was informing us about the consequences of bullying and racism and the problems that transpire. It made us realise that there was unconscious bias going on right under our noses. We learnt how to stop it, but also not to make the victim become the bully themselves. It's a cycle, people only bully because they want attention or they have been bullied in their past life. The important thing that everyone should remember is that no matter the person you should never ever bully or be racist. We must unite against it!

Dylan Adamson,
Bamburgh Castle Captain

Henry Rose, Alnwick Castle Captain

Swansfield's 3Cs

Our 3Cs which encourage our children to be caring, curious and courageous are now becoming firmly embedded in our school culture and it's wonderful to see our children displaying these characteristics on a daily basis. In this newsletter, we'd like to take a closer look at what being a caring member of our school community can involve.

We have been delighted to send postcards home recently to several children who have shown great care for others in our school. Riley (year 6) received a postcard for his caring support to younger children in Plum and Oak classes and Oliver, Brody and Lucas (Year 5) received postcards for showing great care to a friend in need.

There are many other members of our school community who show care on a regular basis and make our school a great place to be. We now have a well-established reading army of volunteers who come in each week and read with children across KS1 and KS2. Huge thanks to Caroline Bridgens, Fiona Saxton, Sarah Hamer and Jennifer and Michael Carter for giving up their time to support our children.

Last half term, our Friends of Swansfield Park once again organised a wonderful event for our children to enjoy. The Valentine's Disco was a huge success and we all appreciate the time and care the committee and helpers give

to ensure our children have these wonderful experiences.

As we move through this half term, we'll be thinking a lot in our assemblies about being a caring member of our school community. Our children tell us that Swansfield is a caring and safe place to be but every now and then, outside play can become a little bit too rough and this is not OK. We will be talking with all children about the expectation that they are:

- **Caring with their hands**
- **Caring with their feet**
- **Caring with their words**

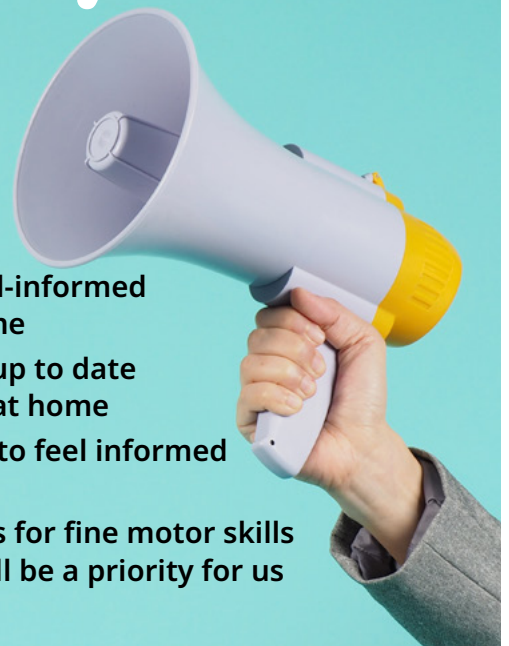
Please do contact class teachers if your child has an experience at school which does not follow this expectation. It is not acceptable for any child to be hurt with words or actions at our school.



Having Your Say

We were very grateful to all the parents of children in Reception who took the time to respond to our recent Google Form questionnaire. Your responses were overwhelmingly positive and it was great to hear that:

- everyone who responded felt that both they and their child have a positive relationship with classroom staff
- the majority of those who responded felt that they are well-informed about their child's progress and how to support this at home
- The weekly class blogs are a very valued resource to keep up to date with class learning and to begin discussions with children at home
- Reading records and parent consultations are useful ways to feel informed about progress
- You are keen to attend further parent information sessions for fine motor skills and writing and mathematical development and so this will be a priority for us to organise



We will take on board the feedback that some of you gave us about not being able to access the 360 app very easily or having many updates on that service. Additionally, some of you suggested that it would be useful to have a more personal update on a half termly basis as it has felt like a long time between the October and February consultations. We will explore ways that we can enable this.

We know what a busy site our school is at pick up and drop off times and that parking and access can be an issue. With this in mind, and as part of our school travel plan, this half term we'll be seeking information about travelling to and from school. We'd be very grateful if you would take a few minutes to fill in this Google form when it comes out.

Friends of Swansfield Park Updates

Once again, the Friends ensured that there was a great social event for our children this half term. It was great to see so many families supporting the **Valentine's Disco on Friday 10th February**. **This event raised £480**, a wonderful total which will directly benefit our children. The Friends are prioritising the funding of experiences for our children this year. This involves paying for buses, tickets and visitors and we are ensuring that all children from Early Years to KS2 benefit from the money raised. **Our next funded experience will be a visiting production of Wind in the Willows for our children in Years 1-4 on March 17th.**

The next FOSP event is Easter Bingo - more details will follow soon.

Barter Books

Encouraging all our children to read is very important and to support this we have established an account at Barter Books. We use this account to fund prizes and to ensure that our children always have a plentiful supply of reading material. Please consider whether you are able to donate books to support this initiative. If so, when you drop books off at Barter Books, please just ask the credit to be added to Swansfield Park Primary school's account.

Thank you!

DIARYDATES

Friday 3rd March

World Book Day

Thursday 9th March

UKS2 Theatre Royal visit "Annie"

**Monday 13th March -
Friday 17th March**

"British Science Week"

Friday 17th March

Comic Relief

**Wind in the Willows production
Years 1-4**

Thursday 23rd March

Ash Class Assembly

Thursday 30th March

Spring Assembly

Friday 31st March

**School Closes
EASTER HOLIDAY**

Nut Free School

We have children in school with severe nut and sesame allergies. These allergies are serious and cause a rapid and life threatening reaction known as anaphylaxis. Please be mindful of this if you are preparing packed lunches for your child and please avoid including any nut products. Our school kitchen doesn't use nuts or sesame in the preparation of meals.



Communications

We use many different ways to communicate with parents.

Keep up to date through the school website at:
www.swansfield.northumberland.sch.uk

Email the office at: admin@swansfield.northumberland.sch.uk

Check the text messages received from **Teachers2Parents** - please ensure that the office have an up to date mobile number for you.

Read the Head Teacher's weekly blog posted on the website and on Facebook every Monday for the very latest news.

