



July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 Issue 25

### **Unusual times**

It is fair to say that this year has been testing and I hope that you and your families remain safe and well. It has been lovely to welcome more children back to school over the past few weeks and we are really looking forward to a time when all children can return to school. I have always tried to plan a way forward for the school over the short, medium and longer term but did not foresee such a prolonged closure. Having looked again at our business continuity plan, I think that it would be sensible to review how home learning has been working. I have seen some of the pictures, activities and work in books that many of you have been doing with your child and it seems you have been very busy and making the best of it. However, I know it must have been difficult for some families and that each family has a unique set of circumstances to contend with.

I have enclosed a questionnaire on home learning and I would be pleased to note your views and look at any suggestions in order to improve. I hope that it will not be necessary to have widescale or long term home learning in the future but your feedback would be valued, should the need arise. A link can be found [here](#).

At the time of writing this, we are still awaiting the guidance for September opening and I will communicate further via OurSchoolsApp and the website once we have received this and made appropriate plans.

### **Good luck Year 6s**

It must have been a strange time for our Year 6 children too. On one hand, some of them will have been delighted by the lack of SATs and to have some time away from school, but then on the other hand sad that they have missed out on some of the activities towards the end of the year that are great fun and a reward. I hope that they have used the time wisely and continued to engage in the home learning, have been in contact with friends and have been exercising regularly. There are some really lovely friendships in the year group and I hope that these will stand the test of time.

Miss Richardson has been talking to the children who have returned to school about transition and this is an important step. I really hope that the children grasp all of the opportunities available to them at their secondary school. Most of all, I hope that they endeavour, collaborate and are inspired. Good luck Y6!

### **Farewell Miss Scott**

Miss Scott will be leaving us at the end of this academic year. It has been a pleasure to get to know Miss Scott over the past two years. She is a talented teacher and I am sure she will be a success at her next school. The governors and I would like to thank her for her efforts and I know that all at Montalbo send her our best wishes for the future.

### **Curriculum in September**

There is a lot of discussion in education about a 'Recovery Curriculum' and what that may look like for individual schools. It is obvious that children have missed out on valuable learning time in school but I have complete faith in our teachers to assess our children's needs and plan to meet them. We are fortunate to have a very talented team and I am confident that children will soon close these gaps.

Parents will be keen to know how to support us and the best thing you can do over the Summer is to listen to your child read or read to them. It is clear that reading will continue to be given a high priority in school, but there will also be an increased focus on Personal, Social and Health Education. Mrs Leonard leads on this area in school and we are implementing more work on Mental Health and Wellbeing in light of the current situation, ensuring children are safe, secure and in the right place to learn.

In order to enhance our provision, I am keen to add to the opportunities our school can provide for outdoor learning. During the past few weeks, the copse of trees in the corner of the field has been cleared of undergrowth and now offers another different place to learn. We have some exciting plans and I am thankful to Mrs Abi Smith (parent), Dr Greenwell and Friends of Montalbo School for some of their work behind the scenes. Once completed, I am hopeful that the area will bring us many benefits.

### **New Starters**

We are really looking forward to meet our new Nursery and Reception starters in September. Our school continues to grow and we are excited to get to know our new children and their families. As we have not been able to have our

usual transition programme, we have decided to organise the first few days in September for our new reception starters as follows:-

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>, Friday 4<sup>th</sup>, Monday 7<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> 8.55am-1pm (children will stay for lunch)

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> and thereafter 8.55am-3.25pm.

Please contact Miss Lauder on the email below should you have any questions about what your child needs, or where to go etc. Hopefully, most of the information you will need has been sent via email.

### **Communication**

We will update you with any important information via OurSchoolsApp which I know that most parents have. The information on there can be also found in the news section of our website at <http://www.montalbo.durham.sch.uk/>

During the Summer, if you have any queries, we will still be checking the school email account which is [montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:montalbo@durhamlearning.net)

Class teachers can be contacted using the following emails:-

[nursery.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:nursery.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Mrs Patterson

[reception.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:reception.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Miss Lauder

[year1.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:year1.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Mrs Leonard

[year2.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:year2.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Mrs Newton

[year3.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:year3.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Dr Greenwell

[year4.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:year4.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Mrs Smith

[year5.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:year5.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Miss Bean

[year6.montalbo@durhamlearning.net](mailto:year6.montalbo@durhamlearning.net) for Miss Richardson

I will update you with any new information we have from the Department of Education or Local Authority and how this may affect school.

### **End of Year Reports**

The report format looks different from previous and we have tried to give a picture of where your child was at in March in a range of subjects/areas. As well as listing attainment and effort for the older children, they indicate coverage and teacher comments. We shared more detailed information on English and Maths in the mid term reports. We hope you find them useful.

### **ParentPay**

Please can all parents/carers ensure that their ParentPay accounts are up to date. As mentioned in previous communications, we are operating a new system from September where charges for care must be paid upfront.

### **School Lunches**

Prices for school lunches have increased to £2.10 per lunch from September. It is also important to note that for children moving from Year 2 to Year 3, that they are no longer entitled to universal free school meals and as such will be charged. If your circumstances have changed and you think you may be entitled to free school meals, please contact the School Office.

### **Reading books**

Please can reading books be returned to school in September so that we can stock take. We will be working on a system to allow the borrowing of books to be done safely when we return.

### **Happy Holidays**

We hope that you and your children enjoy the school holidays. I hope that the weather is kind and that you have some great fun together! I also hope that governors and staff have a good break too and come back refreshed. We look forward to seeing the children back in school on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

**Date for the diary**

September 3<sup>rd</sup>

Children return to school