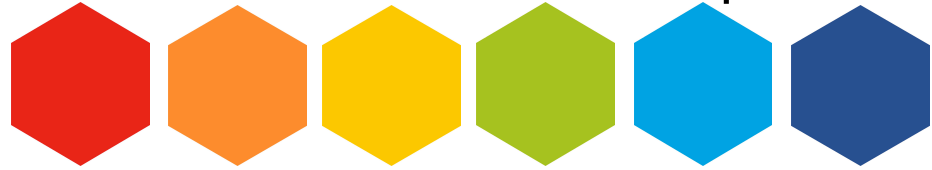


# Curriculum News



April 2016

## In a school far, far away....

After nearly a decade at Farfield, Mr Wilkinson has moved to a school far, far away (actually, only in the Bradford authority) to take up the position of Deputy Headteacher. Mr Wilkinson has been a real creative force within our school and he will be missed. He has recently led much of our work around ethos, the school's Learning Hive and the idea of having a 'Growth Mindset'. Over a longer period, he has led and inspired colleagues in their use of drama in teaching and learning. He moves on to his promotion with our very best wishes and thanks.

Mrs Cruse returns to the school after a maternity leave and she will be teaching in various classes in Years 1-3, particularly in 2L where she takes over from Ms Howells.

We welcome a number of new class-based support staff to the school this term: Mrs Gilhooley, Mrs Harrison, Mrs Cave and Mrs Griffin.

We have a couple of student teachers working with us this term: Miss Haw in 4G and Miss Stirk in Nursery.

After a very successful final teaching practice, Miss Levett will be returning to Farfield in May to take 5T to the end of term. Mr Tiffany will be taking over in 6W after the SATs.

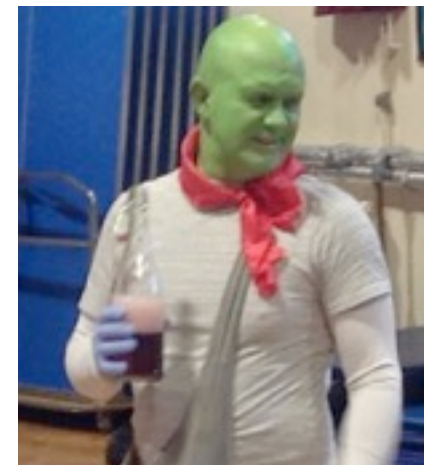
## Exciting new appointment: Assistant Headteacher (infants)

We are **delighted** to have appointed Mrs Katherine Lace as a new Assistant Headteacher to lead in the Infant building. She is currently Key Stage 1 leader at Greenside School in Pudsey and she is going to be a very strong addition to the team. She will take up her new post in September.

Mr Cooke will also continue to be an Assistant Headteacher and he will be leading the Junior Building. He would be acting head across the whole school in my absence and is remaining the school's overall SENCO.



Easily confused: Mr Wilkinson is not the hairy one...



Always keen to dress up:  
Mr Wilkinson on  
World Book Day 2016.  
So many photos... so little  
space.

Mr. Harris



# Academisation?

The title of this newsletter is 'Curriculum News' and that is what I would like to focus on: children and their learning. Instead the government has pledged to force every school to become an academy by 2020 (or 2022). Primary schools, in particular, have shown very little appetite for academisation and hardly any have chosen to go down this route. Although some multi-academy trusts have been successful, many haven't and some have been involved in financial scandals, failed OFSTEDs and controversies around lack of inclusion.

At Farfield, we strongly value the support, challenge and services that we get from the local authority and we are proud to be part of the Leeds Children's Services success story. Over 90% of Leeds primary schools are already good or better according to OFSTED and its Children's Services are held up as a model to other cities following a really positive OFSTED report last year. Much of Leeds' success is based on the cluster model of cooperation

between schools and local delivery of 'early help' services for children and families. This model is threatened by changes to school funding and forced academisation.

Academisation is being opposed by many Conservatives at a local

level across the country and let's hope the government is forced to back down or amend its plans. This proposal is an unwelcome distraction from our core mission to provide a great education for your child. I have written to the minister on behalf of Leeds Primary Headteacher Forum to oppose this move, but after six weeks the letter hasn't even yet been acknowledged. I have also written to local MP Stuart Andrew and got what seemed to be an unsympathetic response. Perhaps parents might like to contact him?

[stuart.andrew.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:stuart.andrew.mp@parliament.uk)

(Mr Harris' personal opinion)



We didn't get much, but when it did snow Nursery and Reception made the most of it...



Year 1 were obsessed with chickens and with eggs; they even used them in their maths lessons!



Nurseries don't usually go on many school trips but we do! Enjoying a Bear Hunt at Abbey House: "We're not scared..."

## School News



# Sports and PE News

Last term was typically busy on the sporting front with children competing in football, rugby, netball and cross country competitions. Year 4 benefitted from a series of lessons in Gaelic Football delivered by coaches from the Gaelic Football Association.

Outdoor and Adventurous Activities have been (literally) high on the agenda for Year 6 as a climbing tower from Herd Farm Activity Centre visited the school for an afternoon in March and children also visited the centre for exciting activities including use of their enormous zip wire. Year 6 are off to [How Stean Gorge](#) on residential in June so this will have been good preparation. Year 5 are also preparing for their residential in the Yorkshire Dales in May: those that are not so confident have been receiving additional bicycle training from Mandy from East Bradford Cycle Club, and everyone will have three training sessions (two off site) with Chris Young (coach from British Cycling) this half term. Year 4 will be visiting the Fan Wood activity centre as part of their OAA curriculum.

Later this summer, many older children will be going to Rawdon Tennis Club for PE lessons - how civilised!

## PTA News

This term sees the PTA host a Race Night on Friday 6th May at 6.45pm. All the races have been sponsored by local businesses and now horses are for sale and tickets can be purchased. Letters have been sent out but if you need a reminder then please contact [Diane](#) or ask at either office.

The Camp-Over is coming: June 18th/19th. The Sunday morning coincides with Father's Day this year - waking up in a field with 50 other families is just what he dreamed of!

This term the PTA will be paying for some playground markings on the junior yard, some supplies for the farm and for a portable sound system (in time for Sports Day). If necessary, the PTA has funding earmarked for a replacement minibus if/when one of the current fleet needs replacing.

## Microsoft Office - reminder

This is a serious bonus: as part of one of the school's subscriptions, all our families (from Y2) are entitled to download the latest copies of Microsoft Office for free! Simply visit our website and search Microsoft or [click here](#) for instructions. Please note that you need a valid Farfield child email address to do this; contact [rachel.hawkhead](mailto:rachel.hawkhead) if you need this information forwarding.

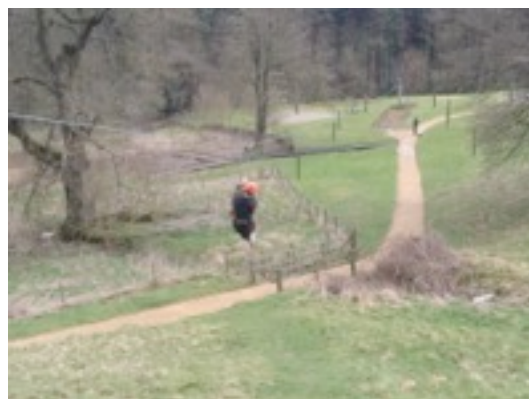
# School News



Children from Year 6 on the Herd Farm climbing tower.



Y5 boys at a big Saturday morning Cross Country competition



Y6 and the zip wire at Herd Farm - photographs don't do it justice!

# SATs this term for Y2 and Y6

This term our children in Years 2 and 6 will be taking their statutory assessments in reading and in maths.

Expectations have been raised and new assessments have been drafted. At KS2, a formal calculations test has replaced mental arithmetic (we're not sure why) and the expectations around grammar have increased hugely in both Years 2 and 6. Children will be declared to have either reached the expected standard or not and the older children will get a standardised score for apparent progress from age 7.

We do have concerns about these new assessments, especially the changes to assessment of writing. Whilst 'levels' were previously a 'best-fit' judgement, children's writing now needs to meet every one of the attainment expectations: you could write as well as JK Rowling, but a relative weakness in handwriting or spelling might mean you were reported as not reaching the expected standard. Woe betide anyone in Y6 who fails to show they have control of active and passive voice in their writing...

Whatever happens, we will continue to celebrate the children's hard work and successes, help them learn from mistakes and support them with the next stages of their learning.

## Phonics tests in Year 1

Phonics tests for Year 1 will take place in June, and some children in Year 2 will have a retest of their phonics skills if they were deemed not to have reached the required standard last year.

If children are mentioning reading nonsense or 'alien words' at school, this is part of the test. Examples of 'alien words' are cloin, jound and fape. Can the children use and apply their phonic skills with no context or word familiarity?

## Baseline binned...

A new test for Reception children introduced last autumn has been abandoned already as the three different private providers were all deemed too different to make reasonable comparisons between schools. Well, there's a surprise.... As a headteacher union immediately stated: "It is hard to avoid saying 'we told you so'." Any chance of the school getting a refund from the government? Or getting back the valuable teaching time wasted when we should have been getting to know our new children? The incompetence is staggering.

## School News



Contestants at the exciting Y6 Spelling Bee



In a bid to make learning of the active and passive voice more appealing and memorable, Year 6 enjoyed a Star Wars-themed day of writing and grammar.



Y2 and Y4 buddies: two boys enjoying learning!

# School News



## Sex and Relationship Education consultation

Along with other schools, we have been waiting, and waiting, for successive governments to review the curriculum guidance and law in this area but they aren't going to do so. Our school policy and planning is now in dire need for review and updating.

Please look out for a consultation letter in the coming weeks and respond to any survey or opportunity to contribute your views. An initial draft policy is being discussed amongst staff and governors and will also be shared for input from parents.

## Year 1 Spring Chickens

The infant hall was very busy for the Y1 Spring Chicken event at the end of last half term.

The children have been superbly engaged with this topic, enjoying looking after some of Mr Garlick's bantam chickens in the Y1 outdoor area, visiting the school's flock of full-size chickens and producing fabulous writing, 'Puppet pal' tales and artwork.

We hope that parents and grandparents enjoyed seeing the children's fabulous work!



Y3 preparing a mummy at Leeds Museum



Many thanks to all the families that were able to support World Book Day last month. The costumes were, once again, fantastic and it is interesting to see how tastes and preferences change over the years. This time, 'The Stick Man' was popular - as modelled beautifully here!



Year 1 feeding the chickens on a visit to Farfield Farm



Children shared their fabulous chicken books with family at the 'Spring Chicken' event

# School News



## Student writing project

We were delighted to welcome Tom Dobson and his students from Leeds Beckett University to Farfield again this year for a series of interesting and engaging writing workshops with children in Years 1, 3 and 6. Our strong relationships with a number of local higher education establishments continue to bring mutual benefits to them and to Farfield.

## Domestic Violence notifications

Leeds schools have been given the opportunity to take part in a new project that will run jointly between schools and West Yorkshire Police. The project has been established to support children who are resident in households where there are incidents of domestic violence and abuse. We know that children can be significantly physically or emotionally hurt by being either present in the house or directly witnessing an incident of domestic violence.

The Domestic Violence and Abuse School Notification Project has been designed to provide confidential 'next day' notification to schools on any incidents of domestic violence and abuse which occur within a child's household that might have an impact on a child whilst they are in school.

The project will ensure that a member of the school staff is trained to allow them to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, and ensure that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in or witnessed a domestic violence or abuse incident.

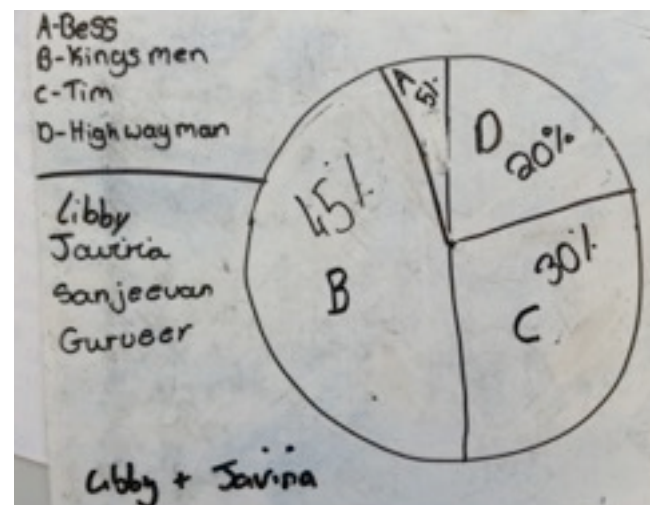
If you would like further support or information about domestic violence and abuse please go to [www.leedsdomesticviolenceandabuse.co.uk](http://www.leedsdomesticviolenceandabuse.co.uk)



Year 1 and students from Leeds Beckett find a mysterious egg on the school grounds.



Year 6 working on The Highwayman



Literacy and maths: who was most to blame for the death in the poem?

Leeds Domestic Violence Service

**24hr HELPLINE**

**0113 246 0401**  
In case of immediate danger call 999

# School News



## Food for Thought

Food is important for everyone. At Farfield, we take food seriously, growing food on Farfield Farm to provide children with horticultural skills, scientific understanding and an enhanced awareness of where their food might come from; providing an ambitious and rigorous cooking curriculum in KS2 and employing our own kitchen staff directly to take control of our own school meals.

Over the coming year we have more exciting plans for food in the school:

- Extension of a regular farming curriculum into Key Stage 1
- Extension of a regular cooking curriculum into Key Stage 1
- Review of the school's overall Food Policy

We would also like to reopen the school cafe this summer - do we have any volunteers who would like to take this on one afternoon a week, e.g. Fridays?

Most excitingly, we expect to soon be members of the **Fuel for School** scheme run by [The Real Junk Food Project](#). If successful, we would aim to have a partnership with a local supermarket to receive and pass on 'food waste' on a 'pay as you feel' basis. Ideally, we would combine this with a re-opened cafe, harvests from the farm and eggs from the school chickens.

Food for Fuel already works very well in some other schools, including locally at Stanningley Primary School. Watch out for more information soon.



We have a rich cooking curriculum at Farfield, beginning in the Foundation Stage...



...and progressing throughout Key Stage 2. Next year, we hope to plan much more regular cooking into Key Stage 1.





## Religious Education

This academic year, the school has invested in its Religious Education curriculum to ensure that all our children receive a well-planned, broad programme of study in this essential curriculum area. Now more than ever, children must have a broad awareness of a range of religions and should be given time to reflect on core ideas and beliefs.

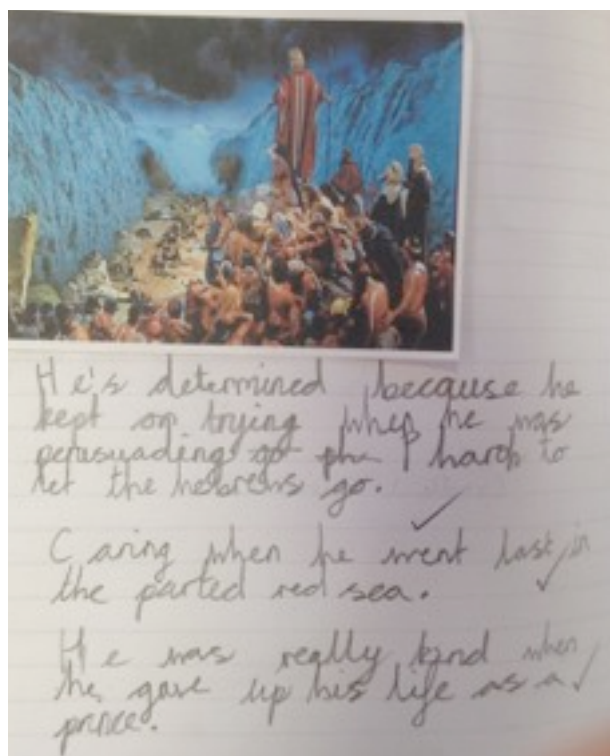
I emailed parents about this work recently and was delighted at the offers of school visits that we received. We will aim to have a RE-related visit in each year group from September 2016.

I have had the pleasure of delivering a few RE lessons this year covering an absent colleague. The lessons that I delivered mainly related to Sikhism and it was really helpful to have Sikh children in the lesson to bring the learning to life: they were very well informed and keen to contribute and share. The rich cultural mix that we have at Farfield is a real strength of the school and is to everyone's benefit.

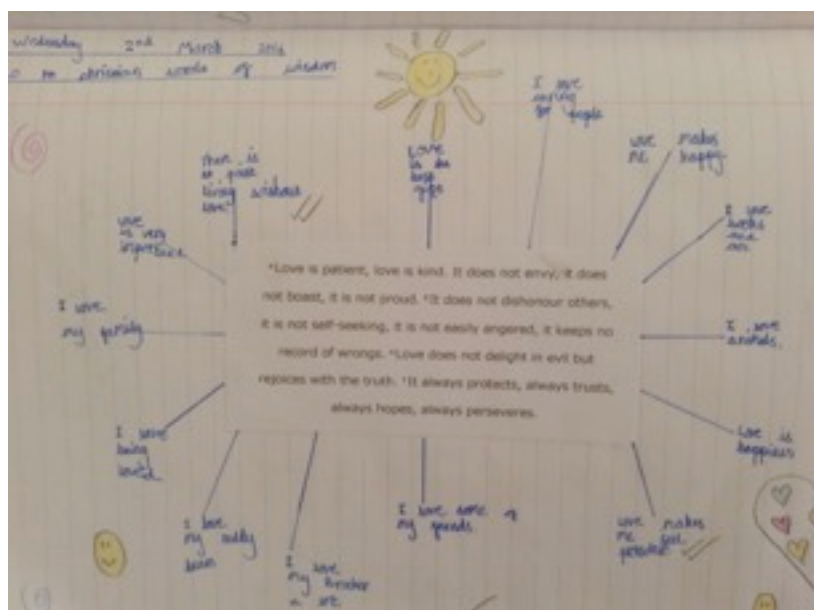
### Mr Harris on behalf of the governors



Year 5 RE through drama and 'freeze frames'



Year 3 considered leadership in religion: in this case, they considered the leadership qualities of Moses (note the beautiful cursive handwriting in this Y3 child's work!).



Year 4 considered Christian 'words of wisdom'. In this example, they are thinking about love.



Year 2 learnt about the Ten Commandments and the Five Pillars of Islam. They then came up with some rules of their own.