



# Farfield News

for parents, carers, staff, governors and community

Sept 2020



## Welcome back!

We have never been happier to see our children again after what has been a remarkable and unprecedented six months.

By July, we did have about 250 children in school - over half of our roll - but we are very aware that 200 children were stuck at home. Now that the 'bubble' size rules have been relaxed and we are able to have classes of thirty again, we can have everyone back in school. It was always going to be impossible to have all children in school with class sizes of just 15.

We are grateful for all the efforts that families were able to make with home learning during the shutdown. We are reviewing what we were able to offer to families whilst their children were not in school - it became progressively more difficult to provide remote teaching and learning as teachers became fully timetabled in school.

We feel that Google Classroom worked well for most people and the home learning packs seemed to be gratefully received by the vast majority of families. We were one of very few Leeds schools that offered some live video sessions with teachers from the start of lockdown and we feel that we can develop this further. Hopefully, we won't have to send pupils home again - and the government seems determined to keep primary children in school - but if we do, we will be ready.

We are confident that our hygiene measures and bubble arrangements for September provide a COVID-secure environment to welcome back **all** children this term - we can't wait to see everyone!



*A KS1 Joe Wicks session at the height of the pandemic. Teachers and children will have to get used to having 30 children in a class again!*



*Socially-distant Y2s in a June bubble. Classes in September will typically be 30, with pairs of children all facing forwards from Y2-6.*

## Expanded pastoral team for 20-21

We are delighted to be able to extend our pastoral team for this academic year.

Existing staff members Mrs Rebecca Myers and Mrs Marie Du Preez have been appointed as Assistant Learning Mentors in the infant and junior buildings respectively, working under Mrs Sarah Sykes (Senior Learning Mentor). Both Mrs Myers and Mrs Du Preez will take these roles part time - typically in the mornings - whilst continuing their existing afternoon roles in school.

This extension to our pastoral team has been planned for some time, but may be particularly well-timed as children return from such a long break.

# Parent governor election

We have one vacancy for a new parent governor. Could you offer yourself as a 'critical friend' for the school? Do you have particular skills and perspectives to offer? Look out for further details in a few weeks - allowing a little time for our new families to settle in.



## Grounds - meadow and more woodland?

We are fortunate to have lovely school grounds. We would like to develop the grounds further to: provide more interesting and engaging play space; create more habitats; further improve aesthetics and reduce some of the maintenance demands of the site. Is it possible to meet all those aims concurrently?

We have tentative plans to bring space beyond the infant tyre park back into recreational use, plant more trees on the top field and create areas of meadow. Do you have any views or expertise that could help us with these aims? Please do contact us.

## Changes to Guided Reading

Children will notice some changes to the teaching of reading this year. From September, classes in KS2 will have most of their discrete teaching of reading as a whole class rather than the guided group arrangements that have been more typical over the last couple of decades.

## Catch-up funding - decisions to be made

We are expecting about £30k from the government for COVID 'Catch-up'. This equates to £80 per pupil which is welcome but it is also difficult to see how this figure makes up for the loss of more than a term of schooling. It is also worth noting that COVID has cost our school in the region of £40k so far in terms of external sinks, loss of catering income, additional bubble staffing, cleaning and PPE.

With such a small amount of money, might it be more reasonable to focus this funding on those year groups that weren't able to return to school in the summer: current Y4-6?

## Volunteering

We **are** allowed to continue to welcome in volunteers into school, albeit with some common-sense restrictions. We are most keen to have volunteers to assist with sessions on the farm and with our KS2 cooking curriculum. If you could spare a couple of hours one afternoon a week, please get in touch: [office@farsleyfarfield.org.uk](mailto:office@farsleyfarfield.org.uk). You don't have to be an expert - simply another pair of adult hands to help us to deliver our exciting curriculum.

## Lottery knock-back - what next?

We refurbished the area previously known as 'The Cafe' last year, providing lovely indoor space for pastoral work and interventions with children around social, emotional and mental health.

We also applied for lottery funding to refurbish the adjacent concrete courtyard, hoping to lay artificial grass in the area to provide alternative and additional play space, especially for those that find the busier yard and fields more difficult to play in successfully.

That lottery application was unsuccessful. We are now about £5k short - does anyone have any ideas?

# Staffing news

We sadly said goodbye to Miss Bray at the end of last year. We wish her well in her new school in Cambridge. We welcome new teacher (and former pupil!) Mrs Rebecca Broadhead to our school as a teacher in Year 1. Rebecca was able to join us for three weeks in July and has already had the chance to teach almost half her new class as a 'bubble' before the holiday. Quite a few of us are feeling old as we remember teaching Rebecca a decade or so ago.

Mr Tony Barraclough also moved on at the end of last term and we now welcome Mrs Schmidt to school as a teaching assistant in the infants.



# Buildings news

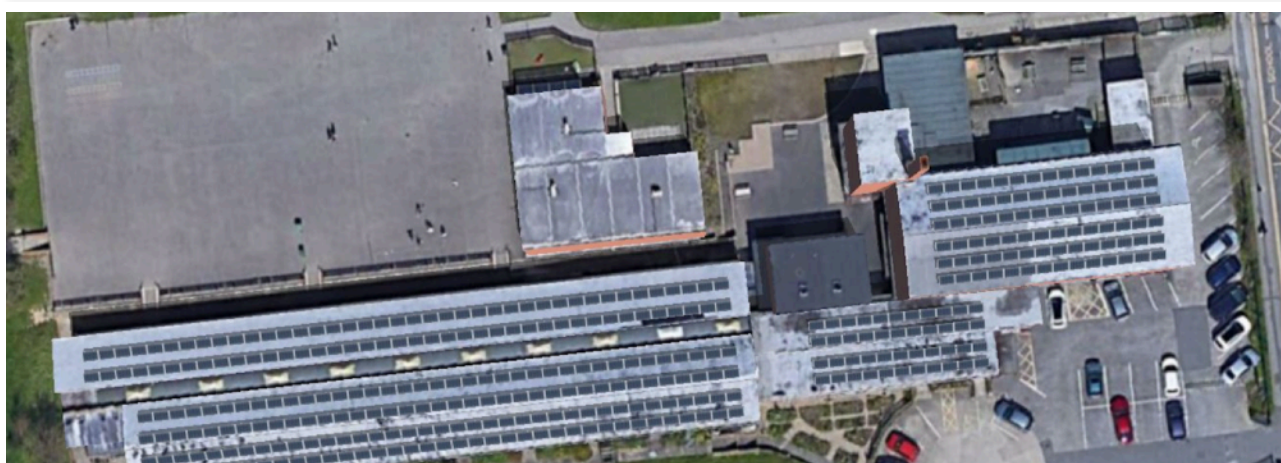
Over the summer, the third and final phase of infant re-roof was completed. Finally, we should be water-tight in the North building. We are very grateful to Leeds City Council for support with this. Over the holidays, we also had the third and final phase of replacement pipework and radiators in the juniors. Again, LCC have been a great support with this.

We have also had some external painting, particularly around the infants, and the new external sinks across the site (with generous support from the PTA). The junior building has a new platform lift for our disabled students.

We have some more major works lined up: a new (and very expensive!) fire alarm system in the juniors, new LED lighting across the school and, hopefully, solar panels on the Junior roof (up to 70KW) - and, possibly, the infants (30KW) too. All this is costing a lot of money when finances are tight: the fire alarm is jointly funded with LCC, the LED lighting will be funded by a SALIX loan over 8 years and the panels will be paid for by Solar for Schools, with the school purchasing the electricity at a competitive fixed price. On a sunny day, the panels should provide all the junior building's current electricity needs - carbon free.

Next summer holiday, we will start a major council-funded fire-stopping programme - important but very disruptive work that is likely to be on-going over a few years.

During the lockdown, we also worked with government-appointed consultants to carry out a feasibility study around de-carbonising our heating. We now have a 50 page report about a ground-source heat pump for the infant building - just need to find a very significant source of funding now...



Is this how the South building will look in 6 months?



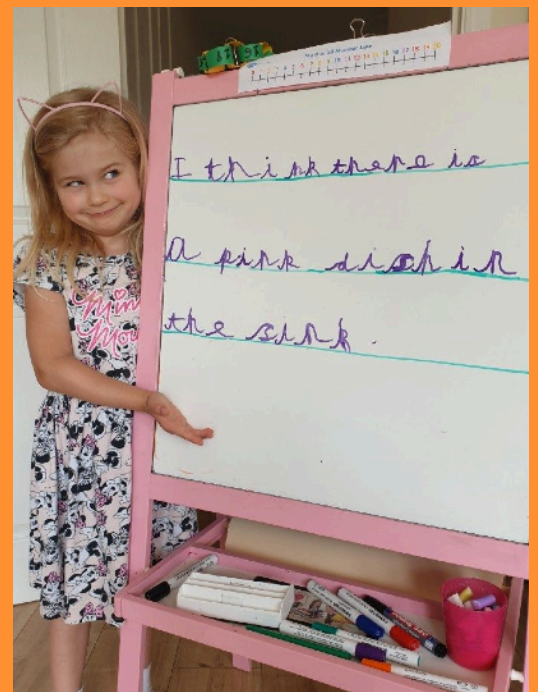


# Assessment and record keeping in the Early Years

Changes are coming to EYFS (Nursery and Reception) educational programmes and assessment from September 2021 (we have chosen to NOT be an early adopter of these changes). We **are** making one significant change now though: ceasing the use of Tapestry for observations and assessment and using a product called **EExAT** from Early Excellence instead.

Like Tapestry, parents will continue to have online access to observations of their child and will be able to submit their own photos and feedback. We look forward to creating lovely online journals of your children's development:  
<https://eexat.com/wp-content/uploads/eexat-sample-learning-journal-documents-110718.pdf>

Parents in EYFS should look out for further information very soon.



Parents can upload evidence from home too - isn't this super end-of-Reception writing!

## New bees for our farm

During the summer of 2019, we lost our colony of bees: forced out by marauding wasps apparently! In July, our friends Nicole and Susan were back with a new colony of 30,000 bees that they collected from a nearby garden.

We set up a live video stream from the top of the farm and Year 2 pupils watched from their 'bubbles' as Nicole and her assistant Mr Harris transferred the new colony into the hive. The children later came up to the apiary for a bee workshop with Nicole and Susan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emlf3kPTJ00>

Many thanks to Nicole and Susan (and daughters) for their time and support. The bees seem happy in their new hive and we look forward to their work as pollinators across the school grounds - we hope it is a bountiful new home.



Mr Harris looks a bit worried as a bee frame is transferred to the new hive!



Year 2 children in a lovely outdoor bee workshop.