

Farfield News

for parents, carers, staff, governors and community

Jan 2021



Ready, Respectful, Kind

For the new calendar year, we have a fresh new set of simple school rules: **Ready, Respectful, Kind**. These 3 rules will sit alongside our Learning Hive of ethos statements and provide a simple framework of language and expectations.

We hope that parents and carers might also use this language and share these expectations of their children.

3 **simple** rules

Consistent language

Consistent expectation

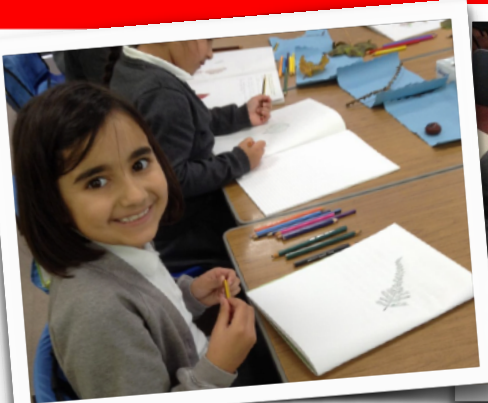
We show we are **ready** to learn and have a positive attitude to our learning.



We act and speak in a **respectful** way to everyone. We **respect** our environment.



We are **kind** to others and ourselves. We use **kind** words and actions.



Phonics Success (again)

Can you read the words **zome**, **waib** and **spraw**? Children in Year 2 can!

Before the holidays, the Year 2 children were asked to complete the phonics screening check that would usually take place in June of Year 1. The purpose of this is to check a child's ability to read words using phonics rules. It consists of lists of real and 'alien' words for children to decode. We were very pleased with how well the children performed in the check. Our overall pass rate was 88% - in line with previous years (and above previous national averages). Children that didn't reach the expected standard will continue to have discrete phonics input over the rest of the school year and will be retested in the summer.



Shared reading in Year 1

The children currently in Year 1 will be required to complete their phonics screening check this year in June. We are sending home Phonics guides for parents this term. We will also be holding virtual phonics workshops for parents in both Reception and Year 1 this half term to provide more information about how we teach phonics in school and how you can support children with their reading and phonics at home.

The Future's Bright...

Last term, all the classrooms and halls had LED lighting and motion sensor upgrades. These upgrades have improved the brightness and quality of the light, whilst reducing electricity consumption for lighting by up to 60%: good for bills and for the school's CO2 emissions. The £25k investment will be repaid over 8 years at 0% interest through SALIX.



Huge Eco grant bid Submitted

Working with Leeds City Council and consultants, a bid has been submitted to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy for a share of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. If we were to be successful, we would have solar panels across the site (on roofs) and the infant building would have new air source heat pump heating. Fingers are crossed!

Whilst this bid is being assessed, our previously agreed solar panel project is paused. One way or another, we are determined to further improve the school's environmental performance in 2021 - we can't keep delaying our response to the climate and biodiversity crises.



An air source heat pump is powered with (ideally renewable) electricity and uses the same type of technology that keeps your fridge cold, but in reverse.

'Be Happy' morphs into 'Be Positive'

It's hard to 'Be Happy' all the time and it is ok to not be ok sometimes.



To reflect this, we have adapted our Learning Hive 'Be Happy' into 'Be Positive'. 'Be Positive' better reflects our determined, aspirational school attitude and includes the 'Growth Mindset' approach that we encourage with our children. Children are taught to learn from mistakes and try to see positive opportunities in difficult circumstances.

Our six Learning Hives are used in Special Mention assemblies as themes for awards.

Grounds - more trees are on their way

Over 100 new 'Woodland Trust Year-Round Colour' trees are scheduled to arrive in early March for planting on the top field and between the apple sculpture and the infants building. We will have saplings of silver birch, rowan, wild cherry, hawthorn, dogwood and hazel. We are also going to buy some alder trees for a particularly wet area on the top field.

Children will be heavily involved in planting the trees - a fantastic activity that will provide shelter, habitats and help make the fields a bit less wet. Our intention is to have less area that requires regular mowing and we will allow more of the space to grow more wild. We will still have plenty of grass space for sports and PE.



Amazing PTA fundraising generosity!

We have been astonished and delighted by families' generosity in supporting PTA activities in the autumn term:

Smartie Tubes - just over **£1000.00**

Prize Draw Lottery - **£250.00** and rising (if you would like to take part, families have until 20th January 2021 to pay on ParentPay)

The secret Santa letter - **£220.00**

Donation page - **£417.00** (available on Parent Pay until July 2021) plus another **£250** donation from a grandparent directly

This represents over **£2000** in two months - thank you **so** much! Our next project is refurbishment of what was previously known as the cafe courtyard: work due for completion next half term.

Diane Walton (Chair of 'Friends of Farfield' PTA) Mr Harris (Head teacher)

Relaunched Junior library

December saw the reopening of our KS2 library with each class having the opportunity to visit and select a book of their choice to enjoy. We have invested in lots of new fiction and non-fiction books that cover a variety of topics and celebrate a range of authors. Thanks to the work of Miss Ellis and Mrs Sykes, and the help of our fantastic librarians, our library area has been updated with new displays and we hope that it will become a place that inspires our children to love reading.

Message to children: We would like to celebrate the relaunch of the library with a competition! Please capture a moment enjoying your new library book by taking a photograph and sending it into school. Are you somebody who snuggles up in a cosy corner with your book? Do you like to be at one with nature and read in a tree? We will be displaying all your photographs in the library and the most inspiring entry from each class will win a small prize.

Happy reading!



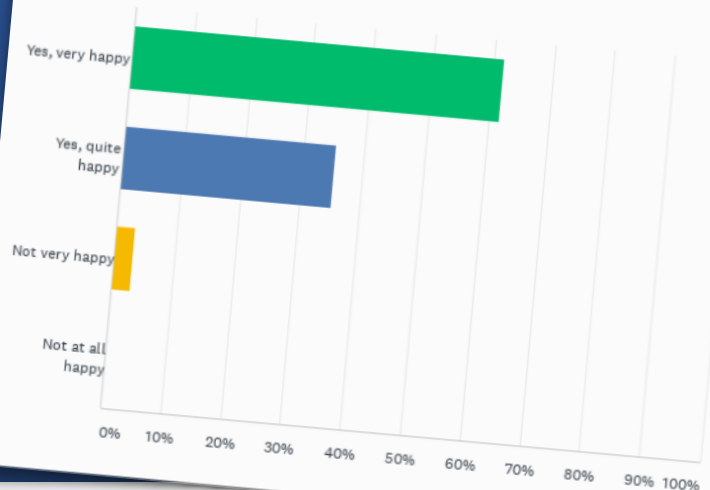
Positive Parent Survey

Thank you for the 230 responses to our Parent/Carer survey in December.

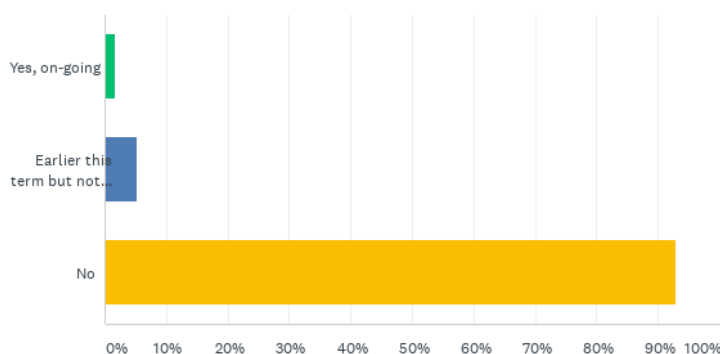
Overall, the feedback was very positive and we will try to address the small number of issues identified.

Please do let us know if your child is unhappy in school or there are significant problems with peers - don't wait until the next termly survey.

Q3 Has your child been happy in school this term?



Q4 Has your child been the victim of bullying in school this term? Bullying would be targeted, deliberate and repeated hurtful name-calling, social exclusion or violence. Occasional 'fallings-out' wouldn't usually be classed as bullying.



A special new member of the pastoral team!

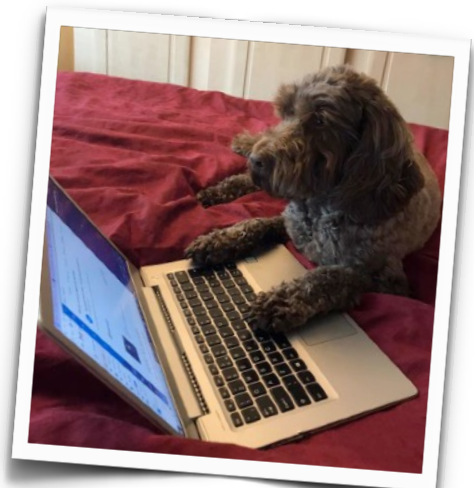
From January, Farsley Farfield is going to have our very own school dog every Thursday. Cockerpoo Zoey will be joining us to support some of our children with SEND and help with children's well-being. She is experienced at working with a variety of children in schools and has had training to ensure she is safe to work with a range of needs.

Due to Covid, she will be based in the Junior Woodlands Room initially but we plan to bring her over to meet the children in the Infants building too. Once she is settled, we will organise a timetable for children to visit Zoey for individual or small group sessions. The children will be able to come and read to her, take her for a walk, sit with her during nurture sessions or just have some quiet time with her.

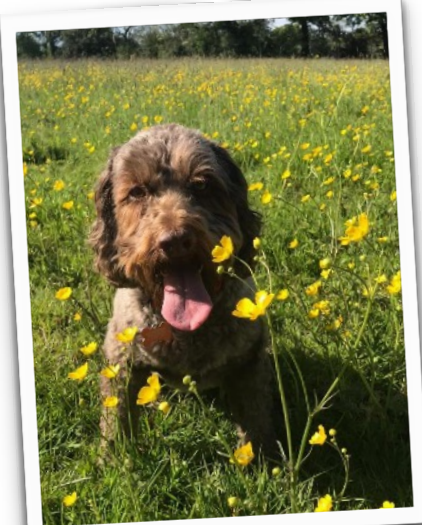
This is the first time that we have had a school dog so we will introduce her very gradually into our school. The benefits that we hope to gain from having a dog are explained in this article:

<https://theconversation.com/therapy-dogs-can-help-reduce-student-stress-anxiety-and-improve-school-attendance-93073>

If you would like to see the draft risk assessment around having Zoey in school, [please click here](#). If you have any concerns about this, please email office@farsleyfarfield.org.uk with the title **Zoey**.



Zoey is clever, but maybe not this clever. She's only good at pressing pause...



Year 1 Hedgehog Hotels

In the autumn, infants found a few hedgehogs around the grounds in the daytime - exciting, but not normal hedgehog behaviour. To make our grounds even more hedgehog-friendly, friend-of-the-school Stephen Carr came and worked with Year 1 children outside to make a range a super hedgehog shelters which were placed surreptitiously around the school.

We have lots of willow and hazel on site that can be harvested by anyone in the school community. Just ask.



Chromebooks Success So Far

We were VERY excited to be able to begin a 1:1 Chromebook deployment in Y4-6 from November: quite possibly the most exciting single classroom development of the past thirty years!

The devices were 'rolled out' efficiently by Mrs Hawkhead and her team and we have only had a very small number of mishaps that have usually been quickly resolved.



Children and families are doing well remembering to bring the devices to school every day fully charged - thank you. Where there are opportunities to use the Chromebooks to enhance teaching and learning, the flow of the lesson continues as the children are online and busy very promptly. This is a long term project and commitment, but we are already seeing fantastic examples of how this 1:1 deployment can bring fabulous new educational opportunities: collaborative writing and collections of ideas; 'pupil voice' and instant assessment; regular practice of times tables, spellings and maths content; online tools to help with spelling and reading and, of course, all the other Google tools and wealth of online educational content.

We will showcase all this work more extensively later in the year.

New Governors and Chair

Farfield has a super governing body: committed, well-informed volunteers that give a strategic steer to the school and provide support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leadership. We are always grateful for their time and contributions.

Once again, we had fantastic candidates for the recent parent governor election, all of whom would have been strong additions to the board. After a close election result, **Marion Allen** and **Shazia Rafiq** were elected.

In November, our long-standing chair of governors **Rob Heap** chose not to seek re-election as chair as his term of office expires in March. Rob has been a superb chair: supportive and challenging at the right times, and bringing valuable expertise to the school. We would like to strongly thank him for all that he has contributed to the school's success and we wish him and his family all the best for the future.

Once again, we were delighted to have more than one strong candidate to take over as chair and, after a vote, **Ruth Fain was duly elected as our new chair of governors**. Ruth is an experienced governor with many professional skills and insights, and is parent to two children in our infants. **Davina Bhanabhai** has been elected as our new vice-chair of governors.



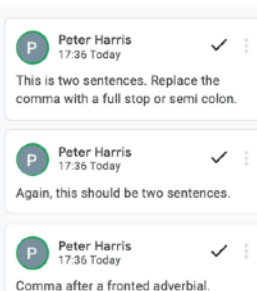
"I consider it a great privilege to serve as chair. Farfield is an exceptional school - we have strong committed teaching and support staff and a wonderful cohort of children. COVID is presenting many challenges (and some opportunities) and adding complexity to an already difficult job. As chair, I will work with the board of governors to make sure the current high levels of governance and effectiveness are maintained and built upon, and the staff and children supported. The board of governors welcomes feedback and queries from parents and staff - if you have any matters to raise please send an email to ruth.fain@farsleyfarfield.org.uk."

Outdoor Volunteering Opportunities

We still have opportunities for outdoor volunteering at school. We have a need for regular volunteers supporting afternoon pupil sessions on the school farm. In January, we also have a need for help with redoing our school pond and/or clearing the courtyard prior to laying astroturf. In March, we would welcome support planting trees. Please get in touch if you can help. Classroom volunteers are best delayed until Spring.



Clockwise from top left: Cameron supporting Y6s preparing a bed for winter; Brussel sprouts for Christmas; a beautiful Romanesco broccoli and weighing a pumpkin for our harvest records. Older KS2 children will now be keeping an online diary of their work on the farm using Chromebooks. Y5 and Y6 may have already started - ask to see your child's. Here are a few sample pages (below).



After that, we cleaned the eggs we collected (one cracked because its shell was a bit weak). Then, we helped on the store (that was the best bit about my day).



Year 5 Nov/Dec

First, we fed the chickens some bread. Sadly they didn't eat off of my hand, but they did eat when I put it on the floor. I found this very fun.



Consultation on revised Relationships and Sex Education

Miss Jones wrote to parents in December asking for parents or carers who would like to join a working group looking at revised Sex and Relationships curriculum expectations. An initial virtual meeting is planned for 2pm on Friday 8th January. Please email emily.jones@farsleyfarfield.org.uk if you would like to contribute to this.



Santa and his elf were a 'site' to be seen again this year, but 2020-style had deliveries left at the classroom door and waves through windows. Santa's visit was still very special, as seen in the faces of these nursery children.

and finally...

We managed to get to page 8 before really mentioning COVID. As you can see from this busy newsletter, we have continued to progress and achieve success as a school despite the constraints we are operating under.

It was a tough term Sept-Dec but we managed to 'only' send home one bubble which very regrettable but was a relative success compared to many schools. COVID-related issues continue to cause staffing issues across school, particularly in Year 3: periods of self-isolation, shielding or longer term absence caused, we think, by 'Long COVID'. Thank you to everyone who was able to maintain systems around social distancing and hygiene, and we appreciate families' patience as regards some of the inconveniences of new timings and systems. Attendance overall was pretty good.

As we start this new term, we have increased some of our COVID security measures above those previously stipulated, e.g. adults wearing more face coverings and reducing the mixing of children within their year group bubbles. Our priority is the safety of our whole school community, especially those that are most vulnerable.

Thank you for your support.