



Upper Durham Dales Federation
St John's Chapel & Forest of Teesdale Newsletter
Friday 15th October



Message from Mrs Hodgkinson:

I can't believe that we only have one week left until the end of this half-term! We seem to have had a really busy half-term. The children have really enjoyed our Space themed learning and we're looking forward to the pop-up planetarium visit next week.

Over the last couple of weeks, class teachers have been assessing where all of the children are in terms of their attainment. As a result of this, we are going to have a big emphasis on basic skills across all of our schools, particularly phonics, spelling and times tables. You can help us to support your child/ren by hearing them read, helping them to practise their times tables and encouraging them to complete the homework that is sent home by their class teacher.

Don't forget to apply for a school place if your child is due to start primary school or move to secondary school in September 2022.

The deadline dates to apply for these school places are:

Secondary school admissions—31st October, 2021

Primary school admissions - 15th January, 2022

Apply online at www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Harvest

Next week, we will be celebrating Harvest in school. The children have been practising Harvest songs and learning about why we celebrate the tradition. We were planning to invite parents/carers into school to watch our Harvest performance; however, due to the current rise in coronavirus cases within our local area, we have made the difficult decision not to do this at this time. Instead, teachers are going to record the children's performances and we will upload this to our school website. The link to the video will appear on the 'news feed' (towards the bottom of our homepage) and you will be able to watch these at home with the children.

We are also collecting any donations of food for the Weardale Food Bank and would be grateful for anything that you can send into school.



Planetarium

As our current topic in school is Stargazers (for the older children) and Moon Zoom! (for the younger children) our Science co-ordinator, Miss Woods, has organised a visit from a mobile planetarium. This will take place next Thursday (21st October). The children from Rookhope and Wearhead Primary will be taken by minibus to St John's Chapel Primary, where they will spend the morning getting to know the children and staff from the other schools within our Federation. We will then be take the children to the Town Hall at St John's Chapel (in age groups) where they will experience the planetarium and learn about the Solar System. Wearhead and Rookhope pupils will return to their own schools in time for lunch.

Federation Fridays

After the October half-term holiday, we will be restarting our joint-working on Fridays, where the children from all schools within our Federation will be taught together at St John's Chapel Primary School. Children from all the schools will be taught together in their age groups - Early Years, Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and Upper Key stage 2 (Years 5 and 6).

The focus for teaching on Fridays will be Science, French and PE. Pupils in Y5 and 6 from all schools will be swimming on Friday afternoons until the end of term.

We are really looking forward to being able to bring the children together and have some exciting events planned for next half term.

Dates for your diary:

Date	Event
w/b Monday 18 th Oct	Harvest events – performances will be uploaded to school websites Collection for Weardale foodbank
Thursday 21st October	Planetarium experience at St. John's Chapel Town Hall
Friday 22 nd October	School closes for half term holiday
Monday 1 st November	Staff INSET day- all schools closed to pupils
Tuesday 2 nd November	Schools reopen for teaching purposes
Friday 5 th November	Bonfire safety assembly
Friday 19 th November	Children in Need Jet & Ben assembly