



Northbourne News

19th July 2023

A reminder that school closes for the summer today. We look forward to seeing pupils moving into Y1 – Y6 at 8:45am on Tuesday 5th September.

I can't quite believe I am writing the final newsletter of my time at Northbourne.

When I arrived at this school as Deputy Headteacher in 2007, I wouldn't have believed that I would end up being here until the 2020s, after having been Headteacher for over a decade. I couldn't be prouder of the school I have led, and of everything that the entire school community – children, staff, parents and governors – has achieved over those years. The Northbourne I leave is a unique school which oozes love, happiness and joy; almost without exception, visitors comment on how happy and engaged children are, and this speaks volumes about the commitment, dedication and care which our fantastic staff team give.

As I am sure you are aware, the job of leading a school has rarely been harder than it is currently, with expectations that schools will achieve more and more with fewer and fewer resources. Strategic planning and looking ahead has, to date, seen us avoid some of the significant staffing problems facing schools locally and nationally, but teacher recruitment is undoubtedly facing a crisis. Northbourne is incredibly lucky that it will be led by Mrs. Johnston and Miss Rawcliffe, supported by the incredibly able senior team of Miss Hill, Mrs. Alleway and Mrs. Parsons, into next year; please value and support them, and the wider team, in the same way you have me over my time as headteacher, as I know they will work all tirelessly to continue to develop and improve Northbourne- but will need all of your support to do so.

Thank you so much for all of your gifts and kind words; they have been truly overwhelming and have made for an emotional end to the term. I am so pleased to be continuing to work in Didcot as this will mean I will hear about the achievements of your remarkable children over the coming years. Have a wonderful summer, and thanks to all of you for helping make our school community such an exceptional one.

Northbourne Excellence awards

You will know that our school mission is to nurture excellence in all of our pupils. We encourage all our pupils to continually strive to get better and better in all curriculum areas, developing their unique talents and interests and learning more about themselves, others and the world around them. Three times a year, class teachers choose 2 pupils who have stood out during the term through their outstanding effort, motivation or achievement (and often all three!) in an area of the curriculum. These really special awards, which teachers give a lot of thought to, recognise the excellence of the pupils chosen in a range of areas. This term, effort and achievement awards have been given to...

Puffins	Josie for being consistently kind, polite, helpful and hardworking – Josie listens carefully in class and always shows empathy and kindness to her friends.	Leo for always coming to school ready to learn, demonstrating great ability to listen to and follow instructions, and always trying your hardest.
Swans	Miley for showing great perseverance, responding to feedback and working hard to improve and refine her work.	Bobby for being endlessly optimistic and enthusiastic, and applying this to his learning all the time.
Nightingales	Eymen for working so hard on his reading this term, and, as a result, making great progress.	Hope for challenging herself to improve the presentation of her work and having a really positive mindset in her attitude towards work.
Robins	Eleanor for being such a great Y2 role model – Eleanor is kind, thoughtful and hard-working, offering sensible ideas and continually improving her work.	Ixia for making great progress in Y2; Ixia is sensible and hard-working and has become an enthusiastic and confident learner.
Wrens	Olive for becoming such an enthusiastic and happy member of the class who cares for everyone around her, always spending time helping others.	Elora for amazing Wrens with her newfound confidence in talking and for taking such a full part in classroom activities.
Owls	Holly for growing up and developing so much independence since September; you are now fully focused on how to be your best in every part of the school day.	Thanuj for being such a conscientious and reflective learner, who listens intently to instructions and feedback and carries out every task to the best of his ability.
Hawks	Maisie for being a conscientious learner who gives her best in every lesson, and who continually looks to improve on what she has achieved.	Isla-Mai for making such huge strides this year. You have become so willing to tackle the things that you would have once worried about, as we saw on our residential.
Falcons	Jessica for being an incredible young learner – for being positive, determined and consistently hard-working with a fabulous sense of humour and great community spirit.	Lottie for being warm and kind to others, and making exceptional progress in reading and writing due to her commitment to her learning.
Kites	Ben for being thoughtful, reflective and resilient, and, as a result, making great progress this year. Ben is also a popular and valued friend to all.	Darcy for having a phenomenal Y6, showcasing how kind, encouraging, honest, funny and reliable she is.
Kestrels	Lucas for approaching the challenges of Y6 so admirably and, as a result, making clear progress and shining as a hard-working Kestrel.	Hannah for being focused, listening carefully and showing consistent effort in so many areas of learning.
Eagles	Harry for working incredibly hard this year – listening carefully, taking part and working with determination.	Daniel for being so focused, participating so well, and showing determination in every lesson.

Well done Y6

I'm an 11-year-old, Get Me Out Of Here! Huge thanks and congratulations to Y6 for your wonderful performance on Monday evening. I know I speak on behalf of everyone in the audience when I say you wowed us with your confidence, comic timing and wonderful singing – and your smiles and laughter showed us how pleased you were to be able to perform in front of such a receptive audience again. Despite the valiant attempts of Y6 after the performance, they couldn't overcome a commanding lead to win the now-traditional adult vs child Rounders Game, ending up losing by just 2 rounders. Huge thanks to the Y5/6 staff team for their hard work organising the performance, and to our PTA committee and their helpers for organising the barbecue – we hope it made for a memorable evening.

Leavers' Service: It was lovely to see so many parents and family members join us for our Leavers' Service yesterday. Well done to our Y6 readers - Ben, Douglas, Charlie, Amy, Noah, Daniel, Oliver, Grace, Elle, Toby, Kevinia, Felix and Benji - for your clear, confident delivery, and to the choir for such a wonderful performance. As always, I am sure you will join me in passing on thanks to Rev Hannah and Fran for leading the service, and to Sara Green, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Wade for their hard work with the choir.

Every year a number of awards are presented to Y6 pupils to recognise some exceptional achievements. This year, the Stephen Scarfe award, presented to school by his parents and dedicated to his memory, is awarded to **Darcy**. This award is voted for by Y6 pupils and recognises the achievements of a pupil who embodies the values of Northbourne through their ongoing effort, behaviour and approach to school. Darcy is a very deserving winner; she is unfailingly hard-working, thoughtful, polite, funny, committed to her learning and a real role-model for the rest of Y6 and the whole school. She takes on responsibility, such as being an Eco Spy, gladly, and has led the way for Y6 in so many respects. Well done Darcy – keep up all of your hard work.

The Dawn Evans Memorial Cup, again donated by her parents, is given to the pupil who has achieved the highest levels of sporting success. This year, for only the third time ever, this is awarded to two pupils with very different sporting interests and talents: **Archie** and **Vesper**. Archie is a sporting all-rounder, constantly adding new games to his already lengthy out-of-school commitments. He plays basketball, cricket for Oxfordshire, and is continually beating his personal best times and scores for Abingdon Athletics. Archie takes huge pleasure in challenging himself, including in his school work, and I know he will go on to achieve great things. Like Archie, **Vesper** has shown huge commitment to her chosen sport of swimming for the whole time she has been at Northbourne. She continues to excel in this – just this weekend she knocked 5 seconds off one of her PBs, showing her determination to continue to improve to be the best she can. Well done to both Vesper and Archie – we will look forward to hearing about your ongoing achievements.

We also present our Shooting Star award, which is voted for by members of staff. This is given in memory of Molly Giles, who we always remember for her friendly, happy and helpful personality, and was this year presented to **Helenka**. She is a wonderful presence – endlessly kind, polite, a hard worker, a reflective learner and a considerate friend to everyone in our school community. Helenka sets herself the highest possible standards in all she does, striving for excellence; she has a bright future ahead of her, thanks to the commitment and love she constantly shows.

These awards only recognise a very small number of all of the achievements made by every pupil in Y6 whilst they have been with us. We would like to wish all of you lots of luck as you leave us, and we look forward to hearing about all of your achievements during your time in your next school. Well done on all you have achieved here, and keep up all of your hard work.

School Meals

I know you will join me in passing on thanks to Tracy and her team for keeping us fed all year. Tracy has ensured that the quality of her lunches has remained as high as ever despite the rising cost of living but, as previously communicated, will need to increase the cost of a meal slightly due to the much higher costs of ingredients; from September, meals will cost £2.40 per day. A reminder to parents of children in Y3 that your child will no longer receive a universal Free School Meal (this only applies to children in YR, Y1 and Y2), but if you think your child may qualify for a means-tested funded school lunch please call into the office, as carrying out this check is quick and easy.

Morning Fun Club

We are pleased to let you know that the cost of Morning Fun Club remains unchanged into next year - £4.50 for your first child and £4 for siblings. This represents great value for childcare, and is reflected in how popular breakfast club remains. A booking form for next year is attached with this newsletter – please, of course, disregard this if you do not need a space!

If you have any good quality, unwanted small-world toys (Playmobil or Lego, for example), Breakfast Club would love these! Please drop this into the office, or hand to a member of Breakfast Club staff if your child uses this. Thank you!