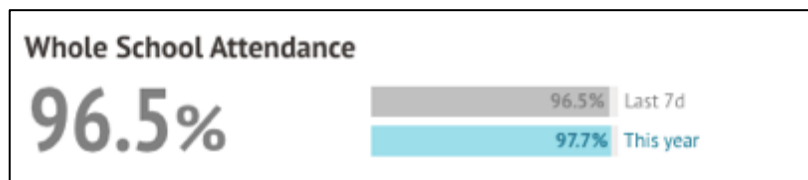




Rushen Primary School Newsletter

February 2021



Our attendance this academic year, so far (97.7%), is a significant improvement on previous years. Our (school and home) focus on good hand and respiratory hygiene in response to the pandemic, may have ensured that sickness levels have been low. We hope this continues. Thank you with your efforts on this, as we work together to ensure pupils have good attendance.

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all well and enjoying the improved weather during the last few days. It has been a different start to this term with only a couple of days in school before 'lockdown 2'. Our distance learning went well and the vast majority of families were able to engage with the distance learning provision. Some parents were working from home and this posed further challenge when engaging in distance learning. Some families had other situations that also impacted on whether they were able to engage, however, every family was in contact with school. Our device loan arrangements were also successful. As soon as the pupils returned to school following the most recent lockdown, the staff of the school set about ensuring that pupils were on track with their learning. We were impressed that our pupils came back to school knowing that they are safe, happy and ready to be in-school learners again. We shared our expectations with them as regards learning and behaviour and they rose to the expectation with ease. The staff have worked incredibly hard and with full commitment to ensure that every pupil in the school would have support and make the maximum progress that they can, moving forward. Children work best in a school learning environment, surrounded by their peers, with clear expectations and with carefully prepared learning opportunities.

We returned to school for two weeks before the half term break and we have had **one week in February**, so far. Due to the lockdown, school and centrally organised events had to be rearranged and postponed, however, we have endeavoured to provide a very busy timetable of events looking forward, which includes sporting, whole school and local events planned. You will also find new dates for class assemblies below and we look forward to you joining us for those.

This time last year I pointed out that several events seem to fall close to each other on the calendar and March is definitely a busy month. Some of the dates for these events are for all schools across the British Isles and some are set locally, but not by the school. If you are able to make a donation for the events, that would be appreciated by the charities involved. Some families have several children and we understand that this could then seem a lot. Please donate whatever you feel is fair. I will talk to the children about this as well. Children who don't wish to dress up can wear uniform as usual and are still able to bring a donation/favourite book/red nose, for example.

We are looking forward to a very successful rest of the academic year. Thank you for your support, help and care.

Ms Owens
Headteacher

6Rs

This half term's 6R focus is 'Resourcefulness':

- ✓ *I know how to get help when I need it.*
- ✓ *I can ask different questions.*
- ✓ *I can choose what I need to complete a task.*
- ✓ *I have lots of my own ideas.*
- ✓ *I try to solve problems independently before asking for help.*
- ✓ *I am willing to learn and try new things.*

Visit from Bill Dale (Beach Buddies) and Carlie Maddrell (Isle Listen and an ex-pupil)

We welcomed Bill and Carlie to our school assembly. They were both amazed at the behaviour of our pupils and said that this was some of the best behaviour that they had seen in schools - we were very proud to have our improvement in behaviour recognised by our visitors.

Carlie introduced the 'Fill-a-fish' competition (which we have sent you details of previously, also to be found on the school [website](#)).

Bill then talked to the children about the environment and how they can help support the Island to be environmentally friendly and to respect our UNESCO Biosphere, Isle of Man.

<https://www.biosphere.im/>



Parents' Meetings

I did say that I would update you regarding our plans for these. The teachers have been discussing and reviewing our arrangements for Parents' Meetings. At the moment we aim to meet each set of parents at least once a term, as a guide. In order to facilitate this, we make two appointments available every Thursday

morning, per class, and parents are able to request an appointment or the teacher may contact you to arrange one. If parents are unable to attend the Thursday morning appointments, then teachers arrange an alternative. This can be in person, after school or on the telephone, for those parents unable to come to school. These appointments can be short, for just a few questions, or longer to explore your child's needs further. If children are on track or exceeding expectations, linked to their attainment and progress, then there may be fewer questions and less need for discussions. Any issues about behaviour and relationships, we contact parents directly and as frequently as required. We believe that the annual previous parents' meeting format, which lasted just a few minutes per person, may not be the most effective way of communicating about your child's attainment, progress and personal development and building a partnership to ensure your child does well. We also have questions about whether spending time looking through your child's books is useful. In school, we use many ways to record learning and some of the most important learning also takes place without being recorded by the child in writing. In our school, based on good practice, teachers focus on moving children's learning forward in a range of ways and the days of sitting in rows, copying out of books for no reason or purpose, are, we are pleased to say, long gone. Sometimes, it may be useful for the teacher to share some of the recorded learning with you to illustrate a point, for example.

As you can see from the school improvement update below, we have been working hard to continually update our approaches in line with the most up to date research and good practice. Our next step is to monitor the situation regarding home-school participation and to see where we are, whether what is currently happening is effective in building partnerships and supporting pupils with their learning. While we continue with our current approach, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher if you have any questions about their learning, in the usual way - see the teacher after school when you pick up (except Wednesdays, as we have a staff meeting), email rushenenquiries@sch.im, leave a voicemail message or speak to Mrs Awkal, our School Administrator, and we will get back to you as soon as we are able.

School Improvement Update

Following on from previous newsletters regarding school improvement, the staff have been continuing to reflect and review routines, practices and policies. School improvement happens in a continuous cycle where we identify areas for improvement, plan actions, implement and review to consider impact. This is a very exciting time at Rushen Primary School where the skilled and committed staff team works together to explore innovative and creative approaches to learning.

Our vision at Rushen Primary School is focused on building positive relationships, having high expectations of behaviour and learning, and of achieving high standards and good progress for every child. We also focus on 'Everyone a Learner' and 'Everyone a Leader' - this applies to all pupils and staff. Our staff are committed to the process and have continued to work hard to achieve improvement. Our vision and values are clearly displayed in the entrance hall and you are invited to have a look at the display when you are in School. The School Council, who designed the display, have included photographs and art work from classes across the school, to show how the children demonstrate the vision and values in their learning and play.



Our teachers continue to build positive relationships with the parents of the children in their class and other classes and use various methods of communication. Please support them in this role by arranging meetings when

you have questions or concerns about your own child, or a quick and less formal 'chat' at the end of the school day. Our Middle Leadership Team and Senior Leaders are always on hand to support our teachers and other staff.

We continue to focus on improving behaviour for learning and the development of personal and social skills. A change in the way we manage behaviour has had a significant impact in our school, supporting the children with their learning and progress. We have continued to focus on building positive relationships and have been using an approach based on restorative practice, where the concept of repairing relationships through 'conferencing' is the main focus. When an issue arises, we talk it through and when children are calm and ready, we undertake conferences. This allows each person to talk about how they felt, how they feel now, the impact of their actions on others and what they will do to make things right. This moves away from the concept of punishment, instead helping children to understand that all behaviours have consequences. We are focusing on learning at all times. When children are focused on their own learning and next steps, this reduces the need for rewards, which are effectively bribes, as a method of ensuring that children meet the expectations, which the vast majority already do without rewards. We do, however, focus on celebrating success in the classroom and in assemblies!

Why not try out the 'restorative practice' approach at home when talking through an issue...share your experiences and let your child's teacher know how it went or come and ask advice.



We continue to move forward with our approach, embedding it, on a daily basis. As we look forward, we are working on a policy to describe our approach and to establish playtime and lunchtime pupil leaders, who will be trained to lead and manage mini conferences and who will encourage positive play amongst the children. Miss Smiley, one of our Middle Leaders, is leading this improvement priority and several other members of staff are working alongside her (Mrs Taggart, Miss Wilson and Miss Irving).

Assessment arrangements are also on a constant and rolling programme of improvement and Mrs Higgins, another of our Middle Leaders and one of our Key Stage Leaders, works closely with Senior Leaders to develop this. At the moment, we are developing our approach to pupil progress, where teachers meet with Leaders to share good practice and discuss how we can support individual pupils with their learning, to ensure they reach their full potential. Individualised plans are created, which utilise resources effectively and result in pupils meeting their age-related expectations.

Mrs McMeiken, our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), has been leading teachers and support staff to plan and review through a process of provision mapping, which supports pupils with special or additional needs, so that they make good progress.

Mrs Shaw, Middle Leader/Key Stage Leader, is currently leading a review of our curriculum, where we are exploring an updated skills-based curriculum which allows pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding through a range of subjects and learning opportunities. Linked to this is our 'everyone a leader' philosophy. Teachers are taking a lead with different subjects and aspects of learning in the school which supports the curriculum review.

Our Special Unit is very much part of our school and Mrs Hermann, another of our Middle Leaders, is developing further, the provision in the unit. Our unit pupils, where appropriate for their needs, join our mainstream events

and classes and spend time learning with their mainstream peers. The unit staff are currently considering the learning environment and opportunities for learning.

Miss Wardman, Deputy Headteacher, is leading our teaching for learning priority as well as taking responsibility for leading school improvement, along with the Headteacher. She ensures that all of the teachers are up to date with the newest and most effective strategies to secure high attainment and good progress and works alongside all staff to explore the best ideas and proven approaches of up to date research. Miss Wardman also supports the work around all of the school improvement priorities.

The Headteacher oversees all school improvement and works to plan the journey moving forward in a strategic way, that ensures our school is effective, facilitates collaboration and secures improvement so that our pupils get the best deal. It is important to know about all of the 'ingredients' of a good school and be able to manage these, utilising all of the resources available and considering the skills, knowledge and understanding of all of the staff. Pupils should feel safe and be happy in school and therefore, fostering positive relationships is key.

Events/Visitors

EYFS

Our Early Years staff have been working with our pre-school feeder schools since the start of this school year, in order to learn about the children who will be attending Rushen Primary School in September 2021. Our Early Years staff have been involved with getting to know the children by visiting them at their pre-school setting. We will be welcoming different groups of pre-school children and staff to stay and play with our Reception pupils. These visits will take place during the summer term, when parents will also be invited. Each year, this has had a positive impact on the transition process and children, parents and staff have found this an invaluable experience.

World Book Day



This year, we will celebrate World Book Day on 4th March. I know that this event has been well supported over the years by parents at Rushen Primary School and we look forward to seeing the children in their costumes. Please choose a character from a children's book to dress up as and bring the book to school (if you can)!

<https://www.worldbookday.com/>

On the day, the classes will take part in a range of activities including a 'Parade of Characters'. Children who do not wish to dress up, should wear their usual school uniform but still bring a book. A book voucher will be given to every pupil and may be spent in our local book shops. **No donation is necessary as we are celebrating reading and books on this day.**

Fairtrade Fortnight 27th February - 5th March This has had to be postponed due to lockdown but we hope to participate later in the year.

The school will be participating in activities related to Fairtrade once again this year.

<https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/get-involved/current-campaigns/Fairtrade-Fortnight>

This year, as part of our 'everyone a leader' approach, we asked for pupils to volunteer to lead our Fairtrade project this year. A keen group of children have come together and are already collaborating and working well as a team.



Comic Relief/Red Nose Day 2021

Comic Relief/Red Nose Day 2021 will be held on Friday 19th March at RPS.

Please buy your nose in plenty of time. They are available from the Comic Relief website:

<https://www.comicrelief.com/rednoseday/>

Pupils are invited to come to school dressed in red clothes. Red noses are encouraged! This year the noses are based on woodland creatures and are 100% Plastic free!

£1+ donation to Comic Relief please...



Manx Youth Games

Please don't forget to sign up for this event and encourage your child to take part. Training sessions are running where children can learn a new sport or play their favourite sport. It will all culminate in a full day of sport in May at the National Sports Centre.

<https://msr.gov.im/sports-development-unit/manx-youth-games/>

Community Links

Southlands

Visits to Southlands will be taking place and we will let you know the dates, when we know.

Beach Buddies

Beach Buddies events are planned during this and next term. We will let you know when these are confirmed.

Dinner Money

The cost of school dinners is £58.75 until the Easter holidays for those who pay half termly or £11.75 per week, less any credits on your account due to absence from school. **Dinner money is payable to the Isle of Man Government and must be paid for in advance.** It is the responsibility of the Isle of Man Government to audit the payments, so that the correct number of meals is provided. The school does not have the authority to provide any meals that are not paid for in advance. Please ensure that your Parent Pay account is in credit - any existing outstanding debts will be passed to the Isle of Man Government for collection. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office for advice.

Term Dates

School closes for the Easter Holiday Friday 26th March 2021 15.30
School opens for the Summer Term Monday 12th April 2021 08.45

Class Assemblies will be held on the following dates at 9am in the Sports Hall. Parents/Carers are very welcome to attend.

Glen Wyllin	18 th March, 2021	Perwick	20 th May, 2021
Fenella	25 th March, 2021	Niarbyl	27 th May, 2021
Cornaa	22 nd April, 2021	Gansey	24 th June, 2021
Scarlett	6 th May, 2021	Garwick	1 st July, 2021
Fleshwick	13 th May, 2021	<i>(Lewaigue have already held their class assembly)</i>	