Headteacher's Blog March 2018

Snow Closures

Thank you all for your patience with the snow closures! We have had a lot of snow where I live, but as I discovered yesterday, there are much bigger drifts nearer school with the wind coming off the coast.

Myself and my Husband ventured out to school yesterday morning, as I had a message from the biomass boiler that the hopper switch had tripped out. At the time, the forecast for Friday was not too bad, so I hoped we could get the heating back on and open the school.



I don't think I have ever seen Alnwick Town so quiet!

First stop was to push a van off the old A1- it had only managed 6ft in! Then we had to negotiate with the Police, who said that as we were in a Defender, we could pass and try the back roads, since the A1 was shut.



Unfortunately, we were quickly thwarted by a BMW 4x4 estate stuck in a drift, in front of the Discovery in the photo. A van got stuck behind us, but people helped dig and push that out- we had to leave the BMW, but a tractor and plough was coming towards it.

We had a clearer run towards Rennington, but lots of reversing if we met up with anything else.



It was clear to see why the trains were having problems.



We very nearly got to school, despite some very large drifts beside Doxford, until we came across a van driver who had managed to get his vehicle off the side of the road near Tynley.



We spent a long time trying to tow him out, luckily further help came in the form of a Landrover 110 and John Young (who was busy rescuing staff who had got stuck overnight at Doxford Hall), so with both vehicles towing in tandem, we got the van pulled free until one of the tow straps snapped.





Just in time, as the driver had been stuck for 2 hours and was suffering asthma issues and refusing to leave his vehicle, tractor rescue arrived!

None of us could go forwards due to an 8ft drift ahead, so thankfully we all got turned around and able to travel on thanks to the local Farmers out ploughing in horrendous conditions. At this point, with no way forward, we decided we better just try to get home, as we were getting messages that our village was cut off.



We didn't meet anything on the A1 south of Alnwick!



Over 7 hours after we set-off, we were only a mile from home when we met a snow plough stuck in a drift at 45 degrees across the road.

We tried another route, but even an awesome Defender can't get through some drifts, so we waited for the arrival of a local farmer and colleague to dig out a mile of road to free the plough. We all got moving, but the plough got stuck again. Luckily the JCB and Manatou could drive from behind us all, through the fields to dig for another hour to free the plough again.

I am pleased to say that, despite our failure yesterday, the heating is back on today- thanks to Mrs Williams. Hooray!

Staffing

Unfortunately, we had to postpone our teaching position interviews this week. We will reschedule as soon as possible and keep you posted on the outcome.

Miss Pringle is hoping to return to us during the summer term- she will confirm later.

Our new Caretaker, Reg Warnes, starts with us mid-March. He will work with Harry for a handover week to enable a smooth transition.

Blogs

I have always loved the Early Years online Learning Journals, so I suggested to KS1 and 2 teachers that this is something we could do throughout school. Therefore, on the website there is now a section called 'Blogs' where there will be regular learning journal type reports from each class base. Once we get back to school, staff will be working on these, so the EYFS learning journals will become 'Blogs' in the Splash section.

I thought that I could also put my HT updates in that section and we will put a link on Facebook so you can easily find them.

Buildings

Ellingham Estate has done a great job of fencing the haul road and Louis Fell has kindly put a walkway around the field for access to the Church and Woodland Workshop, away from the cattle. We may need to add additional wire to persuade the stock to stay on their side!

Events

We will, of course, reschedule all of the cancelled events.

We will be, fingers crossed, having the Mothers' Day event at school on Friday 9th March.

The KS2 pupils are just beginning their Arch Bishop of York's Young Leaders programme. Both classes will work on this during PSHE lessons and we can share with the whole school during Worship sessions. They will have some tasks to work on at home- we will keep you informed.

Diane Lakey