



Newsletter 2 - Friday 18th September, 2026

Dear Cragside families,

It has been wonderful to see how well the children have settled into their new classes and routines. I am incredibly proud of the way they have managed the transition into a new year group, approaching new expectations and learning with such confidence and enthusiasm.

I am especially proud of the children in our Reception and Nursery classes, who have settled remarkably quickly and are already showing such joy and curiosity about their learning. I particularly enjoyed watching the delight this week from a group of Reception children as they played What's the Time, Mr Wolf? It was lovely to see them laughing, playing together and growing in confidence—it was a very special moment and showed what a happy start these children have made to life at Cragside.

International Schools Award

We are delighted to share that Cragside has been reaccredited with the British Council International School Award for 2026–2029. This wonderful achievement reflects the dedication of our children and staff to bringing the wider world into our classrooms through a diverse and imaginative range of international learning experiences. We are incredibly proud to receive this prestigious recognition once again and look forward to continuing to help our children develop their curiosity, understanding and respect for people and cultures across the world. A huge 'Thank You' to Mrs Cowie for leading on this accreditation.

End of year outcomes for the academic year 2025-2026

We are incredibly proud of our children's achievements at the end of the 2025–26 academic year. In Reception, 74.4% of children achieved a Good Level of Development, above the latest national figure of 68.3%, with particularly strong outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Our Year 1 children also achieved excellent results in the Phonics Screening Check, with 94% meeting the expected standard compared with 80% nationally. At the end of Key Stage 2, outcomes were above the latest national figures in every subject at the expected standard: 87% in reading, 82.6% in writing, 78.3% in mathematics, 84.8% in grammar, punctuation and spelling, and 76.1% in reading, writing and mathematics combined. These results reflect the children's hard work and perseverance, alongside the dedication of our staff and the support of families. We are immensely proud of everything our children have achieved.

Peer Mentor Programme – A message from Mrs Urwin-Clark

We are excited to be continuing and expanding our Peer Mentor Programme this year, giving pupils the opportunity to develop valuable skills while supporting other children across the school. Our existing Year 6 Peer Mentors will continue in their important role throughout this year, building on the skills and experience they have already gained. This week, Mrs Urwin-Clark led an assembly with our Year 5 children to explain the role of a Peer Mentor, what the programme involves and the positive difference mentors can make to others. Children who are interested in becoming a Peer Mentor were given an application form, and all completed applications should be returned by next Friday. Following the application process, successful candidates will be selected to take part in six weeks of training, for one hour each week, to prepare them for their new role. Mentees will then be carefully selected from across the school, focusing on children who we feel would benefit from the additional encouragement, friendship and support the programme can provide. We are looking forward to seeing both our new and existing Peer Mentors continue to grow in confidence, responsibility and leadership while making a positive contribution to our school community.





Online Safety

It has come to our attention that some chat groups involving a number of our older children and happening outside of the school day are beginning to cause some upset and worry for children in school.

Why This is a Concern

- **Impact on Wellbeing:** Online conflicts and misunderstandings quickly spill over into the school day, affecting friendships, causing distress and worry, and potentially disrupting learning for the individual children involved.
- **Age Restrictions:** Please remember that the minimum age requirement for WhatsApp, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram is 13 years old.
- **Lack of Supervision:** Unsupervised group chats have the potential to escalate into cyberbullying without parents realizing what is happening.

How You Can Help at Home

We teach digital resilience and online safety in school. At home, please can you

1. **Check Devices:** Regularly monitor your child's phone, tablet, and message history to see what apps they are using.
2. **Reconsider Access:** If your child currently has WhatsApp or other age-restricted apps, we strongly urge you to remove the account and delete the app.
3. **Set Clear Boundaries:** Have open, regular conversations about online kindness, what to do if they receive an upsetting message, and why these age limits exist.
4. **Report Issues:** Encourage your child to tell an adult immediately if they feel uncomfortable or intimidated online rather than retaliating.

Safeguarding our pupils is a shared responsibility, and your support is vital in keeping our children safe both online and offline. If you would like further advice or online safety resources, please contact the school office. Thank you for your cooperation and continued support

Ofsted Framework – A letter from the Diocese

David Akers, Diocesan Director of Education, has written to families of all Church schools across our region to share some information about the national Ofsted framework. I have attached a copy of his letter for your information.

Bicycles and Scooters

For everyone's safety, all bicycles and scooters must be dismounted and pushed while on the school grounds. This is particularly important at the beginning and end of the school day, when the yard is very busy with children and families. Please remind your child or children of this expectation. Electric bicycles and electric scooters are not permitted on the school grounds. I have also attached guidance from Northumbria Police regarding the use of electric scooters for families to read.

Use of Children's Photographs

In response to the rapid advances in artificial intelligence and the changing risks associated with sharing images online, we are taking an increasingly cautious approach to the photographs we publish of our children. As you may have noticed, we have gradually reduced the number and type of photographs included in our newsletters, on our Facebook page and on the school website. We will continue to celebrate and share the children's wonderful experiences and achievements, while always placing their safety, privacy and wellbeing at the heart of our decisions.



Let Your Light Shine

St Matthew's Gospel

European Day of Languages – A message from Mrs Dowson

Next week we will be celebrating European Day of Languages in school. This is a day celebrated throughout Europe to celebrate Europe's diverse linguistic and cultural diversity.

On Friday 25th September pupils in year 3 - 6 will take part in an assembly focused on language learning and cultural diversity and on Monday 28th September there will be various activities throughout the day to celebrate language learning and the chance to win prizes! This will also give us an opportunity to celebrate the range of home languages which are spoken by pupils in our school.

Climate Change Champions – A message from Mrs Beacher

This year, our Climate Change Champions are helping to make a difference in our school and our wider community! Their job is to encourage everyone to think about how we can look after our planet. Throughout the year, we will celebrate special environmental days with fun activities, challenges and discussions.

This week's Climate Challenge is all about saving water. Here are our Champions' top three tips:

- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth.
- Have shorter showers and don't leave the water running unnecessarily.
- Reuse water where you can – for example, collect rainwater to water plants.



140 litres per day ...
80 litres per bath ...
YEP it's true!

Do you need a bath ... hang on ... do you REALLY need a bath? Skip a day, swap for a shower, share your water?

Water + SDGs challenge!

Pumping, treating, delivering, heating, and disposing of WATER - all cause carbon emissions.

Learn about the Global Goals - think about children round the world - and how we can help achieve Goal 13 'climate action' by cutting our water use.

When you've completed this challenge ... Remember to hit the red button!

YOUNG CLIMATE WARRIORS

Let's all work together to save water and look after our wonderful world!

Attendance Matters – A message from Mrs Bilton

I am delighted that we have maintained our strong start with attendance. Good attendance from September builds the foundation for your child's success, confidence, and happiness this school year.

Top Tips for a Great Start Coffee afternoon- Wednesday 30th September 2pm-2.50pm

To help us work together to make this year our best for attendance, I am delighted that we will be hosting a PTFA coffee afternoon on Wednesday the 30th of September at 2pm in our school hall. The PTFA are supporting this as a free event, so there will be no cost to anyone who can join us.

We will also welcome a guest speaker- Michelle Clapperton is an experienced Education Welfare

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St Matthew's Gospel



Officer. I have invited Michelle to share some top tips for busy mornings. We all know the feeling of those busy starts, so Michelle is coming to share some top tips to help make the best possible start to the day! I very much hope this session, with tea and coffee and lots of time for chat, will support all of our efforts to give your child the best start with great attendance. There's no need to sign up for this, please just come along if you're able.

Whole school attendance is 97.21%%.

This is our class breakdown for attendance.

RLC 90%	RNH 95.74%	1LT 90.43%	1KB 98.26%	2RC 100%	2JF 99.17%
3DF 98.18%	3CG 98%	4UC 97.14%	4SG 98.15%	5KR 100%	5JD 97.6%
6ER 95.86%	6JB 96.21%				

Well done to 2RC and 5KR again!

Just to remind you, the Department for Education states-

School attendance is vital because it directly links to academic attainment; near-perfect attendance makes pupils significantly more likely to achieve strong results in core subjects like English and Maths.

Regular attendance is key to developing social skills, building positive relationships, and preparing pupils for adulthood. Thank you for all of your support with attendance. Please don't hesitate to be in touch if you have any questions.

Dates for your Diary

Please take a moment to make a note of the key dates for the term ahead. Additional dates which have been added to the diary are shown in yellow.

Saturday 12 th September	Northumberland County Council Online Admissions portal opens for Year 6 parents/carers to complete Secondary school applications
Wednesday 23 rd September-Friday 25 th September	Year 6 Residential visit to Robinwood
Thursday 24 th September	Vision Screening for Reception children
Monday 28 th September	European Day of Languages
Wednesday 30 th September	2.00-2.50pm Top Tips for a Great Start Coffee Afternoon
Friday 2 nd October	2.00-3.00pm – Reception Meeting with families
Wednesday 7 th October	Nursery Stay and Play sessions – further information to follow
Wednesday 7 th October	3.30-6.00pm Parent consultation meetings in school
Thursday 8 th October	Harvest Festival Church Services at St Nicholas' Church 9.30am Year 5 & Year 6 11am Year 1 & Year 2 2pm Year 3 & Year 4
Wednesday 14 th October	3.30-6.00pm Parent consultation meetings in school
Friday 16 th October	Phototronics in school – individual and sibling school photographs taken. If families have older or younger children who do not attend our school, families are welcome to come into school between 8.00am and 8.30am to have photographs taken
Thursday 22 nd October	Teacher Training Day-school closed to children
Friday 23 rd October	Teacher Training Day-school closed to children and half term begins
Saturday 31 st October	Online Admissions portal for secondary school applications closes



Sunday 1 st November	Northumberland County Council Online Admissions portal opens for September 2027 Reception intake – please note that parents/carers of children in Nursery need to complete this for a place in our Reception class
Monday 2 nd November	Children return to school following Autumn half term
Thursday 3 rd December	Flu Immunisations in school (Rec-Year 6)
Monday 7 th December	9.00 am Nursery Christmas songs and family crafts
Monday 7 th December	2.00pm Year 3 & Year 4 Nativity
Tuesday 8 th December	9.15am Year 3 & Year 4 Nativity
Tuesday 8 th December	2.00pm Year 5 & Year 6 Nativity
Wednesday 9 th December	9.15am Year 5 & Year 6 Nativity
Wednesday 9 th December	2.00pm Reception Nativity
Thursday 10 th December	9.15am Reception Nativity
Thursday 10 th December	2.00pm Year 1 & Year 2 Nativity
Friday 11 th December	9.15am Year 1 & Year 2 Nativity
Monday 14 th December	Am - Nursery and Reception Christmas Party
Wednesday 16 th December	Am - Whole School Pantomime gifted by the PTFA 1.30pm Year 3 & Year 4 Christmas Party
Thursday 17 th December	Christmas Church Services at St Nicholas' Church 9.30am Year 5 & Year 6 11am Year 1 & Year 2 2pm Year 3 & Year 4 1.30pm Year 1 & Year 2 Christmas Party
Friday 18 th December	1.30pm Year 5 & Year 6 Christmas Party End of Autumn term – school closes at 3.15pm
Monday 4 th January 2027	Teacher Training Day – school closed to children
Tuesday 5 th January 2027	Start of Spring term – children return to school

Have a lovely weekend.
Joanne Parker

