

A Happy New Year to all our school community! We look forward to working with you throughout 2026.

**Thank You!**

It was lovely to welcome so many of you into school for our Christmas Celebrations. Thank you to everyone who was able to come and support, the children were fantastic and it was lovely to see them perform and to hear their singing.

**Therapy Dog**

Some of you may remember that we used to be visited by a therapy dog named Bernard who was a lovely, huge, St. Bernard. Unfortunately he had to take early retirement from therapy work due to ill health. We recently found out that, sadly, he has now passed away and we send our condolences to his owner. Those of us who knew him, will cherish the memories we have of his visits.

**Competition Winners!**

These two talented young ladies both won a prize in last term in Dorothy Hyman’s Colouring Competition! Well done girls, we are all so proud of you! A huge well done and shout out to every child that entered too, the competition was stacked full of amazing artists and the judges definitely had a hard job!



**Fantastic Fundraising Efforts!**

WOW! WOW! WOW! As well as being a fun and festive day, our Sponsored Elf Run raised a phenomenal amount of money, over £7,000! We are so very proud of all of our children and the school community. What an incredible achievement! A HUGE thank you to everyone including your wider network of friends and family – your generosity, encouragement and support has truly made a difference. The money raised will be shared between school and Barnsley Hospice, helping to support the fantastic work they do in our community.

Looking ahead, our school council will be gathering ideas and suggestions on how school's share of the money raised can be spent to benefit all of our children. Watch this space. There are photos on Class Dojo of the fun we had and even Remedy, our therapy dog, joined in with the festive spirit.



**Advance Notice of NSPCC Rocks Day**

On Friday 6th February we will once again be joining in with the NSPCC Rocks Day. This will be a non-uniform day when children will be encouraged to dress up as a rockstar and donate 50p to the NSPCC. There will also be times tables competitions to take part in, with children competing both against other pupils at ASPS and across our family of ECM Trust schools!

**Team Trip Winners**

During the Autumn Term the Falcons were the winning team, collecting the most success stones for their behaviour and academic efforts. As the end of last term was so busy with Christmas events, the ‘reward’ for Falcons will instead be enjoyed this month. A huge well done to all the Falcons!

**Who should I speak to?**

We very much hope that all our children are settled in school and you will not have any worries or concerns. However, please can we take this opportunity to remind you that if you have any concerns about your child at all this year you should, in the first instance, contact your child’s class teacher who has the most thorough knowledge of your child. If your concerns remain you should make an appointment to speak with a Leader of Learning (EYFS – Miss Pell, KS1 – Mrs Wheelwright, Y3&4 – Mrs Belfield and Y5&6 – Miss Stanley). If you feel that these members of staff have not been able to assist you sufficiently, you should contact either Mr Wheelwright or Mrs Sanderson via the school office.

**School Details**

Tel. 01226 284223

Address Wakefield Road, Barnsley S71 3TP

Website: [www.athersleysouth-primary.co.uk](http://www.athersleysouth-primary.co.uk)

Contact Us: [athersleysouthadmin@ecmtrust.co.uk](mailto:athersleysouthadmin@ecmtrust.co.uk)

## Raise Your Attendance – Raise Your Chances

We place a high importance on attendance at our Athersley South and feel every effort should be made to attend school regularly and to achieve 100% attendance. The greater your child's attendance at school, the more likely your child is to achieve their targets. The following information gives you some idea of what pupils should be working towards, and what action might be taken if you fall below accepted levels in line with LA guidelines. Government guidance dictates that the threshold for persistent absenteeism is below 90%.

### Attendance %

**100% Excellent** – **this is what pupils should achieve.** It means they can be really successful and make lots of progress.

**95% Satisfactory** – This means a pupil has missed almost 10 school days in a year. **In five years this is almost a full term.**

**Below 95% is considered 'Unsatisfactory'** At this stage a pupil's absence will be closely monitored. Parents may be contacted and may be invited to an internal school attendance panel meeting (ISAP) in school.

**90% attendance** means a pupil has missed almost 20 days in a school year. **In five years this is ½ a school year.** This now puts a pupil in the Government category of '**Persistent Absence**' and the school is expected to put things in place to improve a pupil's attendance. Parents will be contacted and expected to attend a meeting in school with Mrs. Smith our Parent Support Advisor and the Headteacher. At this stage parents can face further action such as a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

**85% Poor** – This means a pupil has missed almost 30 days in a school year. **In five years this is ¾ of a school year.** At this stage parents face the possibility of court action.

**80% Very Poor** – This means a pupil has missed almost 40 days in a school year. **In five years this is a whole school year off school.**

At Athersley South we fully understand that there are exceptional circumstances that can impact on attendance and Mrs. Smith works closely with families to offer the necessary support and advice. Ultimately we want all our children to attend for as many days as is possible to enable them to progress to the best of their ability and we hope to work with you to enable this to happen.