

Stanhope Barrington C of E
Primary School



Head Teacher: Mrs D Cross

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Dear Parent/Carer

12th September 2023

Re: Return of the Hens!

I am delighted to confirm that following their summer holidays, our four little red hens have returned to school.

As you may remember, we had a loan of the hens for the last half term of last year to see how it would work and what impact they would have. The hens settled really well and laid lots of lovely eggs.

Some of our children helped to look after them and enjoyed learning about caring for an animal. They have also had a really big impact on the emotional well-being of some of our children due to their calming effect. They also impact on behaviour as everyone has to be calm and relaxed around the hens so that they aren't scared.

Having the hens also enhances the delivery of our science curriculum with the children in Year 2 learning about the lifecycle of a hen this term. We aim to create an outdoor science display in the hens' courtyard area.

During the 'trial' we had a formal risk assessment in place which was reviewed and checked by Michael Cowan (Parent and member of the NE Poultry Association); we had fortnightly welfare checks by their owner and also a formal animal welfare inspection by Stephen Thew (Animal Health Inspector from Durham County Council). Everyone was delighted with how well the hens were looked after. The Animal Health Inspector was especially impressed that they had their own outdoor swimming pool and dust bath!

As such, we have taken the decision to have hens permanently. The original plan was for us to buy some rescue hens, however, Dr Haynes felt so strongly that the hens were much happier here at school that she has kindly donated them to us. This is brilliant because the hens are already settled and we know that they are very friendly and liked being handled – in fact they love the attention.

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The hens will continue to go back to the allotment on holiday when we are off school for prolonged periods of time.

Now that the hens are definitely part of school life, we will be holding a vote to decide on some names as we cannot continue to call them 'the four little red hens'. The children will choose some names and then everyone can vote for their four favourite names.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Cross

Mrs D Cross
Head Teacher

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