

## Federation football write up 2016/17 season

With high expectations the federation schools have again decided to run a federation football team. All children went through a trials session where they all worked hard to show the two coaches what they could do. Every player who took part showed passion and skills, which made the decision on who would make it into the squad of 40 a real difficult one.

The team's passion continued in the following training session which left them eager to get their season up and running. The children had to wait several weeks before getting to compete against another school team and this came on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October with a tricky away fixture at Rowner Junior School.

The squad arrived to find a smaller than average pitch with smaller than average goals, and during the warm up begin to make sure that all played knew each other's names and understood their roles in the team. The game began with a drop ball and the first 5 minutes were played at a frantic pace with the Federation team playing their game and creating so good opportunities. William Bourne then took possession on the right hand side of midfield and worked his way past several opposing players before hitting his shot past the stationary goalkeeper, 1-0. The team continued to work hard and piled on the pressure. Alfie Ali then whipped in a corner which was met by the head of the oncoming Owen Barrett, the ball flew past the on looking goalkeeper and bulged the back of the net, 2-0.

Just before half time some high pressing of the Rowner lead to a mistake resulting in the defender passing the ball into his own net, 3-0 at half time. The team rested up at the interval and continued to work hard on and off the ball. The Rowner team pulled one goal back early in the second half with a beautiful finish into the top corner of Mason Moss' net, but then it wasn't long before some great work by Daniel Aitken lead to the ball dropping at Xander Sibbick's feet to put the ball into an open net. The team maintained this lead until the final whistle, first game, first win, 4-1

The second game of the season came two days later and the first team fielded an unchanged side apart from the absent Alex Reeves against a very strong Elson Junior team who finished third the previous season. The game started and from the outset the team fell under pressure with Elson's slick passing making the pitch seem double the size for the federation players. Mason Moss pulled off some amazing saves from long range shots before one of the rebounds fell to an Elson player to put into an open net, 0-1. The team fought back and broke quickly nearly catching out Elson's high line up the pitch and some smooth turns from Xander Sibbick always lead to an opportunity to work up the pitch.

The second half picked up from where the first half finished with both teams playing quick football and making use of the space on the pitch. The Federation team pulled together and covered each other really well. Mid way through the second half the Elson team scored a

second goal through a good piece of play finished with an unstoppable shot but the federation always looked a threat and worked super hard throughout.

The second team also played against Elson with all the players making their first appearance of the season with the large majority playing their first games for the school. The team again come up against a tough Elson team and fell behind early with two unstoppable finished against captain Joshua Tume, but fought back with similar breaks through the Elson defence. Blaine Smith whipped in a corner which Jake Gwalchmai turned towards goal but just missed the target. The second half started the same as the first with two early goals being scored by Elson. Aaliyah Thomas lead the line in the second half and some good play with Joshua Jones saw a shot just fly past the post. Although, no player who played that day came close to covering as much ground on the pitch as Reece Nicholls, he was all over the pitch and was supporting anyone who needed it working up and down the pitch and pulling of some incredible tackles. Final score 0-4.