

Old Heath Community Primary School

Newsletter April 2010

Where children learn, achieve and enjoy success

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Headteachers Comments

Finally, the sun is shining and Spring is with us! Children are able to enjoy the various wild life in and around our pond and the plants appearing throughout the school. The world appears a happier place for all of us!

I thought I would take this opportunity to thank and congratulate you as parents and carers for the wonderful support you offer the school and your children on a daily basis. Throughout this term it has been wonderful to see that so many family members have chosen to join us to celebrate and enjoy the great class assemblies. Our new approach to homework has transformed the quality of learning opportunities available and many of the activities seem to have involved the whole family working together. Our Read, Write Inc Workshop was well attended and from the feedback I received it seems to have been really helpful. As a result of this I have arranged for a maths workshop to take place next term which I will explain in more detail later in this newsletter.

I was hugely impressed last Friday, 186 children throughout the school read four times at home over the past week. In addition to this in excess of 90 pupils read at home for over 80 minutes. I would like to say a huge thank you for supporting me with the home reading initiative, it is transforming the children's reading ability and their knowledge of and love for reading. Once again thank you, it is greatly appreciated by all the staff at our school and is really helping to make a difference to your children's learning.

Have a wonderful Easter and let us hope the sun keeps on shining for us all!

Breakfast Club

You should have received a letter recently explaining the wide variety of food and activities on offer at our new and exciting breakfast club. If you have not received one yet please see the school office. Below is a brief summary of some of the details:

Start date: Tuesday 20th April

Timing: 8am-start of the school day, gates will only be open between 8am and 8:10am for the entrance to the breakfast club.

Food on offer: wide variety of hot and cold food

Arrangements: No need to book, just turn up with your money on the day.

Cost: £1.50 per day

Location: Meet in the Pre-School and depending on the activity the location around the school will vary

REMEMBER: USE IT OR LOSE IT!

Parent Consultations

98% of parents attended two recent consultation meetings. This is again hugely impressive and reflects the enthusiasm and interest you have in your child's education. Thank you.

Parent Forum

REMEMBER THE NEXT PARENT FORUM MEETING IS THURSDAY 10TH JUNE AT 11AM.

The Agenda will follow in next month's newsletter. If any parent/carer would like an item on the agenda please see me and I will endeavour to include it for discussion.

Parent Governor Elections

A letter went out on 15th March informing parents/carers there was a vacancy for a Parent Governor and to invite nominations to fill the vacancy. We had 3 nominations returned so thank you to parents who volunteered their services. Governor Elections will be held after the Easter holiday, dates are to be confirmed.

Attendance Incentive

Our recent attendance reward fortnight was a huge success. Our attendance figures improved significantly and 152 pupils received a gift at the end of the fortnight. Our last attendance fortnight will be between 17th May and the 28th May with loads more great prizes available to be won!

Maths Parent Workshop

At a recent governor visit to the school several parents suggested that they would appreciate the opportunity to have a maths workshop. They requested a few ideas of how they can help their children at home and more information about how their children multiply and divide on paper (as it is very different to how we did it when we were younger, myself included). I have therefore arranged for Ian Roper (an experienced and entertaining maths expert) to lead the session. It will take place on Monday 21st June from 9am-12pm. A crèche will be provided (please inform the school prior to the event if you need the crèche facility).

I would like to encourage all parent/carers to attend. It will be very informal and good fun. I have been involved with Ian before and irrelevant of your own maths experience and memories of school he will enthuse and inspire you, I promise!!!

Princess Diana Anti-Bullying Ambassador

After Christmas we were invited by the Princess Diana Trust to apply for one pupil in our school to become the school's Anti-Bullying Ambassador. We applied for Thomas in Year 5 to fulfil the role as all staff felt he would do an outstanding job. Earlier this month we were informed that our application was successful and Thomas has been formally recognised as an Anti-Bullying Ambassador.

Within his role:

- He can make recommendations to the Government's Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF).
 - He will sit on all school council meetings at which anti-bullying will automatically be an item on the agenda.
 - He will form a working party of children to promote anti-bullying across the school.
- Congratulations Thomas and good luck with this hugely important role.

Clubs

Whilst I am aware that the changes from the old set of clubs to the new set may have had the odd technical hitch, all seems to be up and running smoothly now and pupils are really enjoying the opportunities available to them.

I feel it is important to inform you that staff volunteer their own time to run clubs which unfortunately in most schools is highly uncommon and therefore if you child is unable to attend a club for any reason it is very important they let the teacher concerned know.

Please remember clubs restart after Easter from Monday 26th April 2010 and finish on Friday 9th July 2010

A Big Thank you

On behalf of the school I would like to thank Mr Duffett and Mr Rowe who have very kindly donated to the school a wide variety of new books which will greatly enhance our current library. The children are really enjoying the new titles!

Collecting Children from School

Last year the school's governing body adopted a Collection of Children Policy because it was becoming increasingly difficult to identify who should/should not collect children or whether they should walk home alone. To ensure the safety of all children this policy includes a form that identifies who is allowed to collect specific children or whether they are allowed to walk home alone. The policy and form can be collected from the school office.

THE GOVERNING BODY INSIST THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE IF ANYONE OTHER THAN THE PARENTS/CARERS ARE COLLECTING A CHILD FROM SCHOOL OR IF THE CHILD IS WALKING HOME ALONE.

Please help us to keep your children safe. Thank you.

Community Cohesion Club

We are the only school in Essex to have a club of this sort. Every other week the club members visit places to either help members of our community or to look at future career opportunities. In the weeks in between the visits they carefully prepare or make things to give to the community.

Last week our club visited Cleveland Lodge Resident Home, taking with them gifts of plant pots, plants and biscuits that they had made for the residents. This was a fantastic experience and one that both the children and residents thoroughly enjoyed. Well done to our fantastic club for giving something back to our community!

Congratulations to our Pre-School

Following the high standard of care in place and all the hard work put in by the staff our pre-school have successfully achieved the Pre-School Learning Alliance Re-Accreditation. This is a fantastic achievement and further proof of the high standard of care, guidance and support provided at our pre-school setting. Well done to all involved.

Gifted & Talented Events at Old Heath

During March our school hosted 2 different gifted and talented events for ourselves and our consortium of 15 other schools to enjoy:

Saturday 13th March

In excess of 65 children attended our school to learn about metamorphosis, the Greek experience of Olympus and the science of navigation at sea. Charlie and Kieran, in Year 5 took part in the science of navigation at sea activity. In the morning children created charts to identify land at high and low tide. They then had to identify the longitude and latitude of certain islands on the chart. In the afternoon the boys studied the English Channel, looking at the 'motorway' the container ships take and what different buoys mean and other significant features/key. Kieran and Charlie mentioned that they really enjoyed it because 'some bits were quite hard and other bits were quite easy. We learnt in a fun and different way.'

Tuesday 23rd March

20 children from all over Colchester joined Alice and Tyler (Year 5) to try their hand at fencing. Most of the pupils had never taken part in the sport before and all really enjoyed the opportunity. As a result of the event several of the children seemed keen to join the club which runs one evening a week at a local secondary school. Alice and Tyler mentioned that they really enjoyed it because 'we got to meet different people, make new friends and it was fun.'

Recent Sport Matches

After all of the hard work over the last term it is really pleasing to see our sporting teams competing so well in recent tournaments.

The boys' football team played in the Colchester Community Tournament finishing second in their league thanks to good teamwork and skilful play. Even more pleasing was the way they handled themselves which the officials were keen to mention.

The girls' netball team has also been showing good progress throughout the term which culminated into qualification to the Colchester and Blackwater Schools Netball finals. All of the girls played brilliantly and won their first game as well as drawing two others.

The girls' football team have equally been as impressive by qualifying for the Girls County Football Finals in Harlow this was held on Monday 29th March. In preparation for this they played a hard game against Millfields and showed good determination whilst improving their defending. Well done to all the girls for a fantastic show of skill and sportsmanship at Harlow and despite many injuries prior to the tournament

O.H.S.A. Request

The OHSA are requesting parent/carers who have any spare time to help with the planning of the summer Fete to be held on Saturday 19th June. They are also asking for donations for raffle prizes, offers of food or drink for the barbeque, coconuts for the shy and sponsor for the grand draw. If anyone knows of a group who can put on an arena display please let us know by contacting the school office or at oldheathschoolassociation@googlemail.com.

At the end of April the OHSA will be holding a competition for pupils to design a game for the fete, details are to follow.

The next OHSA meeting will be held on Wednesday 5th May at 9am in the Learning Lounge.

Saturday 19th June

SUMMER FETE: new and exciting football tournament, quad bikes, bouncy castle & slide, fairground rides, various performances, stalls, competitions and much more!!!!!!

From Father Richard

Firstly I want to congratulate the Staff and Pupils on a marvellous 'Religions Theme Week'. Our pupils learnt a lot about the religions of the world and the questions they asked of those of us who told them about our religions showed real interest and insight. If you visit the school I encourage you to look at the wall displays. Well done everyone.

Secondly, I should like to let you know that the Old Heath Fun Day will be earlier this year. We are holding it on 24th July on the School Field (and not Barn Hall Green) so if any of you would like a stall to raise money for your charities, please get in touch with me.

Finally, I wish you all a very Happy Easter (if it is your custom to celebrate Easter) holiday and hope you will all be refreshed and ready for the next term.

Fr. Richard

Lunch Boxes

Please can we remind all parents/carers that lunch boxes are to be emptied at home and not in the school bins. This is causing a problem with litter when the contents of the lunch boxes are not disposed of in the bins carefully.

Head Lice

There have recently been a few concerns raised from parents/carers regarding head lice. We would like to take this opportunity to please remind you to check your child/children's hair on a weekly basis and if head lice or eggs are found to treat immediately. If you require more information on this subject then please contact the school office who can put you in touch with the school nurse.

School Nurse

We are pleased to inform you that we have a new School Nurse, her name is Vicky Lott and she is based at the Monkwick Clinic. Vicky has agreed to restart the drop in clinic from Tuesday 20th April at 3pm in the Learning Lounge; this will be held every other week so look out for the dates on the parent board. If you would like to meet with Vicky please contact the school office or just pop along on the Tuesday.

Uniform Shop

Unfortunately Ms Hedge will not be running the uniform shop after the Easter Holiday all at Old Heath School would like to thank her for all her hard work and organisational skills since taking on this job.

Fond Farewell

It is with great sadness that we have to say goodbye to one of our mid-day assistants Toni Hopkins who is moving on to pastures new. Good luck with your new job and many thanks for all your time and effort over the years.

Fund Raising

Mrs Ramsay would like to thank all parents/carers; children and members of staff who have helped with fundraising and organising events for her London Marathon on 25th April 2010 in aid of St Helena Hospice. The bad taste non-uniform day raised £96.83.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Easter Holiday: 2 – 16th April

Back to school: Monday 19th April

19th April @ 3pm School Nurse Drop in Clinic in the Learning Lounge

Clubs Start: Week Beginning 26th April

Bank Holiday: 3rd May

4th May @ 3pm School Nurse Drop in Clinic in the Learning Lounge

Year 6 SATS WEEK 2010: 10/5/10-14/5/10 (No holidays will be authorised during May)

Theme Week (pupils choose topic): 17th – 21st May

Theme Week Assembly: 17th – 21st May

18th May @ 3pm School Nurse Drop in Clinic in the Learning Lounge

Theme Week Assembly: 21st May @ 2.30pm (ALL FAMILY WELCOME)

Half term holiday: 1st – 4th June

Parent Forum: Thursday 10th June @ 11am

St Barnabas Day Service @ St Barnabas Church: 11th June @ 9am (ALL FAMILY WELCOME)

SUMMER FETE: Saturday 19th June

Parents Maths Workshop: Monday 21st June 9am – 12pm (crèche available on request)

Sports Day: 6th July 10.30-12.00pm: Key Stage 1, Early Years & Pre-School. 1.30-3.00pm: Key Stage 2

Reserve Sports Day (in case of bad weather): 8th July

Reports sent home: 9th July

Clubs Finish for the term: 9th July

Early Years & Pre-school Teddy Bear Picnic: 13th July @ 11am

Year 6 Leavers Assembly: 21st July @ 2pm (ALL YEAR 6 FAMILIES WELCOME)

Year 6 Leavers Party: 21st July after school

St Barnabas Church Leavers Assembly: 22nd July @ 9am (ALL FAMILY WELCOME)

Last Day of Term: 22nd July