

Old Heath Community Primary School

Newsletter March 2010

Where children learn, achieve and enjoy success

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Headteachers Comments

All too often in the local and national media we hear of the negative aspects of society and how things are worse now than in the good old days! With this negativity around us all the time I thought I would take an opportunity to share a positive story with you. Following my appeal for information as to the person/people who broke into our playground and damaged our equipment I have been inundated with information, all of which referring to the same group of children/youths. This information has been passed onto the police and I know they have paid the individuals involved a visit. I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has taken the time to speak to me about the incident. Yet again, it reinforces my belief about what a fantastic place Old Heath is and a community that care so much for it.

In school we have just completed our fantastic theme week entitled 'A Celebration of Faiths'. It was a huge success and I will talk more about this later in the newsletter. However, my personal highlight was Mrs Howes having an opportunity to visit our partner school in India (Trivandrum). Mrs Howes was greeted with a traditional Keralan welcome and made to feel very much at home. Several of the pupils from this school are now in contact with our own pupils exchanging emails regularly. Year 5 will also be developing whole class projects with the equivalent class in India.

March promises to offer a lot of new and exciting opportunities for all; new clubs are under way, parent consultations (PLEASE DO NOT MISS), Read, Write, Inc Parents Workshop, many sporting events and another attendance reward fortnight.

DON'T MISS THE READ, WRITE, INC. PARENT WORKSHOP ON WEDNESDAY 3RD MARCH AT 9AM IN THE SCHOOL HALL

PARENT CONSULTATIONS: (DO NOT MISS-VERY IMPORTANT)

10th March & Thursday 11th March

It is expected that all parent/carers make an appointment for one of the days.

How it will work:

-On **Wednesday 3rd March** after school every teacher will put a list of times available for consultations on the external door nearest to their classroom. People will then have a chance to sign up for a specific day and time.

-Any parent/carer of a child who has not signed up for a time will then be given one of the left over times (note sent home with child regarding time and day) and **be expected to attend**.

-On the evenings of consultations you will wait outside the internal door to the classroom for the teacher to invite you in at your specific time. There will be your sons/daughters work available for you to view prior to the consultation.

-Each family will receive a mini-report for their child, which will be a factual record of the meeting and will also include what you can do at home to further support you child's progress.

During the week of consultations there will be no clubs running.

Breakfast Club

As I promised in the last newsletter I can confirm the following information for the trial breakfast club running 1st ½ term of the Summer Term (continuing if successful):

Start date: Tuesday 20th April

Timing: 8am-8.45am

Food on offer: Toast with a variety of accompaniments, cereal, yoghurt, fruit, fruit juice and milk.

Arrangements: No need to book, just turn up with your money on the day.
Cost: £1.50 per day (this cost has been reached after advice from many other breakfast clubs)
Location: Still to be arranged, but on the school site somewhere.
A SEPARATE LETTER WILL BE SENT OUT NEARER THE TIME WITH MORE INFORMATION.

A Fond Farewell to Mrs Dubber

It is with sadness that I have to inform you that after Easter Mrs Dubber will be leaving us to work in a school in Chelmsford. This will enable Mrs Dubber to be a lot nearer to her home and young family. Mrs Dubber has worked at Old Heath for 12 years and has seen many interesting and exciting periods during this period and has taught a wide range of different age groups too. On behalf of the current and former community of Old Heath I would like to thank her for her hard work, dedication and enthusiasm over the many years. I would also like to wish her good luck with the new and exciting challenges that lay ahead.

Miss Farrow will replace Miss Dubber in Early Years, working alongside Mrs Newell. Miss Farrow is a very experienced teacher who has worked at Old Heath for the past year in a variety of roles. The current pupils in Early Years are familiar with Miss Farrow and a detailed handover programme will ensure a smooth transition for all.

Minutes of the recent Parent Forum

On Thursday 25th February 10 parents attended this terms parent forum. The main focus of the meeting was based around our new literacy programme called Read, Write, Inc. The following took place:

- Mr Hallum explained to the parents about how he found out about the programme and the different schools the staff visited before committing to investing in the programme.
- Parents visited Early Years, Year 1 and Year 2 to see Read Write Inc. session happening. These classes were chosen because they showcased the different elements of the programme (speed sounds, ditty books and story books).
- Following parents joining in the lessons discussion took place as to what was seen. The main outcomes from the discussion were positive comments around the changes to pupils' perceptions about reading and how the mixed age groups worked effectively.
- It was requested and agreed for the next Parent Forum to have an opportunity to look at pupils' in the more advanced Read, Write, Inc groups.
- The parents discussed **communication** and it was agreed that any attachment to parent mail would also be included on the parent mail message as well (similar to newsletter) attached.
- We discussed the new **homework** arrangements and many positive comments were mentioned about the new structure. It was also mentioned that some pupils find the amount of home work set a lot whilst others thrive on it and want more. The topic of the homework set was also mentioned as the subjects would either inspire lots of work or not. Mr Hallum reminded the parents that whilst reading 4 times a week, learning tables and spellings (not for pupils doing Read, Write. Inc.) was compulsory. The Learning Journey books have the flexibility to do as much or as little as you wish to do. Some weeks the homework may inspire you to spend a lot of time on it; on occasion maybe only a little time may be spent. The choice is up to you and your children.
- Under other business we also discussed:
 1. The possibility of including the General Elections as a focus for next term's theme week. This will be discussed with the school council.
 2. Parents were asked if a morning or afternoon workshop would be best for the Read, Write, Inc. event on Wednesday. It was agreed the morning would be better.
 3. We discussed the signing up arrangements for the parent consultations. After discussing alternative options it was agreed to leave it as it is.

4. We discussed the challenges for parents who work a considerable distance away to attend parents meetings. It was agreed that parent consultation appointments were available until 7.30pm

NEXT PARENT FORUM THURSDAY 10TH JUNE AT 11AM

Thank you to the 13th Air Assault Regiment

Over the recent half term, 35 soldiers under the leadership of Lieutenant Trainer were busy helping us to complete a variety of jobs. In spite of the terrible weather conditions they moved planters and soil, painted the exterior of the pre-school, created large wooden name plaques and lots more. On behalf of the school community I would like to say a huge thank you to the soldiers for their help and hard work.

Parent Governor Elections

Paperwork will be sent out to all parents/carers in the coming week for nominations for the parent governor vacancy. If you would like more information about the post please either see the current parent governors (Mr Mabbott, Mr Saunders and Mrs Lee) or see Mr Hallum. This is a super opportunity to have a real involvement in the success of our school.

Attendance Incentive

Our attendance reward fortnight was a huge success. Our attendance figures improved significantly and 152 pupils received a gift at the end of the fortnight. Well done to the school council for organising the event and working with our Local Delivery Group and the Borough Council to arrange the gifts.

Our next attendance fortnight will be between 15th March and the 26th March with loads more great prizes available to be won!

Read, Write, Inc. English

Don't forget that on **Wednesday 3rd March at 9am in the school hall** we will be running a workshop for parents/carers to enable you to gain a greater understanding of the programme your child is learning. If your child is involved in 'Read, Write, Inc.' it is **very important** that you attend this workshop to enable you to help your child at home.

Celebration of Faith Theme Week

The week was a huge success. Every class gained a greater understanding of cultures and religions from all around the world, culminating in a wonderful celebration assembly. Many different events occurred during the week, some examples of these are:

- Every day pupils had an opportunity to enjoy a lunchtime meal from a different continent. These were all freshly cooked in our own kitchen. Well done Paula and Dawn!
- Mrs Ali visited Year 6 to share her knowledge of the Muslim culture. This included completing intricate henna patterns on the pupil's hands and tasting a variety of dishes.
- Mr Denna visited Year 2 and shared his knowledge of the Muslim culture and variety of Islamic festivals. Following the presentation Mr Denna very kindly donated a number of Islamic literatures to the school.
- Mrs Miller visited us and taught our Year 1 pupils a variety of Indian dances, which they thoroughly enjoyed.
- Many classes throughout the course of the week have visited St Barnabas Church and had tours with Father Richard. I know the children really enjoyed ringing the bell and learning more about the special objects within the church.
- Our Year 5 & 6 pupils had members of the University of Essex's Islamic Society visit. Their informative presentation covered a wide range of events linked to the Muslim calendar.
- Year 3 & 4 were visited by the Youth Minister from Frinton Free Church to share a variety of information about Christianity.

- All the classes cooked a wide variety of foods from around the world and classrooms were organised into a restaurant format for children to enjoy the food and the cultural experience too.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the adults who gave up their time to help us educate our pupils and also assisted us to make the week a huge success.

Clubs

Our new clubs have proven to be very popular with the pupils across the school. Having the School Council research the clubs that children wanted has been a real success. Our new clubs for this half term are: Community Cohesion Club, Photography Club, Lego Club, Rugby Club, Singing Club and Table Tennis Club. I am sure you would agree these changes offer something for everyone to enjoy!

Were you a pupil at Old Heath Primary School between 1980-1989?

We have no stories from any former pupils from this decade to display in our school hall. I am certain that someone who is reading this newsletter and was attending Old Heath during this decade has an interesting life story to tell that could inspire the current generation of pupils!

Please don't be shy, let us know.

Parent Mail

There are still a few families that have not yet registered to receive parent mail information from the school. As you know communication between home and school is very important and we send out daily information by email to families. If you do not register you will miss out on so many things. Every family not already registered will receive a form soon; this simple form will then allow you to receive emails too.

If anyone has changed their email addresses recently please see Mrs White in the school office to update our records.

O.H.S.A. Upcoming Events

Soon

Jewellery recycling envelopes will be sent home to all children for any old and unwanted jewellery to be put in. One envelope returned will be randomly drawn and the winner will receive an art set. All jewellery recycled will result in OHSA receiving money to be spent on your children.

Tuesday 16th March

The next meeting of the OHSA will take place on Tuesday 16th March at 9am in the learning lounge. Everyone is welcome to attend, especially parents/carers who have not been involved previously.

Tuesday 30th March

Easter Bonnet Competition: Pupils will make bonnets as part of their homework for the week/fortnight and there will be prizes for the best ones.

Easter Egg Hunt: After school children can enter the hunt for £1.50 and small coloured pieces of wood will be hidden all around the school site. These can then be exchanged for an egg.

Saturday 19th June

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

Recently the OHSA have very kindly funded the majority of the playground markings and purchased a variety of Read, Write, Inc Resources across the school. Thank you very much on behalf of the pupils of Old Heath for the ongoing hard work of the OHSA.

From Father Richard

MOTHERING SUNDAY

Sunday March 14th is Mothering Sunday. Our service is at 10am and all are welcome

especially if you have had your children Christened at St.Barnabas. Bring the family. Posies are given out to 'mums old and young' on the day.

Recent Sport Matches

Both our boys and girls football teams have been really busy recently. Our boys team played extremely well and managed a 1-1 draw with North Primary. Well done to all the team and in particular Charlie for scoring the goal.

Our girls team were lucky enough to have Ashley Vincent (Colchester United player) train them recently. This was very useful as they travelled to Arlesford to play their first competitive match of the year. The game was thrilling and resulted in a 2-2 draw. The girls played wonderfully well and were unlucky not to have won.

Walking Bus

We are very keen to start the walking bus again, if you are interested in becoming a volunteer helping to escort children walking to school then please contact the school office for more information.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Year 5 Class Assembly: 4th February @ 2.30pm

Read, Write, Inc. English Workshop: Wednesday 3rd March (exact time still to be confirmed)

Year 4 Class Assembly: 5th March @ 2.30pm

Parent Consultations: 10th & 11th March 3.30pm-7.30pm **IMPORTANT, DO NOT MISS**

No Clubs during Parent Consultation Week: 10th & 11th March

OHSA Meeting @ 9am in the Learning Lounge (all welcome): Tuesday 16th March

Attendance Prizes Fortnight: 15th March – 26th March

Early Years Class Assembly: 19th March @ 2.30pm

Year 3 Class Assembly: 26th March @ 2.30pm

Clubs Finish for the term: 26th March

Easter Egg Hunt and Bonnet Competition: Tuesday 30th March

St Barnabas Easter Service: 1st April @ 9am (ALL FAMILY WELCOME)

Easter Holiday: 2 – 16th April

Back to school: Monday 19th April

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

Parent Forum: Thursday 10th June @ 11am

SUMMER FETE: Saturday 19th June