



## HARTLEY PRIMARY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER 2

Academic Year – **2013-2014**



Dear Parents and Carers

I cannot believe we are almost at the end of Term 1 – the weeks have flown!

They have been busy weeks, with some school trips having already taken place for Year 2 (Tyland Barn) and Year 3 (Lullingstone Roman Villa and Country Park). Year 5 children undertook a Geography field survey in New Ash Green. Some of our Year 6 have taken selection tests and have been popping in and out of school for secondary school visits. Year 6 pupils have also participated in 'Kent Bikeability' – a scheme training our older children to be safer cyclists.

Year 3 children will begin swimming after half-term (our first session is on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November and the last session is Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November). We are trying something different, not only are we returning to 'Cygnets' in Northfleet, but we are going to swim twice a week for 3 weeks, rather than once a week for 6 weeks! We hope the children will be able to build more confidence in the water this way and rapidly progress their swimming skills.

Our Reception children are now enjoying the Forest Schools initiative (come rain or shine) and our Harvest Festival for Years 1 & 2 held earlier this month was a complete success! Our individual pupil photographs took place earlier in the month – if you miss the deadline for returning orders (the deadline was Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October) the School Office will be able to direct you to Braiswick Photographic Ltd.

### **Future Events**

Please be aware of the following dates when we come back after the break:

Year 5's – Build a Lego House Challenge, Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Year 4's – visiting Hall Place, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2013 (£12.00 per child)

Year 4's – K'nex Autumn Challenge, Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013

### **Children's Academic Progress**

Between now and the end of this term teachers will be setting and marking the first of our tri-annual assessments. We will be able to give you up to date information about your children's progress when you come to Parent's Consultation Evenings in November. We also ask parents to complete a questionnaire at this time of the year. Your views are important and we need to know how you feel at a point in the school year when we can address any concerns you might have – rather than leave consultation to the end of the year when it is too late to implement changes!

In addition, your child's data collection sheet will be given to you at your consultation. Please complete and hand back before you leave. It is most important for the school to have accurate details on file in case of emergencies.

## **School Website**

Our school website will soon be displaying its latest 'makeover' as we become more embedded as part of the Leigh Academy Trust. In the meantime the existing website is still up and running and you can check our 2013 end of Key Stage (Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6) results.

Whilst these results are important because this is the data we have to submit to the Department of Education, we still focus very closely on 'In-Year' progress for the other year groups. Children whose progress is causing concern are 'flagged up' after every assessment period and we decide what is needed to accelerate progress. Children's progress is an inexact science and many things can impact on learning. Some of which are things we cannot influence at school and sometimes children just need a little bit longer to gain confidence and embed their learning.

## **Parent's Consultation Evenings**

This year, to avoid clashing with bonfire and firework celebrations on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>, our Parent's Consultation Evenings will be on **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup>** and **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November**. You should have already received a letter regarding this.

Dates for information evenings such as the recent 'Meet the Teacher' and Parent Consultations are published as far in advance of the event as possible. If parents are unable to attend such events it is unfair to expect teachers to give up more of their time to repeat information. Teachers' contracts require them to work for specific hours within school; this does not include time for marking and preparation which is done at home in the evenings and at weekends. As you know, teachers will always make time to see parents about issues and concerns regarding children but if parents cannot attend a published meeting it is unreasonable to ask class teachers to give up more of their time.

## **Clubs**

After school clubs have now been running for some time. We are sorry if we cannot accommodate your child's first choice of club. There are a maximum of between 10 and 12 children for most of our clubs - unfortunately we cannot avoid some disappointments. Please note that due to the Parent Consultation Evenings, clubs will not be running the first week back after the break.

## **PTA**

Our PTA has been working hard this term – holding a Quiz Night and the AGM back in September, the Movie Night this week and coordinating the Christmas Fayre (Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November). Your children have also been asked to draw self-portraits for tea-towels and aprons which will make ideal Christmas gifts for the family - watch this space!

## **Academy Links**

Year 6's have started a programme of Science links which will continue throughout the school year. Year 3 have started a Food Technology project, joining children at Milestone school where there is specialist equipment. Year 2 children will be linking with Milestone through a Dance project. Maths links are already established at Longfield Academy and opportunities will develop as the year progresses. In addition, we invited Principals from local Academies to come and observe teaching in our Primary school. A greater understanding of how each phase works is definitely an advantage for our children.

## **Academy Governance**

Mr Clewes – our Chair of Governors before conversion is now Vice Chair of the Longfield Board (which oversees our school and the Longfield Academy). Members of that board include Mrs Gall and Mr Brindle who both have a great deal of experience and knowledge of our school.

For your information, their titles/responsibilities are:

Mr Clewes

Board Member Leigh Academies Trust, Vice Chair Longfield Academies Board, Resources Committee, Link Governor Matisse College (Longfield Academy).

Mrs Gall

Longfield Academies Board, Link Governor for Hartley and Academic Standards Board, York Road Interim Board.

Mr Brindle

Longfield Academies Board, Link Governor for Hartley, York Road Interim Board

## **Pets As Learning Support (or P.A.L.S)**

Mrs Adams is undertaking an educational research project linked to reading. During this term on a twice-weekly basis, a group of children have been reading with animals. We are lucky to have our own private zoo to be able to call on and some children read to dogs, some to Bearded Dragons and some to Colin the Corn Snake! The children are really enjoying it!

## **Thinking School**

Parents who came to 'Meet the Teacher' in September and arrived at the earlier part of the evening would have heard me talk about our aim to become an accredited 'Thinking School'. This is a long-term project which over time introduces children to:

- Visual and mental 'tools' to help them link ideas;
- Revise their learning, structure questioning and look at issues from different points of view;
- Support children in their organisation of thoughts for writing;
- Involves an element of Philosophy for Children – developing structured speaking, listening and questioning.

Ofsted had commented on the excellent behaviour of our children but they suggested our children need to be more independent in their work. After discussing this element with the Governors, Mr Clewes suggested we visit Rochester Girls Grammar School where Thinking Skills have been embedded for some time. Mrs Meehan and I visited last academic year and we were very impressed with what we saw.

Since our visit we have become involved with 'Thinking Schools International' who have led training in school. Accreditation is through Exeter University – but we are some distance from this yet. So far we have begun with 3 elements: the 'Thinking Maps', 'Habits of Mind' (our 'Stairs to Success' are a prelude to children understanding this element) and our 'Thinking Family' time on Friday is linked to the Philosophy for Children. One parent asked what had been lost from the curriculum in order to incorporate this – and the answer is nothing! Thinking Maps and Habits of Mind are part of our daily learning and Thinking Family time is very effective in developing speaking and listening skills – something that is fundamental to developing literacy.

## **Absence and Holidays in School Time**

Thank you for keeping us informed if your child is unwell and for helping your child maintain a minimum of 95% attendance, which is the Department for Education minimum requirement. This year, we would like to achieve 96% attendance – let's hope we have a year without too many tummy upsets and cold viruses which really hit us this time last year. The school has made provision for potential outbreaks and has already arranged for staff to be immunised against the flu virus!

Having informed parents for many years now about the intention to apply for fines for those parents who take children out of school for holidays in school time, now we are fully part of the Leigh Academy Trust these fines are being applied in accordance with their policy.

## **Head Lice**

Please inform the School Office if your child has an infection so we can inform other parents of children in the same year group. We have lice combs in stock in school and can advise on the best course of action should you need further information.

## **Medical Issues**

If your child is on a course of medication you must make arrangements to have an adult come into school to administer the medicine. We are not allowed to administer medicine unless there is an agreed Health Plan which has been drawn up in conjunction with the School Nurse. Health Plans are usually for children with ongoing medical conditions such as asthma.

Can we also clarify for parents that if your child has been unwell, they must be clear of symptoms for at least 24 hours. A child who has been vomiting in the morning must not come into school that day. Thank you.

## **Parking and Road Safety**

You may have seen some posters recently around the school which relate to a KCC project on Safe Parking around schools. There have been fewer incidents of parents parking on the zig-zag lines at the Fairby Gate – thank you – but there are occasions when parents drive along pavements to navigate their way around parked cars – another very scary scenario!

However, the School Office has recently been dealing with a large number of complaints from residents and parents alike due the standard of driving and parking around the school. We do have an unofficial one-way system and please ask parents to be courteous to each other and keep the safety of our children paramount in their minds.

## **Scooters**

Can we remind parents that it is your responsibility at the beginning and end of the day to ensure your child dismounts from their scooter and walks with it across the playgrounds. One child was knocked over due to a collision with a scooter and there have been several 'near misses'!



## **Breakfast Club**

In response to several enquiries from parents, unfortunately the club cannot accept payment in the form of childcare vouchers at the present time. Can we also remind parents that the facility does not open until **7.30am** and children **must** be escorted to the door by parents. This is a safety concern for us as more and more children are running across the car park. The same rules for bringing children in late to school apply to Breakfast Club – children must be dropped off by an adult – thank you.

### **Play 4 Ages**

If children who regularly go to Play4Ages are not going on a particular day, they must inform Play4Ages so they are removed from the list for that day – this avoids the scenario whereby school staff go on the hunt for children who have been picked up in the playground.

### **Sponsored Sports Kit**

We have received expressions of interest from our entrepreneurial parents regarding sponsoring of our sports kits. Just to remind you, we have Netball, Tag Rugby, Girls' Football and Boys' Football kits which would benefit hugely from a revamp and some promotion! If you are interested, please contact the School Office or email [office@hartley.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@hartley.kent.sch.uk).

### **Junior Fruit Snack**

Unfortunately the Junior children do not benefit from the 'Free Fruit for Infants' scheme and therefore if your child would like to continue having a fruit snack at playtime parents need to provide this for them. According to our Healthy Schools policy only a piece of fruit is allowed (this includes sliced/prepared fruit, grapes, raisins etc), biscuits and similar snacks are not permitted.

### **Free School Meals**

If your circumstances have changed and you are in receipt of benefits such as Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit or similar, you may be entitled to Free School Meals. It's one less thing to worry about and there is no stigma attached; children are not identified at any point and applications are treated confidentially. Please collect a form from the School Office.

The daily cost of a school dinner is £2.20.

### **School Library**

Whilst the internet is an ever-important source of up to date knowledge, there is still a place for the School Library. To help us maintain the library in a neat, tidy and orderly fashion we would welcome some help! If there is a parent or grandparent who might have a couple of hours a week to spare we would be very grateful to hear from you.

### **In the News...**

#### **Opening Mornings**

Please tell friends and family! We are holding 3 morning events on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November, with tours starting at 9.30am and 10.45am. If you know of anyone who would like to take a look around our school in preparation for making Reception applications for September 2014, they can contact the School Office to book themselves on a tour.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Hollingworth  
Principal