



HARTLEY PRIMARY ACADEMY
NEWSLETTER 4 - DECEMBER

Academic Year – 2013-2014



Dear Parents and Carers,

The year has galloped by! Here we are once again facing the end of term, the end of the year and..... Christmas!

Apologies.....

My presence in school might be a little diminished just now, owing to an unexpected problem with my vision which has necessitated surgery with very little notice. I hope to be in school as much as possible in the run-up to Christmas and fully recovered by January. Meanwhile, Mrs Lambourne and Mrs Adams are doing a fine job making sure all is running smoothly along with the first-class team in the School Office.

PTA Christmas Fair

What a fantastic start to the Festive Season! The PTA organised and ran another of their thoroughly enjoyable Christmas Fairs. Santa was kept very busy, stalls were inundated and a good time was had by all. Thank you for coming and supporting this event – and for spending so much money! A record £3,000 profit was raised!

The PTA worked incredibly hard, as they have all year, providing refreshments for prospective parents who have been touring the school and will be providing refreshments at the end of the Year 1 and 2 Christmas productions this week. Whilst we have an amazing committee, they would value extra support in organising and running future events and there are a lot of projects on their calendar for 2014, the first being the **PTA Movie Night – Friday 10th January 2014**.

However, we have one more event before the end of this year, the children's **Discos on Thursday 19th December**; the early disco for **Years 1 and 2 (5-6pm)** and the later disco for **Years 3 – 6 (6.15-7.30pm)**. It is felt that children in Foundation Stage will find this a little overwhelming and they are very tired at this point in the term - they will be most welcome to attend the Summer Disco. A flier has been sent out via Home Connect this week, and is displayed in our noticeboards.

Musical Mayhem and the School Choir

Congratulations to the school's many and varied musicians! On Thursday 21st November we had a splendid Musical Concert, the like of which we have not had for many years. Very many thanks to Mrs Collings, Mrs Lovett, Mrs Greenwood, Mrs Marsden, Mr Warren – and particularly Miss Czapiewski who organised the event and who rehearsed the choir. We had soloists, duets, small groups of children playing the piano, guitar (Mrs Greenwood), ukulele and recorder (Mrs Collings) and singing – with some children participating several times. They were enthusiastic and confident and it was a real pleasure to be in the audience. The Choir then went on to learn completely different material, this time Christmas songs and Carols which they sang beautifully to celebrate the opening of the Christmas Fair and again, within the community at Hartley Library last Thursday.

Year 6 Community Carols

To continue the theme of singing, Year 6 children participated in the Service of Nine Carols and Lessons at Milestone Academy with their peers from Milestone, Fawkham and Steep Hill. This was a solemn but charming event which reminded us all of the true meaning of Christmas.

New Website

Hooray! We now have a new website <http://www.hartleyprimaryacademy.org.uk>. In our questionnaire there were a number of responses with regard to the website and when it would be live. The Trust now host the school's site for us and Mrs Lambourne and Mrs Orchard are bringing it up to date (a full time job they are trying to fit around their other full-time jobs) and it will just get better and better as time goes on. We are aiming to upload letters/news items as soon as they are published - please let them know how you are finding the new layout and what information you would find useful uploaded to the site. You can contact us via an email to office@hartley.kent.sch.uk and we will take your suggestions on board. Thank you.

Year 5 Visit to Victoria & Albert Museum

How lucky we are to be so close to London and that we are able to visit national institutions such as the Victoria & Albert Museum. What greater 'primary source' could there be than the plethora of Victorian buildings in our great capital city! Unfortunately despite the journey only being about 25 miles away, the time it takes is disproportionate! The children had a great experience and learned a great deal about the 'Great Exhibition' first-hand. Their behaviour, as always, was exemplary.

Christmas Productions

- Foundation Stage - performance to parents on Wednesday 11th December at 9.30am.
- Key Stage 1 'The Grinch' - performance to parents on Tuesday 10th December and Wednesday at 1.45pm.
- Key Stage 2 'Squeak!' – performance to parents on Tuesday 17th December at 1.45pm and 6.30pm.

Our hall, although a good size, does have seating restrictions – **we request that families restrict the numbers of people attending to two per family.** For 'Squeak!' tickets have already been issued to you via the children. For the evening performance of 'Squeak!' we do ask that there are no children please. If you have a baby with you during the afternoon performances and your child begins to cry please leave the hall until they have settled again. It is unfair to the children who have worked so hard in rehearsals if their words cannot be heard.

We do not charge for tickets, but we do collect for a charity at the end of each performance. **This year, in consultation with the School Council any donations received at the end of the productions will be sent to the Philippines Typhoon Disaster Appeal.**

Open Mornings

We have had a very good response to our Open Mornings for prospective new parents. Such was demand that we arranged two extra tours. We can offer no more this term. There are very few places available now for new starters across our current year groups. Children come to us from a variety of places, for a variety of reasons and generally they settle well. If the culture in their school has been different to ours settling in can take a little longer but we are an ever-changing community and learning how to get along with others is crucial in our society. Well done to all of the children who have joined us since September.

Christingles

Year 2 children will be making Christingles and celebrating the tradition in assembly this Thursday, to which Reverend Fletcher is invited.

Christmas Lunch – Wednesday 18th December 2013

Just a reminder that the TCS School Christmas lunch will be served on **Wednesday 18th December** for those children who have school dinners (sorry, but we can't accommodate any ad-hoc school meal orders for the one day). Children with packed lunches are welcome to bring in more of a festive lunch box. All the children can bring in a Christmas cracker to get into the Christmas spirit!

Academy News

Following the appointment of Frank Green as Commissioner for Education, the new CEO is Simon Beamish, who many of you with older children will already know. This has caused some internal change within the Secondary Academies. We have sent congratulations to Mr Beamish and wish all new appointees success in their new roles.

Children's Achievements

Outside school our children participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, sporting and artistic. We mentioned Sky Bebbington (Year 6) in our last newsletter. Sam Maidment is British Champion for Motor Cross.

External Clubs – Fridays

Brazilian Kickers' last training session this term will be **Friday 13th December**. Hannah May's Dance Club will also hold its final session this Friday.

Last Day of Term

Will be **Friday 20th December 2013!** We've had a few queries from parents – there is no half-day! Please can you collect your child at the normal time. Thank you.

Standards of Driving

Many parents have reported – and we have seen it ourselves – that some parents are driving in a hazardous way around the roads adjacent to the school. Despite the 30mph limit this speed is too fast during the congested times at the beginning and the end of the day. Some drivers who are themselves parents - appear to completely disregard other families and children in their haste and in the manner of their driving. Recently we have had both a very near miss involving a pedestrian and another between two vehicles. Parking continues to be a bone of contention with local residents with the School Office handling a number of complaints and there is still a regular minority of parents who insist upon parking on the zig-zag lines in Fairby Lane which is both selfish and dangerous. Running a few minutes late is better than rushing to get here on time and causing an accident.

Bedtimes

We are sometimes aware that children are in school but are not in a fit state for learning - having gone to bed late the night before. Tired children cannot focus, they are unable to access the learning which is demoralising for them and leads to a real disengagement with school. It is essential that on school nights children are in bed at a reasonable time. For our younger children this will be quite early but for our older children – even in Year 6, they should be in bed by nine o'clock if the children are to get the recommended amount of sleep.

Dogs!

Despite our continued polite requests, an increasing number of parents wait with their dogs very close to the pedestrian gates. It is not unusual for there to be barking – which may be friendly but for some children is very frightening. Please DO NOT stand next to the gate, please stand across the road so that families can enter and leave the playground without fear. Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school site. Once again, parents, despite our polite requests, are ignoring us and bringing dogs onto the playground and up to the Main Entrance.

Winter Approaches.....

Every winter brings the possibility of snow and ice. Extreme bad weather can cause widespread problems as we know from recent years! Our aim is to ensure the school remains open as far as possible. However, as you are aware, gritting Round Ash Way and other minor roads is not a Highways department priority – obviously main roads and emergency facilities must come first.

This year, parents can go online to check if the school is closed, obtain information about road gritting and other KCC closures (www.kent.gov.uk/winter). You can also tune in or visit the sites of KMFM, BBC Radio Kent and Heart FM for updates and closures. We will continue to use Home Connect as we did last year and many parents felt this worked well. If you have not yet signed up for Home Connect and you would like to, please let the School Office have your email address. KCC suggests parents might like to sign up for text message alerts on www.kentclosures.co.uk. Please be aware there is a charge of 20p plus the standard network charge. KCC also recommends parents should visit the BBC or direct.gov.uk websites for home learning resources to support children's learning while the school is closed!

Parents Consultation Evenings

Dates for your diary: Tuesday 25th and Thursday 27th February 2014.

Staff Changes

Mrs Bainbridge has now returned to us from Maternity Leave. It is lovely to see her back, but even lovelier – Mrs Creed is not leaving us, she will be supporting children in Key Stage 1 initially (in Year 2) but later in the school year, Mrs Creed will also be working with our children in Year 1.

Monday' Pop-Ins'

The purpose of the Monday Pop-In session is to enable parents who are following up a concern with the teacher to have a **brief update – not longer than 5 minutes**. We have scheduled Staff Meetings on Mondays which begin at 3.50pm.

Start of Term

We are already looking forward to next year – teachers are involved in planning and creating resources with which to welcome your children back. Our Spring Term starts on **Monday 6th January 2014**.

So all that remains is to wish you and your families a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2014 from everyone at Hartley Primary Academy.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Hollingworth
Principal