

Newsletter 20 October 2017

Dear parents and carers

A message from the Chair

I have had the privilege of being the Chair of the Governing Body at Branfil Primary School since Easter. I have been a governor for three years and my daughter went through the school, leaving last year to go to secondary school. When I came and looked around Branfil, all those years ago when looking for a primary school, I was impressed by the family feel and the enthusiasm of the children, which is still very much the case now. When I walk around the school and look into classrooms I see children engaged in, and enthusiastic about, learning.

As I am sure that you are aware, many schools in the country are finding finances challenging at present and we are certainly no exception. Difficult decisions about how money is spent have had to be made. I wanted to take this opportunity to reassure you that these decisions are always taken with great care and with the overall priority of the school, of ensuring the best outcomes for your children, in mind. As a Governing Body we have recognised that we could do a better job of communicating with our parent body about the role of the Governing Body in improving the school and getting your feedback and ideas on improvements that could be made. To that end we are looking to ensure a more visible presence of the governors in ways that allow parents and carers to engage with us. This entry in the newsletter is part of that and you will also see us at other school events. I would also like to draw your attention to the Governors' section of the website (under Our School) where further information and governor biographies can be found.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate that any and all contributions towards your child's education are deeply valued and appreciated, be they financial, time spent in school or time spent supporting your own child's learning.

If you would like to get in touch then please contact the school office for my contact details.

Wishing you a happy half term break,

Mrs Deborah Whittle

Values Based Education

October's value was responsibility, we learnt about the importance of being responsible for ourselves, others and our environment. Our House Captains, School Councillors and Sports Crew have begun to take on their new responsibilities across the school. In assemblies and lessons, we have learnt about Walk to School Month, Black History Month, Diwali and World Mental Health Day. We also had a visitor from NSPCC to support us in how to keep ourselves safe and report any concerns to a trusted adult.

November's value is Peace and we will share our learning with you in the next newsletter.

Parent Consultation Meetings

Thank you to everyone who attended our recent Parents' meetings. We hope you found your meeting with the class teacher informative. If you were unable to attend then please arrange to meet your child's class teacher at a mutually convenient time.

Feedback

Recently we have received some lovely, positive feedback for parent/carers about what we are doing well. I wanted to thank those of you who have taken the time to do this- it really does make a difference to staff morale.

Lateness

Whilst most parents and carers do a good job of ensuring their children arrive at school promptly, we still have a significant minority who regularly arrive late in the mornings. It is important that adults encourage children to form positive habits with regards to time keeping in order to become successful members of society. Pupils in Years 3-6 must arrive between 8.40-8.50am with registers being completed at 8.50am promptly; please bear in mind that some of the children have a couple of minutes walk to get to their classes once they are in the building. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 must arrive between 8.50-9.00am with registers being completed at 9.00am promptly. Please ensure that your child is in class in time for their registration.

Recording of Absence

It is our duty to contact parents or carers as soon as a child is not present at school if we have not already been informed of the absence. This is an important aspect of our safeguarding of children's welfare and it is therefore essential that we have up to date contact details, including alternative contacts. Please note that if we are unable to speak to any adults on the list provided we will have to contact outside agencies to report a child missing in education.

Branfil Website

Curriculum maps for each subject are now on subject pages of the curriculum section of the website and year overview plans for each year group are also on there for you to view.

Coats

Please remember that children play and learn outside in all weathers so all children need to bring named coats to school even if they travel to school in a car.

School nurse Drop In

Our School nurse, Denise Ellis, will be doing a drop in session on Wednesday 29 November at 3.00pm. She is here for anyone who has any concerns about their child and would like to have a chat.

Ear-rings

After careful consideration of the advice given by London Borough of Havering and the Association for Physical Education in their Safe Practice handbook, governors at Branfil have agreed that children should **not** wear ear-rings for games, dance or PE sessions.

Ear-rings can no longer be taped and if pupils are not able to remove their ear-rings they will be found alternative involvement such as a PE theory sheet.

Reading Scheme

Our younger children are learning to read through our new reading scheme, Oxford Reading Tree. Children progress through different colour bands as their knowledge and confidence grow. You can find out more about the scheme by visiting Oxford Owl (www.oxfordowl.co.uk) where you will also discover lots of information to help you support your child at home: free e-books and resources, top tips and fun ideas, games and activities.

Micro Scooters for Schools Scheme

Please support our school when purchasing a micro-scooter for your child. We will receive 10% of the basket value every time the school code is used at the check out at micro-scooters.co.uk. All you need to do is provide the school URN number which is: 135588.

Many thanks for your support,
Mrs Harris

Parent Forum

Please note that our first parent forum will now be held on Friday 24 November 9-10am (change of date from 17 November).

Safety at collection time

When waiting in the playground at drop off and pick up times please ensure that your younger children do not swing on the rails along the slope by the new build and run up and down the steps to the platform or run across it.

Staff are reminding all children that the slopes are for access only and that rails are not play equipment.

Please note that the doors from the platform and by the year 3 corridor are for children only and that parents/carers need to enter school by the office door if necessary.

Thank you to everyone who is now leaving via the back gate promptly so it can be locked at 9.00am.

A whistle will now be blown to let everyone know that the gate has been locked, which means you will have to exit the playground via the front entrance.

Scooters

These are not to be ridden on school grounds. We have had a near miss on the slope by the back gate earlier this week and these incidents can be prevented if the rules are followed. Thank you for your cooperation.

First £50 Uniform Grant Issued

We have now issued our first Uniform Grant as a thank you for a **new** successful application for Free School Meals. This entitles the school to Pupil Premium.

Pupil Premium is a route by which the school can get additional funding for any child who is entitled to Free School Meals. Although all children in Reception to Year 2 currently received their meals free of charge, the school is only able to access additional funding if the parent/carer actually qualifies for free school

meals on the grounds of income. For children in Year 3 to Year 6, qualification will mean a saving on the daily cost of a school meal. The school will get additional funding even if your child chooses to have a packed lunch. It is eligibility that qualifies the school for extra funding.

You can quickly check whether you are eligible by entering your name, date of birth and national insurance number on the following website: <http://www.fsm.lgfl.net> or apply directly on the Havering website <https://my.havering.gov.uk/Pages/OnlineForms/Free-school-meals.aspx#Details>.

Please contact the office and let us know if you are granted free school meals so that we can arrange the voucher.

If you need any advice or help with applying one of the ladies in our office will be happy to help.

Violin Lessons Year 1 & Y2

Violin lessons are available for Year 1 and Year 2. If you are interested please collect a leaflet from the school office.



Pupil of the Week

22 September

Lewis Pullinger, Albie Woodward

6 October

Abbey Bryan, Poppy Fitzsimmons, Mia Dorrian, Leo Irons, Charlie Fortune, Daniel Goodman, Grace Payne, Ruby Goodspeed, Ava Roe, Benjamin Smith, Harry Fordham, Louis Bell, Emmy Hazelwood, Albert Fisher, Finley Tolan, William Penfold, Amelia Farrow, Albie Sheehy, Megan Hatley.

13 October

Eva-Grace Bethray, Maisie Pullinger, Poppy Racher, Ella Perkins, Dylan Edgeler, Jorge De Faria-Thomas, William Irons, Kara Smith, David Chitiga, Emily Kemp, Oliver Fulling, Bobby Lang, Lexi Adams, Billy Persue, Austin Winterford, Lily Slay, Katie Scarlett Dodds, Freya Burke, Harry Thorogood-Sneade, Oliver Purdie.