

Newsletter 9 February 2018

Dear parents and carers,

On 30 October 2017 we wrote to you providing a breakdown of the school's budget and outlining the financial problems facing the school. As we explained in that letter, funding is based on pupil numbers and for the last 2 years, along with other schools in Upminster, we have had a drop in the numbers applying for Reception. This had caused us to go from balanced to deficit budgets, and the prospect of an increasing overdraft in future despite our efforts to control spending. Whilst the efforts of the PTA and school sponsorships help, the sums involved were such that we needed significant outside help to improve our situation.

Following the letter, the Governors made renewed efforts (we had raised our concerns back in 2016-17) to lobby the Local Authority (LA) and the Council seeking either: to reduce the intake at Reception from 3 to 2 form entry (this would have made it easier to balance the books); OR to obtain additional funding.

We are pleased to advise that following lots of correspondence and a meeting with the LA and the Council last week, the LA have agreed to consider additional funding for the school. If this is received it will go a long way towards reducing our deficit. This is important because we all want to improve the school and give the children the very best opportunities for learning and that is very difficult if we have no money to invest and are constantly concerned about the school budget.

Having said that, the situation would merely be better – not yet good, and if parents or carers have ideas about how the school might raise more money to spend on the children we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Tony McDonach, on behalf of the Governing Body

Values Based Education

The value for February is Love

Love sustains human relationships with dignity and depth. Love does not involve dependency or control, but kindness, caring and understanding. It is wishing another person happiness and taking pleasure in their well-being. It is unconditional and unselfish.

Reading and library update

Thank you for all the donations of books that we have received; these have been shared amongst our two new libraries (fiction and non-fiction) and the classroom book areas. We continue to need more fiction and non-fiction books so if you have any that you are willing to donate then these would be very gratefully received.

As previously stated on the reading letter, which was sent out before the Christmas holidays, we had planned to ask parents and carers to pledge a book which would then have a book plate inside with your child's name on. However, due to the amount of book donations we have received, and the imminent sponsored reading event, we have postponed this until later this year.

If you have not already sent in a photo of your child reading in an unusual place then please do, as we still have plenty of room in the library to display these.

Reading Ambassadors

Every class teacher has selected two children who they feel are excellent role models for reading. These children will have an important role to play in raising the profile of reading across the school. They will be meeting regularly with Mrs White, reading leader, then reporting back to their class on any issues that have been raised and carrying out agreed actions to promote a love of reading across the school.

World Book Day

Thursday 2nd March is World Book Day. We will not be asking the children to dress up for this but they will be participating in a day full of fun activities planned around a specific book that will be chosen by the children and suitable for their age range.

SQUID - Update!

From Tuesday 27 February Havering Catering Service will no longer be using dinner tickets for school meals.

Your registration letter will give information on how to log on and pay online.

Dinner tickets are available to purchase up to Friday 23 Feb and we would ask that you purchase tickets and repay any outstanding before the 27 February.

Any dinner tickets remaining once Squid starts can be returned to school and your Squid account will be credited with the appropriate amount.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to allow children to continue to have meals if the Squid account is not in credit so we would recommend that you select auto update which will ensure your child's 'purse' is always in credit.

11+ Information

11+ 2019 Entry & CSSE 11+ SIF Registration

Registration for these exams will be from 5 June to 20 July 2018 inclusive. CSSE schools will hold open days/evenings during June/July 2018.

The tests will take place on Saturday 22 September 2018 and parental guidelines for 11+ preparation is available on the website:

www.csse.org.uk

O2 Choir visit

This week the choir joined hundreds of other schools at the O2 to perform in this year's 'Young Voices'. The theme was Togetherness and 7,891 children sang their hearts out and danced the night away along with some excellent guest appearances from The Magnets, soul-singer Natalie Williams and 16-year old Alfie Sheard. All the children's hard work paid off and they were an asset to Branfil. Well done!

Mrs Campbell

ParentView

We would like to hear your views about the school. Please go to <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk> and click on 'give your views' on the top grey bar. There are 12 quick questions to respond to and space for explaining your answer if required. Thank you in advance.

First Day Call Procedure

You may be aware of a recent tragic story where two young children were left with their father, for a whole day after he had suddenly passed away. The school had been unable to make contact after the older sister did not arrive for school and did not follow this up. Therefore, the alarm was not raised until the evening.

Please be aware that as a school we will do everything we can to prevent such situations occurring as your child's safety is paramount to us all.

If your child is not in school please always call the office on 01708 225186 or email on office@branfil.havering.sch.uk first thing in the morning.

If we have not heard from you then we will call the first contact number provided in order to gain an explanation for absence and then continue to go down the list until we have contacted somebody.

If we are still unable to get a response, we will make a home visit. If contact is still not made, we will report it to the police as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe.

INSET days 2018/2019

Governors have approved the following INSET days when school is closed to pupils for staff training:

3 & 4 September 2018

29 October 2018

7 January 2019

3 June 2019

Helpers

We are looking for any parents/carers who would like to come in to school on a regular basis and help in class with reading etc or in the office with admin tasks. If you hold a current DBS or are willing to apply for one through the school, please contact the office.

TIMES TABLES ROCK STARS

The new IOS app has been released. Since then there have been a number of updates and the latest version is 2.0.8

Version 1 of the app will no longer work from 16 February so please ensure iPads in particular are running version 2 and above.

Laggy Buttons

Some users on older devices have experienced a small delay when entering answers. We have added a setting to reduce this lag. Click on the Me icon and enable Slow Device Mode and Hide Multiplayer Sidebar.

Please update it on your Android devices

Good news for Android users! The app is now in Google Play. You will need to delete the old one first.

Server Update

There has been a significant improvement in server capacity but if you have suffered a slowing down of the service during peak periods, I apologise. We are very much aware of the problems and continue to make alterations several times a day.

This week two new servers were commissioned and it's taken this week to copy all the data over to them so that they can start picking up the load from next week. Barring teething problems, this could yield significant gains in speed and up-time.

Kind regards

Bruno

Founder, Times Tables Rock Stars

Parent Forum

Our next parent forum will be held on Tuesday 27 February at 2.15pm. If you would like to submit a question to be answered at the Forum, please send it in writing, letter or email, to Mrs Sansom by 20 February so that we have time to gather any information needed.

Child Minders

We have been asked to remind parents that they should check that childminders are Ofsted registered.

Nearly new uniform

We have a huge selection of nearly new uniform – particularly old style sweatshirts and cardigans. If you are in need of a spare, please do come and help yourself.

Pupil of the Week



26 January

Darasimi Adefemiwa, Kingsley Chen, Caitlyn Biddle, Ashton Barker-Miller, Harry Marchington, Alice McKelvey, Daisy Wren, Joshua Patterson, Fletcher Byron, Finley Newstead, Joshua Watts, Khalid Olanrewaju, Archie Dennis, Natan Sanabria, Molly Brennan, Ruby Grove, Sadie Wenn, Lyla Tolan, Olivia Bradbury, Lily Nguyen.

2 February

Sydney Ballard, Isla Persaud, Luca Filomarino, Owen Austin, Henry Bradbury, Charlie Summerfield, Isabella Metcalfe, Olivia Davis, Mia Laronde, Alice Tsui, Isaac Williams, Zoe Batts, Luke Moles, Simona Stoycheva, Lennie Oliver, Lewis Welch, Oliver Schafer, Poppy Mason, Tilly Barrett, Harry Worpole.

Learning Objectives for this week

Below are links to our year group pages where you will be able to find our Learning Objectives for this week:

Reception: <http://www.branfil.com/yg/year0/>

Y1: <http://www.branfil.com/yg/year1/>

Y2: <http://www.branfil.com/yg/year2/>

Y3: <http://www.branfil.com/yg/year3/>

Y4: <http://www.branfil.com/yg/year4/>

Y5: <http://www.branfil.com/yg/year5/>

Y6: <http://www.branfil.com/yg/year6/>