



# Newsletter

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2009

The last week of the term has suddenly arrived but there is still an awful lot going on in school before the Easter holidays start for the children on Friday. We will hopefully be filling two important vacancies this week as on Tuesday we will be interviewing for a new Year 1 teacher to start in September and on Thursday we will be interviewing for a School Secretary to work alongside Mrs King and Mrs Hare in the school office. The School Council will be heavily involved in the choice of our new teacher and having already written their own person specification for candidates will be conducting their own interviews as well. Also interviewing will be staff and governors giving us a broad and balanced group to represent children, parents, staff and community. Also occurring this week are our second parent consultation meetings of the school year where our mini reports will be trialled for the first time. I am also happy to inform you that our Forest Leader, Mr Mannion is returning to school having recovered from his back injury and that consequently the infants will be able to again get out to Fermyn Woods for Forest School. For more information on all of these aspects of the life of the school and other important information read on.....

## **Corby Reads!**

The school continues to engage fully in the town wide, Corby Learning Partnership, year of reading. Children from our Year 2 and Year 5 classes enjoyed special 'Corby Writes' workshops earlier this month and brought back special writing toolkits and story chests for the school to use and enjoy. We also initiated weekly paired reading sessions across the school which started as part of our celebrations for World Book Day. This week, as part of our Forest School work, Rabbits and Year 1 children will enjoy special Forest Tales sessions with professional story teller Jo Blake up at Fermyn Woods. Also Mrs MacDonald was pleased to receive volunteers to join her at a family reading conference in April. We are also enjoying an increase in reading volunteers at school, if you would like to give an hour or two each week to support children's reading development in school please contact Mrs MacDonald via the school office. Time spent helping children to acquire these all important skills is hugely rewarding, we provide training and helpers will even get a free Criminal Records Bureau check! So if you've the time and inclination come and really get involved in our year of reading.

## **Environment Club**

The Environment Club met for the first time on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March - thank you to all of the parents, children and staff who attended. We had an enjoyable meeting discussing our plans for the school grounds and touring the site. Mrs Street and the children have already been busy in school planting seeds and potatoes and wizzing out requests for donations and materials to start to put our plans into action. The Club will start to meet regularly after the Easter holiday on Thursdays from 3.30pm to 4.30pm here at school - First meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. Attached to this newsletter is a special flyer with more information on the club and a list of 'wanted' items ranging from old plant pots and garden tools to seeds and drinking yoghurt pots! If you have an interest or expertise in any of the following areas please come along and lend your support: wildlife habitats; growing fruit and vegetables; creating living sculptures, herb and sensory gardens; recycling/composting, playground games & fixed sports equipment/markings and Eco-schools.

## **Access to the school and to staff**

Over the past weeks we have noted an increase in the number of parents who are either using the inside of the school as a short cut or who are actually dropping off and collecting their children inside the building. Please can all parents observe the schools request to drop off and collect their children from the exterior classroom doors and refrain from cutting through the school rather than walking around the building. This is an essential part of our safety arrangements both in terms of knowing who is within the school at any given time and to enable teachers to effectively 'hand over' the children to parents and carers at the end of the school day. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Please could I also ask that parents are brief in their discussions with teachers at the start of the school day as we do need to start the day promptly at 8.50am to enable lessons to begin. If you do need to have an extended conversation with your child's teacher please make a suitable appointment at a mutually convenient time. Reading Record Diaries are checked daily by staff and are an excellent means of communication between home and school.

## Parent Consultation Meetings

Our second pupil - teacher meetings take place this Wednesday and Thursday after school. If you have not received your meeting time confirmation please speak to your child's teacher as soon as possible. These meetings are very important and have real impact on children's progress, attainment and attitudes to school. At your meeting this week you will receive, from your child's teacher, a mini progress report. These will form the basis of the discussions and are to be taken home from the meeting to be discussed by parents and children with written comments being added before being returned to school. Teachers will then read and act upon parental and pupil feedback to further improve the children's learning opportunities in school. Teachers will also share with parents individual attendance figures for the academic year so far. These figures will be given as a percentage and all families should be aiming for a figure in the high 90s - anything below this has a direct negative impact on pupil progress and is a cause for real concern. At both evenings the school hall will be open to parents where information will be available on attendance and helping children at home, displays showing the highlight activities of the current school year and the results of our first parental and pupil surveys undertaken in Term 3. These meetings are intended for parents and teachers, children are welcome to attend but will be expected to remain outside classrooms during their parents meetings. This of course does not apply to Reception children, if they are attending with parents we do not expect them to be left on their own around the school. Samples of pupils work relating to key areas of success and areas for development will be shared by teachers and we would ask parents to respect each others privacy and only look at their own children's work where available. If you would like to view all of your children's school work please make suitable arrangements with teachers for another mutually convenient time.

## Forest School

With the happy return of Mr Mannion today Forest School is back up and running. We are changing the arrangements slightly for the morning groups to reduce the congestion in the Reception classrooms and infant cloakrooms. This week we will be trying the new system whereby the parents of the children attending Forest School in the morning (teachers will identify these groups to parents) will meet Mr Mannion and Mrs West outside the Forest Shed. This is the room with the white door, which is part of the service yard building, located on the rectangular playground side of the school opposite the new notice boards and next to the pedestrian access gate and timber sheds. The children will be shown where to go today in school so hopefully will know exactly where to head in the mornings later in the week. All of the Forest School equipment is now stored in this room and there are cloak racks for the children to store their book bags and packed lunchboxes while they are out in the woods. Parents are of course encouraged to continue to help their children to get their puddle bashers, wellies and coats on ready to depart for the woods at 9am.

## Toddler Group

Our Monday afternoon parent-toddler group continues to grow and will continue after the Easter Holidays. All local parents and toddlers are welcome to attend the sessions which run in the school Studio between 1.45pm and 3.15pm.

## Recent Events

- **Environment Club** - The first meeting of the group was a positive one with lots of ideas shared and enjoyed.
- **Star Dome** -The infants had a great time (as did the school staff) enjoying and exploring the universe around us.
- **Friends of Oakley Vale Primary School Book Fair** - Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February - a good start was made to what is hoped to be a regular event here at school. Thanks go out to those who gave their time to organise and run the day and to those who came along to spend their money!
- **World Book Day** - What a great day! The school was awash with story characters from across the world of books. All of the pupil and staff costumes were fantastic which made the job of our governor judges incredibly difficult. Congratulations and well done to each of the year group winners.
- **Oakley Vale Great Pancake Race** - Our first school pancake races were enormous fun, thank you to all of the families who brought in pancakes and frying pans and well done to all of the children, parents and staff who enjoyed the races.
- **Tennis tournament** - the Year 2 tennis squads really enjoyed their end of coaching tournament at the Corby Tennis Centre. Both teams did really well and were great ambassadors for the school.
- **Rugby coaching** - the children in Year 3 have been enjoying their special tag-rugby coaching sessions with top coaches from the Northampton Saints RFC. They were even lucky enough to have a surprise visit from the team mascot at their sessions last week.

- **School Council Visit** - the School Council were invited to visit the town mayor earlier this term and had a fantastic time meeting the mayor and visiting the council offices - the CCTV control room was particularly enjoyed!
- **Comic Relief 2009** - What a day! We all had great fun in our pyjamas and with the help of the friends managed to raise a fantastic £501.00.
- **Friends of Oakley Vale Primary School Car Boot Sale** - Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March - a lovely day and a good start to another regular event planned by the Friends. Keep an eye out for the next sale after Easter.
- **Visiting Artists** - Year 5 were visited by two local artists with three huge interactive sculptures which they used to create movable art installations on the school grounds.
- **Drumming Assembly** - today we were visited in morning assembly by a drumming teacher. We all enjoyed a super assembly and hope to be able to offer individual/paired drumming lessons for juniors here at school starting next term. A letter with the relevant information and costs will accompany this newsletter.

#### Dates for your diary.

- **Forest Tales** - During the week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> March our infants will be enjoying special story sessions out in the woods with professional story teller Jo Blake. These sessions are part of the Corby Learning Partnership 'Year of Reading'.
- **Second Parent Consultation Evenings** - the second parents' consultation evenings this year will take place on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009. At these meetings parents will be given 'mini' reports relating current pupil progress and attainment.
- **Parent Support Group** - Mrs Parton and Mrs Butler will be holding their first support group for parents of children with special needs next term. The first meeting will be on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2.00pm to 3pm in the community room here at school. No appointment is necessary parents are welcome just to drop in using the exterior door to the community room next to the main school entrance.
- **Year 4 Swimming** - Swimming sessions start for our Year 4 children on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April (the first day of term 5). Children will attend swimming sessions at the Corby pool until it closes in May and then at the new pool as soon as it opens.....hopefully before the school closes for the summer holidays in late July. More information will be coming home from Mrs Rutherford-Bate before the end of the week.

#### And Finally...

Over the Easter holiday can all families please double check that names are in all uniform and P.E. kits. As the weather improves the children increasingly remove jumpers and cardigans while playing and they also get out for more P.E. and sport sessions. With 240 children in school they inevitably pick up the wrong clothes and only by having names in clothes can we hope to reunite child and item.

School closes for the Easter holiday on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 3.30pm** and re-opens to children on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at the normal time of 8.50am.**

M.Deane-Hall - Headteacher

#### Environment Club wish list:

Off cuts of wood (decking etc.) and wood that we can build things with, garden canes, plastic milk and juice bottle tops. Later in the term we will be asking for offers of help to dig beds for fruit and veg and to help to stock the growing areas with seeds and cuttings. Look out for more information coming home from school next term. So far we have gained support from Kier Street Services, Wilkinsons, Asda and Focus - if you have any links which could be explored please let Mrs Street know via the school office.

#### School Lunch Ordering

Can all parents remember to place their child's lunch order for week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> April, by 9am Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March, any orders received after this time cannot be processed. Please can all parents remember to look at the date of orders placed to ensure that you are placing the correct orders for the correct weeks. Could all lunch monies be placed in a named sealed envelope with your **child's name, class, description 'School Lunch Money' and amount.**