



Newsletter

Monday 14th December 2009

Fantastic Fair! - Saturday 5th December 12noon-4pm

The Christmas Fair was a great success raising around £1000.00 which is fantastic. I would like to thank the Friends of the school, the children and the school staff for all their hard work before, during and after the fair and to thank everyone who came along and supported the school so well.

Mrs Wells' 'Oakley Vale's Got Talent'

What a fantastic evening - all of the finalists were great and it was extremely hard for the panel of four judges to choose the top three. Well done to all of the children involved with special congratulation to our winners Nkara and Judah Stephenson and runners up Joe Coy and Tsitsi Mugayi. Our thanks also goes out to everyone who came and supported so well, to the staff for a hilarious staff dance and to Mrs Wells and her crew for working so hard to stage this event. An amazing £570 was raised, well done everyone.

Christmas Sing-a-long

This was a lovely event and very well supported by our Foundation Stage parents. It was lovely to see so many families joining us here in school and to see and hear the children really enjoying themselves.

The Bossy King

The final dress rehearsal for the Christmas production took place this afternoon and all of the children in Year 1 and Year 2 are really looking forward to performing for parents and families tomorrow afternoon and evening. The afternoon performance will begin at 2pm and the evening performance at 6pm.

School Choir - hit the right note

Miss Cockshoot and the school choir have been very busy over the past week performing their seasonal songs in assembly, at Sandalwood Court for some of our older residents and at the international concert held at Brooke Weston last Friday evening. They were superb, really enjoyed performing and have been excellent ambassadors for the school - well done to all of the choir members - if any children would like to join the choir please see Miss Cockshoot in school.

Playground Markings

As you will have seen we are currently having playground markings applied to all of our external play surfaces. We were hoping to have had them all down by now but the installation team have all come down with a tummy bug! This means that they will be returning to complete the work this week - please be aware of them working on the playgrounds and keep clear of the sectioned off areas.

Road Safety

Over the last couple of weeks I have received several disturbing reports from parents who have had to perform emergency stops while driving along the roads adjacent to the school. These incidents have occurred before the start of the school day and have been caused by children crossing roads without the necessary care and attention. Fortunately no children have been injured but I would ask all parents to remind their children of the importance of road safety and to impress upon them the expectation that they always use the pedestrian crossings on Lyveden Way and Cheltenham Road. I have spoken to the whole school this morning in assembly and have reminded them of our expectation that they use the crossings and of the potentially devastating consequences of not looking and listening when crossing the road. I would also ask all parents to be good role models, to not cross the road onto the island at the drop off bay and then cross the drop off bay to get to the playground entrance but to use the crossings with their children as well.

Reading Information Evening

Our recent reading information evening for parents was well attended and we have received very positive feedback from those who attended. We are now planning several more curriculum information evenings for parents - look out for more information coming home from school next term.

Hand Washing

We have suffered some bugs and illness over the past few weeks and have responded here at school by again raising the issues of basic hygiene with the children. Having monitored the children staff have observed an alarming number of children neglect hand washing after visiting the toilets - this is particularly the case in the infants over lunchtimes. The importance of hand washing has been discussed in assemblies and we have modified our lunchtime staffing arrangements to ensure that all children are washing their hands after using the toilets. I would ask all parents to discuss the importance of washing hands before eating and after using the toilet with their children as with the same message coming from both home and school we can ensure that the children stay as healthy as possible.

Bad Press

Some of you may have seen the recent report in the Evening Telegraph 'Schools get good marks' where our school was reported as being one of the lowest scoring schools in the area. This has caused some concern from parents and some anger amongst the pupils and staff here at school. The report is correct in the figures that have been published but no further information was given in the report as to the circumstances of the school or what the published figures actually measure and mean. The figures relate to the End of Key Stage 2 test results which arise from the tests that all Year 6 children in England undertake in May each year.

The attainment of our Year 6 children last year was below the national average but as the tests record the children's attainment and their learning for their entire school career (from 5 years old to 11 years old) it is rather unfair to make a narrow judgement on the school as a whole when those children had only been at our school for around 8 months before sitting the tests.

When you also consider the fact that around a third of the Year 6 cohort last year did not actually take the tests, due to special needs or having English as an additional language, our performance was actually on target and good. The report also makes no mention of the fact the school is new (other new primary schools generally open with only infants and therefore have four years before these judgements are made), that the progress rates of our children since starting at Oakley Vale have been good or better right across the school (progress nationally can be expressed in points with the expected rate of progress being 3 points in a school year - our children averaged 5 points progress last year with some making as much as 7 points in a single academic year). Our current Year 6 children have been so angered by the poor reporting that they have asked if they can write to the editor of the Evening Telegraph to express their displeasure and disappointment with the quality of reporting and to invite them to come into school to 'do a proper job' - we will await a response with interest. I have received a small number of questions regarding the report from parents and if you would like to know more about what we are doing as a school to further raise attainment and achievement please contact me in school.

Attendance and Punctuality

We will be celebrating children's good attainment at the end of the week and I would like to say well done to all of the children who have achieved 100% attendance over the course of the term and since the start of the current school year. As mentioned in a previous newsletter we monitor pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and some families will have received a letter drawing their attention to their child/children's current attendance rate last week. While we appreciate that much pupil absence is due to legitimate illness we are expected as a school to bring low attendance rates to parents' attention as it significantly impacts on learning, progress and attainment. As stated in the letter home last week we will continue to monitor all of the children's attendance rates and make contact with families where attendance is falling below 90%. We are however sympathetic to those children who are suffering longer term illness and those who have regular hospital visits.

And Finally...

School closes for the Christmas holiday on **Friday 18th December at 3.30pm** and re-opens to children on **Monday 4th January 2009 at the normal time of 8.50am.**

On behalf of all the staff here at school I would like to thank you all for your support during our first full year and wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

M.Deane-Hall - Headteacher