in partnership with Blanche Nevile

# Headteacher's Newsletter September 2009

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back to the new school year. The children and staff have returned refreshed and enthusiastic about the year ahead, and the first week has gone extremely smoothly. The signs are good for a successful year ahead.

This newsletter tells you about some of these changes that have taken place at school, and, provides details about the events that are coming up this term.

## New staff

There have been quite a number of new staff who have joined our team this year. We welcome our new teachers: Max Porter to Nursery, Toni Beaucage to Reception, Eleanor Phillips to Year 1 and Lorraine Gooday and Bianca Cohen to Year 2.

In addition, we welcome a number of new teaching assistants to our staff. Laura Cutting and Kate Imeson will be working the Foundation Stage, Alex Mummery in Year 2, Rachael Adams in Year 3 and Billie-Jean Daniels across Year 5 and 6. I am particularly pleased that we are now able to provide additional teaching support for every class throughout the school, which I know will impact positively on our children's learning.

## Building Work over the summer

You may well have noticed the makeover that the school building has undergone over the summer period, indeed the school is looking lovely, and very shiny! Special thanks go to Terry and for his management of the various projects, and to his team for their excellent work.

## Office/Reception Area

Julie in her new office!

The first change you will see is that the school reception area has been opened up, to make it lighter and more welcoming. If you visit during the morning, please say hello to our new admin assistant, Elaine Clesham, who will be here to deal with any questions that you may have.

## Changes to Year 1

The interconnecting classrooms and new decking in Year 1 has proved very popular with the children. The idea is one that has long been championed by Anjali, which is that Year 1 is a transition year taking the children from the Early Years Curriculum to the National Curriculum. To start the year the learning environment feels very much like a reception class, but as the year progresses, the approach to learning will adapt. The way in which the children have settled into their new setting has been wonderful to see.

## New babies

Congratulations go to Anjali and Stuart on the arrival of baby Lana, who was born at the start of the summer break, and also to Julia and her husband Matt, with the arrival of Emilia, who was born just a week ago. Mothers and babies are all doing well.

## Music Tuition Year 4

This year all children in Year 4 will be taking part in project led by the Haringey Music Service, where every child will be given the opportunity to learn a new musical instrument. This comes as part of the school's commitment to promoting music, and has been generously funded by the PSA. Further details will soon be coming to parents of children in Year 4, and we look forward to following the children's progress.

## Parents Meetings

Teaching teams from Year 1 to Year 6 will be holding welcome meetings for parents over the next week or two, in which they will out line the daily routines, the learning which will be taking place and how you can support this at home. They will also give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

All meetings are taking place in the classroom and start at 3.00 pm on the following dates

| | |
|---|---|
| Year 1 | Thursday 24th Sept |
| Year 2 | Friday 25th Sept |
| Year 3 | Wednesday 16th Sept |
| Year 4 | Friday 18th Sept |
| Year 5 | Tuesday 15th Sept |
| Year 6 | Thursday 17th Sept |

## School Lunches

The school lunch menu has been revised and, having tried it myself, I can say the food tastes very good indeed.

Lunch money must be paid in advance, at the start of each week in the morning. Half-termly paid lunches must be paid for at the beginning of the term. If you are unable to come to the office, please send money in a sealed envelope to your child's teacher (with your child's name and class clearly marked). If your child wishes to change from packed lunch to school dinners, or vice-versa, the school office requires one week's notice. This terms lunch prices are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Weekly @ £2 per day | £10.00 |
| First half of term | £70.00 |
| Second half of term | £68.00 |
| Full Term | £138.00 |

## Attendance and Punctuality

There was a good improvement in children's attendance and punctuality towards the end of last year, with one or two classes achieving 100% attendance for a number of weeks. There is however definitely room for improvement in some parts of the school and I ask that parents support their children in this matter.

We ask children to arrive at school promptly at 8.55 am, and I respectfully ask parents to avoid arranging holidays during term time. If a planned absence is unavoidable, parents are requested to complete an absence request form requiring authorisation from the headteacher.

Individual children and classes with outstanding attendance and punctuality will of course be acknowledge in our 'Shining Stars' assemblies, however it is our job as parents to make sure we do our bit.

## Term Dates

Important dates for the Autumn Term are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Year 6 PGL Week | w/c 28th September |
| Parent Consultations (Y1 Y6) | Wednesday 7th October 4.00 – 6.00<br>Thursday 8th October 6.00 – 8.00 |
| Harvest | Wednesday 14th October |
| Half Term | w/c Monday 26th October |
| Staff Training Day (School Closed) | Friday 27th November |
| Christmas Performances | Wed 9th December<br>Thursday 10th December |
| Term Ends | Friday 18th December |

## Lost Property

At the end of last term we seemed to acquire a rather impressive collection of children's clothing. All lost property will be put on display in the Dining Centre at the end of the day on Friday 17th September. Please come and have a browse, after which the clothing will be recycled.

## Extra-Curricular Clubs

Anthony is currently completing the timetable of extra-curricular clubs which will be sent out very soon. In the meantime, course leaders will be sending out information about their clubs to the relevant classes.

## Pupil Medication

If your child requires medication such as an asthma pump or an Epipen, please ensure that the school has been informed and that you bring updated, labelled medication to our Welfare Assistant, Mrs Cook.

## Helping in Schools

Once again Parents have the opportunity to take part in the 'Helping in Schools' course, which this term is being hosted by Tetherdown Primary School in Muswell Hill. The course, which runs for eleven weeks, gives parents an overview of the way in which a primary school works, how children learn and the role of the classroom assistant. If you are interested in attending, please speak to Kim Slater.

## International Award Silver

Great strides were made last year in developing the international dimension to the children's learning, with a variety of classroom work, assemblies and whole school projects – such as the International Week and One World Evening. As a result, the school has recently been awarded the International Award – Silver. Congratulations go to Julia, Livia and Maria for leading this project so well.

## Black History Month

Kim Slater is currently recruiting parents to help lead the school's celebrations surrounding Black History Month, which celebrates black history, achievement and culture. If you are willing to share an activity with a class at school (for example story-telling, music, cookery or family history), please speak to Kim who can be contacted on 07950 334111.

As you can see, plans are well underway for a full and productive year at Highgate. I look forward to working with you this year for the benefit of all of our pupils.

Kind regards

William Dean
Headteacher