Dear Children / Parents and Carers

As we approach the end of this very short half-term, I would write to update you on school life. It has been a very short but busy start to the spring term for the children and staff.

**PTFA news and events**

The PTFA is next due to meet at 18:15 on Monday 14th March at school. All are welcome. Please come along and support this important group. The next events scheduled are

Tues 9th February – Valentines Disco

Fri 18th March – Easter Bingo

Recently, we have spent some of the PTFA money on new guided reading books (on order) and staff training and development for Forest Schools (booked!). We are looking at spending more money on the online Books through BUG Club to allow access to books at home and school and also on more playground equipment. The PTFA have also paid for music tuition for all pupils this year. These opportunities are only possible with the continued efforts of the PTFA and they need your support.

**Music**

Our choir recently took part in the Young Voices festival which was held in Sheffield. It was a very long day but the children thoroughly enjoyed the event. Our thanks go to all the many parents who supported this event and to Mrs Baynes for all her hard work preparing the children in the run-up. I’d also like to thank Mrs Firth who worked very hard behind the scenes booking coaches and seats and ensuring that the event ran smoothly.

Our Year 5 and Y6 children are beginning a Music Partnership taught introduction to Ukulele which should be very interesting. This is being delivered by Ria XXXX who is our Violin Tutor and who already knows the school and many of our children.

Peripatetic lessons continue to be available for the following instruments

* Guitar (Sam Genders)
* Violin (Ria )
* Keyboard
* Wind – flute and clarinet (Jane Taylor)

We are currently exploring the possibility of re-introducing brass and cello. If you are interested in your child learning an instrument, please contact Sue Firth in the office who organises the sessions.

**Curriculum News**

Creative curriculum topics for this half term are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Oak Class | Dinosaurs |
| Beech Class | The Black Plague (Eyam) |
| Ash Class | Egypt and the Egyptians |
| Willow Class | Living Green |

The children are thoroughly enjoying these themes and have been very busy with their learning. Visits to provide enrichment for their learning are scheduled for Beech and Ash classes with trips to Eyam and Graves Museum (Sheffield).

**Dinner Money**

Thank you to all parents who have paid for their child’s dinners promptly. If you have not paid for this half term, please ensure that all payments are made by the THURSDAY 11th Februrary 2015.

For the Spring 2 term, there are 5 weeks (note school is closed on Friday 25th for Good Friday)

The costs are therefore

1 day - £10.00

2 days - £20.00

3 days - £30.00

4 days - £40.00

5 days - £50.00

(Subtract £2.00 if you include Friday as one of your days!)

**The student council**, supported by Mrs Chapman have been continued with their hard work to support our school vision. They are currently looking at

* Improving playtimes and the playgrounds
* Fundraising options
* Healthy Schools – looking in particular at improving healthy choices for food and drink at school.

**Working Gardens**

Our mud kitchen has been a fantastic success and the children have really enjoyed using this area. We have another scheduled Working Garden Morning on Saturday 5th March 2016. Please turn up to help and have fun. Buns and drinks provided – please bring any equipment that you might have easily available.

**Parent Voice**

Last summer we asked parents to complete a survey to identify their views about school. We have worked hard to respond to these views and hope that improvements have been made. The Governors and staff are interested in continuing this work will be sending out a new survey next week. Please do take the time to fill it in. It is important that we respond to your views and with this in mind, I have organised a Parents Meeting on Wednesday 23rd March at 6.00pm. This will be an opportunity for parents to find out the feedback from the survey and to hear about priorities for taking the school forward. We do value your views and will send out a separate letter nearer the time. Please do help by returning the questionnaire as fully as possible.

**Attendance**

We continue to monitor attendance very closely. If you are worried about your child’s attendance or are struggling to get your child to school on time, please contact your child’s teacher in the first instance. We can often help. Can I please remind you that doors open at 08:40 and lessons start at 08:50. Please make every effort to arrive in good time so that your child can get themselves settled without feeling rushed.

**Sporting News**

Following on from our success in achieving the Sainsbury School Games Silver accreditation, our pupils have been very busy competing. The Y4s attended a Dance Festival with other local primary schools at Hope Valley College. This was an enjoyable experience and was not competitive.

Our Y6 Indoor Sportshall Athletics team are due to compete again at The Arc in Matlock on Friday 11th March in the afternoon. We also have the Y5/6 High Five Netball competition which takes place on Thursday 17th March 2016 at HVC.

HVC are running a new afterschool Gym Club this term – details and bookings via their website.

**Cooking Club**

The Tesco ‘Lets Get Cooking’ club which is being run by Liz Riley and Paula Nicolaou has proven to be a great success and many of the Y3 and Y5 children have benefitted. This club continues throughout the spring term and more children will be given the opportunity. This club specifically targets teaching cooking skills alongside learning about making healthy eating choices. We are planning to join in with Tesco’s Cookathon – with everyone being asked to home cook a cottage pie in the week commencing XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. A recipe will be on-line!

**Breakfast Club**

Places are available at our breakfast club and you can book via reception. We take regular repeat bookings and can also cater for ad hoc, occasional bookings. The club is run every morning and the children really enjoy the sessions. Further information about breakfast club is available in the office. We are now able to accept payment through some qualifying childcare voucher schemes.

**Before and After School Clubs**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Before / during school | After school |
| Monday |  | **Drama** |
| Tuesday | Sports Leaders / Sportshall Athletics | **Football** |
| Wednesday | Running | **Multisports** |
| Thursday | Early Maths (Y5 & Y6) | Craft Club |
| Friday | Early Maths (Y5 & Y6) | Homework Club |

Clubs in **bold** are fee-paying. If you are unable to attend but wish to due to financial pressures, please see Mrs Gemmell in confidence.

**Forest Schools**

The school continues to look at providing a great breadth and depth of learning experiences for all pupils. With this in mind, we have secured Level 3 training for 2 staff and Mrs Coulson will be our Forest Schools lead. We are very excited that this development has been made possible with donations towards training costs from the PTFA and ALPKIT. We hope to become a fully affiliated Forest School within the next 9 months and will use this approach to learning throughout school.

**Car Parking**

Please can I remind all parents that we are fortunate to be allowed to use the Angler’s Rest Car Park at drop off times. Please do not park your car there for longer than needed and please, where possible, we encourage you to walk or cycle to school. Exercise in the morning is very helpful for learning and children who walk/cycle to school have already had exercise and are wide-awake and ready to learn. We have received several complaints about people who are approaching too fast and who are endangering the lives of local residents and children. Please, Kill your speed, not one of our pupils or local residents.

Kate Gemmell