Dear Children / Parents and Carers

As the term draws to an end, I thought I would write to update you on school life. It has been a very long and busy first term for our new team and the children have been working really hard.

**Staffing News**

As the term ends, we bid a fond farewell to Angela Spence who has been part of our team for over 12 years, working initially as part of the Midday Supervisor team and latterly as part of the kitchen team. We will all miss her but hope that she will visit us often. Her post has recently been advertised and if you are interested in working in the kitchen please do contact the school or visit the Derbyshire Local Authority job web page.

**Volunteers in School**

I would like to take a few lines to publically thank our regular volunteers who make such a difference to our children – providing additional opportunities such as choir, craft club, cooking club, Welly Walk support and Godly Play. Additionally, we are fortunate that we have several volunteers who offer support for reading which makes a massive difference to the children’s progress and confidence.

If you have any spare time and are interested in offering some voluntary support, please talk to your child’s teacher in the first instance – no experience is needed and both ad hoc and regular support is always keenly accepted.

**Music**

Attending the Christmas concert and service, I was reminded about how many of our children are learning music and saw how their hard work is obviously working. They were brilliant during their recent performances. Our fantastic team of music teachers work really hard and if you do wish your child to play an instrument or join the choir, please contact the office. The juniors certainly benefit from their specialist music teaching with Mrs Jane Taylor and after the holidays, our infants will begin a 10 week run of singing and music with Mrs Baynes which judging from past feedback, they will really enjoy.

**Curriculum News**

Creative curriculum topics for the next half term are:

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

More information will follow in the spring class newsletters and on the class websites. Anyone with artefacts or specialist knowledge please contact the class teacher responsible – ideas and resources to fuel learning are always welcome.

**Dinner Money**

Thank you to all parents who have paid for their child’s dinners promptly. Prompt and up-front payments are very helpful and allow us to minimise the administrative costs relating to dinners. We are still hoping to bring on-line our payments using ParentPay but we have to wait for this module to be delivered on our internal management information systems. We are, however, reassured that this facility will soon be available. In the meantime, payments can be made in cash or by cheques (payable to Derbyshire County Council). Costs for the half term are:

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| --- | --- |
| 1 day per week | £12.00 |
| 2 days per week | £24.00 |
| 3 days per week | £36.00 |
| 4 days per week | £48.00 |
| 5 days per week | £60.00 |

\* Subtract £2.00 from your total if your child has dinner on a Friday to take into account that school is closed to children on Friday 12th February (Inset day 3).

**The student council**, supported by Mrs Chapman have been continued with their hard work to support our school vision. Recent successes include

* Making Christmas cards for the local residents
* Organising the Children’s Raffle
* Supporting the Enterprise initiative

Watch out in the spring for further activity including planning a spring sponsored walk to raise funds for our school community and work to improve the school playgrounds.

**Working Gardens**

Our mud kitchen has been a fantastic success and the children have really enjoyed working on this. One of our next projects is to build some sheltering for the lower yard and to continue to develop the grounds further. If you can help, please contact the office and keep an eye out on the website for further working mornings.

**Parent Voice**

In the summer, a parent questionnaire was handed out in order to consult with parents about 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 and we will be repeating this process in the spring term. We will also be announcing an open meeting, a chance for parents to become involved in identifying key areas for improvement and celebration. The dates of the questionnaire will be released in January with a meeting scheduled following the survey. Please do help by returning the questionnaire as your views are important to us.

**Attendance**

Attendance at school is very important and is a clear priority for school, the Government and Ofsted. Our school attendance is good and I would like to thank you for arranging your holidays outside of term time. This allows your children to receive and benefit from their full entitlement to education. We have recently audited attendance and many children qualified for a Merit Certificate for ‘100% attendance for the autumn term’ and we would like to congratulate them for this achievement. If your child has had a lot of absence this year or you are worried about attendance, please talk to your child’s teacher in the first instance or see Mrs Gemmell.

**Sporting News**

Following on from our success in achieving the Sainsbury School Games Silver accreditation, our pupils have been very busy competing.

Our Y6 Tag Rugby did very well in the second round of the competition which took place in November at the Anthony Gell School . They played very well and worked well as a team against other, much larger schools.

Our Athletics team also took part in the Sportshall Athletics Competition which was hosted by Hope Valley College. This competition is always fiercely fought and we were successful in coming first – with 23 points. The team will now go through to the second round and will represent the cluster at the partnership championships on Friday 11th March at the Arc in Matlock. Again, fantastic team work was a big factor in securing success but special mention should be given to four of our children who won the individual sports including Best Javelin (Joe West), Best Boy Sport (LP), Winner Speed Bounce (KP) and winner Vertical Bounce (Lucia Baynes).

Our aim for the next year is to achieve the Gold Standard, which we can achieve by demonstrating a commitment to the Healthy Living agenda, including both competitive and non-competitive sports, curriculum time to educate about healthy choices, diet and lifestyle and a whole-school philosophy towards healthy living. To this aim, Y4, Y5 and Y6 benefitted from the 560 Sports Scheme this autumn. As already mentioned, the Lets Get Cooking team are also playing a role in educating the children about healthy diet and exercise choices and we have asked the Student Council to think about how else we can improve our Healthy School agenda.

Further sporting fixtures are advertised on our calendar on the website and the Infant event that was cancelled due to the weather is due to be re-scheduled. We are also pleased to announce that the Bradwell Indoor Bowls group will bere- introducing our students to this sport over the spring term. Once again, thanks go to the many parents who gave up their time to help with transport to and from venues.

We have been training up a group of Sports Leaders who are now ready to help us – leading sessions at lunchtime and beginning to organise some intra-school sporting competitions on a half termly basis. This is another of our initiatives aimed at allowing the children to take responsibility for their own learning and to have a say in how the school is run.

**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 will continue in the spring term and more children will be given the opportunity. I have been quite astounded by some of their cooking skills and their ever increasing knowledge about healthy eating.

**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 | Choir\*  Sports Leaders | **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.

**Free School Meals**

If your circumstances change and you think you may be entitled to Free School Meals, even for a short, interim period, please contact the office in confidence. The form is very simple to fill and a quick response is given. If your child qualifies, then the school receives approximately £900 per year for the whole year and the next 5 years once you cease to qualify. This money makes a big difference to school and is used to support the learning of children.

**School Christmas Fair**

What can I say other than a big thank you to all involved! £1700.00 is a huge, record breaking amount to take and we thank you. The fair was very well attended and a great time was had by all.

Wishing you a very restful and peaceful holiday from all the team at Bamford Primary.

Kate Gemmell