

To all parents/carers

## **New Year Newsletter**

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year to you all from everyone at Brent Knoll School. We hope you all had an enjoyable holiday time and wish you and everyone a peaceful new year. We are looking forward to our first full year in our new building. Late last term the new Executive Director of Children and Young People visited the school for the first time and pronounced herself very impressed with the building and the specialist facilities. We are continuing to invite anyone who has not yet had the chance to look around the building to have a guided tour, please contact the school office to book an appointment. At the end of last term we were delighted to see so many of you at our special achievements assembly when we celebrated the opening of the new school and the many achievements of our young people. We also held two Christmas music performances, one by the primary pupils followed by a secondary music performance. Both were very well attended and enjoyed by everyone there. This term we are hoping to enter our Makaton Choir in the Lewisham Live music performance evening at the Broadway Theatre, fingers crossed and watch this space!

### **Further building works**

We are continuing to complete the list of 'snagging' works to finish the building project. This term we are installing a gate to replace the temporary barrier at the top of the stairs to the lower primary play area. The safety glass and steel balustrades have had to be made to measure which is why it has taken so long to begin the work. We have recently completed the installation of barriers outside the school entrance and the Highways department have extended the yellow zigzag lines which makes the road outside the school far more manageable. We are still lobbying for a road safety assessment which may result in a school crossing patrol but that is not guaranteed. We are also having a lot of work done behind the scenes to improve the drainage systems.

### **Remaining INSET days this year**

This year like many other schools we are reviewing both the curriculum we offer and the way pupils' progress is assessed and measured. We want to create an appropriate world class curriculum for our pupils that is designed with their individual needs in mind. This year our two remaining INSET days will focus on curriculum review and design and assessment planning. The dates for these two training days are

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February** and **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June** and the school will be closed for pupils on those days.

We intend to launch the new curriculum and assessment system in September this year and will be providing information for parents during the summer term.

## **Staffing news**

This term we are advertising for full time permanent teaching staff to fill the vacancies currently being covered by agency staff. Teacher recruitment is very difficult in London at this time and what we are most concerned with is getting the best people into our school and in front of our children. This sometimes requires a great deal of patience but we will get there. We have a goal to be the outstanding special school in Lewisham and to achieve that we need to ensure that we maintain a staff team of the highest quality.

On a more personal note I have decided after over 13 years of leadership at Brent Knoll that 2016 will be my last year as Headteacher and that I intend to retire from headship in December. This is the ideal time to plan for leadership succession with the building project almost finished, the best school staff team ever and the school on a steep upward curve poised to step up to outstanding next time OFSTED come round. I have considered it a privilege to have been able to lead Brent Knoll and to have worked with so many skilled and committed people caring for such special children. I think of this time as being the peak of my professional career and though I will miss the people, the challenge and professional satisfaction of school leadership I consider it an ideal time to hand over the reins and plan some 'me' time! By letting the Governing Body know of my intentions now it gives them a year to recruit and appoint a replacement of the quality and calibre the children and staff deserve.

## **Important dates and events**

In the meantime there is a lot to be getting on with this term and some important dates are listed below.

Half term holiday: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February

INSET day: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February

Lewisham Voices Live at the Broadway Theatre: Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March

Jack Petchey Achievement Award presentation evening at the Broadway Theatre: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March

Parents Evening: Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March

Achievements Assembly and end of term: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March

Start of summer term: Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April

We hope to see many of you in and around school or at some of these events.

Best wishes

Jon Sharpe  
Headteacher