

End of term newsletter – Christmas 2015

We have nearly completed a whole term in our new school building. Since we moved in September we have had the challenge of overcoming the various 'snags' that inevitably come with a new building and at the same time finishing off areas of work that have been commissioned separately to enhance the building and the experience for the children. We have been delighted to have had the opportunity to show many of you round the new building either at the tea party afternoon, parents evening or on one of the many organised tours. It was good to see so many of you at Parents Evening recently. If anyone hasn't yet taken the opportunity to be shown round and would like to please contact the school office to arrange an appointment. We will be celebrating the opening of the new school building at our Christmas Achievements Assembly at the end of term.

The new building

This half term we have finished off several areas of the school. In November we opened the Soft Play Room which provides a stimulating environment for energetic play and the Immersive Room which uses leading edge technology to create multisensory environments – it has to be seen to be believed! We have now had the yellow zigzags and safety barriers completed outside the school which was the responsibility of the local council.

Work is not finished as there are several issues that have arisen that need to be addressed. Having recognised a potential hazard with an unprotected set of stairs in the lower primary play area we have ordered a stainless steel and glass gate in the style of the existing balustrades. This has to be custom made and will be installed early in the new year. We also recognise the need to provide protection in the hall for the lighting bars and windows to allow ball games in the hall and are considering using netting for that purpose. There are several other projects that will make the building even better and these will be prioritised so that when the school has the funds available they can be completed.

Road Safety

Perry Rise is a busy road and we are very aware of the need to make it as safe as possible. The yellow zigzags and safety barriers are very helpful in this respect and everyone can help by avoiding parking on the yellow lines around the school. We have also requested a school crossing patrol which will be assessed by the Lewisham road safety team. Parking is an issue around the school and we all need to be mindful and sympathetic of our neighbours.

Staffing

We have had several new permanent members of staff join the team this term. Sara Elmqvist has taken up the post of Year 7 classteacher and has already introduced herself at Parents Evening. On the support staff team we have welcomed Kenny

Anderson, Miriam Anthony and Emily Ward in the primary classes and Della Clarke in secondary. Everyone has settled in very quickly and we are very pleased to have them all on the team.

School News

As always there has been lots going on this term. Last week nearly all our Y7, 8 and 9 pupils went on a weeks residential school journey to Margaret Macmillan House in Kent. The outdoor activity centre is run by our Trust partner Wide Horizons and both pupils and staff had a great week. 9B had already spent three days in Whitby, North Yorkshire earlier this term.

We have a number of groups working in the school this term. Movement Works have been delivering a physical development programme for our youngest pupils while Speech Bubbles have run another series of successful communication workshops. We have introduced music tuition for secondary pupils and of course our Makaton choir has been going from strength to strength. Outside school all our primary classes are continuing to benefit from visits to the Forest School again run by Trust partner Wide Horizons.

We hope many of you will have the opportunity to come to one or both of the music performances being held in school this week. The secondary department are presenting a musical performance on Tuesday 15th while the primary departments Christmas performance is on Wednesday. The school Christmas lunch provided by our caterers Harrisons is on Thursday.

Our school website has recently been updated to make it compatible with mobile devices and Ipads. There will soon be new images added as well as updated video material. We hope to make the website much more interactive and current so that everyone can find the latest information and news there. Check it out at www.brentknollschool.co.uk

Parents Forum

We are very keen to improve communication between home and school and the Parents Forum is an important part of that. Ideally this will be the start of an active Parent/Teacher Association which will increase the involvement of parents in school life both socially and work wise. Watch out for the date of the next Parents Forum which is an opportunity to have your voice heard and meet some of the school governors. Catie Painter, one of our parent governors, is very keen to get as many parents involved as possible.

Please note that the Spring Term begins on Monday 4th January but in the meantime we hope to see many of you at our Christmas Achievements Assembly on Friday at 10.00 am. For those who can't make it we'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year from everyone here at Brent Knoll.