



February/March 2016 Newsletter

Here we are in the second part of the Spring term. The days are getting longer as we lead up to Easter, which is very early this year - giving us a short 5-week term.

New learning themes:



Last term's learning themes resulted in some great learning with 'Blue Abyss' in Y3/4, with the trip to the Sea-life Centre being a highlight

This term Y3/4 will be following the 'Potions' theme where they will be looking at lots of scientific learning. They will be writing non-chronological reports and play-scripts. They will be designing different flavoured ice-pops, which they will sell at the end of the term.

In Y5/6 they found out lots about World War Two and used this to write some excellent stories.

This term, they will be looking at mini-beasts through the 'Beast Creator' theme. The children will be learning a lot of science information and using it to write formal letters about the conservation of bees in the UK.



There is more information on our website (www.brackensdalejuniorschool.co.uk) and some topic webs and homework choices will be coming out soon. Let's Love Learning!



The next **Friends of Brackensdale (F.O.B)** meeting is on **Wednesday 2nd March 2:30 - 3:15**. They will be discussing the **Easter competitions**, events for 2016 and other school issues.

The Valentines disco was a success and raised over £200 towards their security fencing project. Also, we discussed: the cost of trips - an understanding that £15 is a more realistic target than £10; INSET days - see below; the best time and days for parent information meetings - see Reading support; and to have a Bullying Awareness week in in April in response to the Parent Questionnaire. Please feel free to drop in - all ideas are welcome.

Remember, we have a regular **Coffee Morning** every **Monday** from 9:15 - 10:30 in the school hall. Please come along for a drink, biscuit and a chat.

Parent protocol:

Whilst we try to make ourselves available to parents as much as possible, the present 'open door' approach is proving to be unmanageable and seems to prevent some parents getting their fair 'air-time' with staff. Grabbing a 'quick chat' with a class teacher at the beginning of the day can seem harmless, but this can often become extended and affect the start of lessons and the learning. In order for the system to be manageable for us and fair for all parents, we are asking all parents and carers to follow the protocol below:

- Unless it is an emergency, please ring or call into the school office and make an appointment to see the member of staff. This will enable us to give you a slot of quality time rather than a rushed conversation. Please be aware that class teachers must be with their classes from 8:55am until 3:15pm and we always have a staff meeting on a Wednesday, starting at 3:30pm.
- When talking to the school office staff, in addition to asking which staff member you wish to talk too, can you give a couple of possible slots when you are available.
- We will try to get back to you with a suitable time-slot as soon as we can - hopefully on the same day if possible.

Communication between home and school is very important to us and we hope this protocol will help us to make these links more effective.

Together we...learn, care, succeed, share

INSET days:

On reviewing our School Development Plan (which we do each term), we seem to have planned one too many INSET days. Reflecting on how this happened, it stems from trying to do a similar format to last year - which worked very well for our school, matching with the Infants and helping parents by finishing the school year on a Friday rather than a Tuesday. Only when counting back did we realise that this resulted in six INSET days rather than five. In order to comply with the 190 teaching days for the children, we need to cancel one INSET day. After discussion with some parents and staff, we feel it is more convenient for families if we cancel the day on Friday 1st July, so all Brackensdale families can break up together for the Summer holidays on Friday 22nd July - possibly benefiting from cheaper holidays beginning that weekend.

Apologies for any disruption to your planning for the year.

Parking on Brackensdale Avenue:

I have had several complaints about how difficult it is to drive along Brackensdale Avenue at the end of the school day. I am working with the police and our local councilor to try to find a solution. One suggestion, which might ease the frustration, was for cars to park **only** on the **school side** of the road.

The problem of flow does arise when there are cars parked on both sides of the road creating a blockage.

This 'rule' may help everyone's frustration until a permanent solution can be found. Thank you for your support.



Helping your child with their reading:

We all know how important being able to read is to everyone. Reading is the key to all learning, as it is very difficult to learn if you cannot read. It can be difficult to get your child to read or you may not be sure about how to support their reading. We have been given a DVD with some small (5 - 7 min) videos of suggestions to help parents read with their children. Rather than just give them out, we thought it would be better to have a 30 minute session after school on **Monday 7th March** to introduce it to parents and answer any questions on helping children read. If you cannot make the meeting the DVD will be available on request or you can look at the resources on-line at www.whatever-it-takes.org.uk/resources.



Questionnaire

Parent questionnaire:

Thank you to all the parents/carers who responded to the parent questionnaire given out during the Christmas performances. We had 100 responses, which made it easy to work out the percentages. The results are attached to this newsletter and show a high level of positive responses. Although only 6% were concerned about bullying, the FOB group and I have decided to have a **Bullying Awareness Week** beginning on **Monday 11th April**. The FOB group will be selling Anti-bullying friendship bracelets during the week.

Governing body news:

Governors had an interesting day on 26th January when they spoke to the School Council and answered some of the children's questions. We were very impressed with the positive attitude they had toward our school and how keen they were on the topics and writing in particular. They could see the benefit of doing work at home and had some 'interesting' ideas on how they could encourage all children to do their homework - research shows this makes a massive difference.

We will be running a 'Meet the Governor' stall in reception on each of the Parents interview days (March 2nd & 3rd) from 3:30 to 5:30pm. Please come and ask us questions about governance or the school in general. We look forward to meeting you.



Key dates for the year:

If we have to make any changes, we will try to give you as much notice as possible.
Stick it on your fridge etc.



Key Diary dates for 2015-2016

Mon 22nd Feb
Wed 2nd Mar
Thurs 3rd Mar
Thurs 24th Mar
Mon 11th Apr
w/c 11th Apr
Mon 2nd May
Mon 9th May
Mon 23rd May
Fri 27th May
Mon 6th June
Tues 5th July
Thurs 7th July
Fri 8th July
Tues 12th July
Wed 13th July
Mon 18th July
Thurs 21st July
Fri 22nd July

Back to school (5 weeks)
Parents evening 1 3:30 – 6:00
Parents evening 2 3:30 – 6:00
Easter Service 10:00am Y5/6 + Break for Easter holidays
Summer term begins (7 weeks)
Bullying Awareness week
Bank holiday
SAT week
Art week
Break for ½ term
Back to school (7 wks) – Book week – link with Derby Book Festival
Transition day (Welcome Assembly for Y2s 9:15 & New parents mtg 3:30pm)
Summer Fair
Reports to parents
Sports morning am
Marathon am
Final Awards assembly – Swimming, 100%ers & Star of the term
Leavers Performance 1:30pm followed by Y6 leavers party
End of Year Assembly + **Break for Summer**

If you lose the newsletter, this and previous newsletters are also on the school website.

David Hall – Headteacher