

## **Brookland Schools' Governing Body Newsletter June 2010**

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Dear Parent/Carer

Each term we aim to send you a newsletter detailing some of the recent areas we have been working on. We hope you find this information of interest. In addition to the items below, we have been undertaking the usual annual tasks of reviewing plans set the previous year and setting new targets and priorities as well as reviewing the annual budget. You may wish to view the school profile, link to be found on each of the school websites, for a further overview of our schools.

### **Children's Centre**

At the start of February 2010 the governors were faced with a very difficult decision that had to be made in a very short timescale. We were invited to build a Sure Start Children's Centre on the schools' site, which was to be managed by the Infant & Nursery School. Unfortunately, we were approached very late in the process and with the Centre being required to run from soon after 31 March 2010 and no consultation having taken place or firm building or funding plans available, the governors did not feel able to agree to such a significant venture.

### **Extended hours in the Nursery**

Plans for extending the hours provided to children in the nursery have been finalised this term and new nursery parents will by now have been offered one longer day together with either four mornings or four afternoons each week. These longer nursery hours are part of national reforms to ensure all nursery age children have access to 15 hours of free provision each week. We look forward to seeing these new arrangements in operation from September.

### **Community Cohesion and Race Equality**

We would like to inform you of the schools' policies and work on a number of areas.

A welcoming, multicultural school, Brookland children learn about all the religions and join together to celebrate the important religious and cultural events. Additional events, such as Black and Asian History month take place during the course of the year. In academic terms, the progress of each individual child and group of children is carefully monitored by ethnicity, gender, those on free school meals and Looked After Children. Further promoting community cohesion, the school joins with other schools for events such as the Barnet music festival. On a local and national level, the children support various charities. Forging links further afield, we are pleased to report that a junior school link has just been established with a French school.

### **SEN Section**

Governors with specific responsibility for Special Educational Needs meet regularly with the Schools' SENCOs to review the schools' work within this area. We would like to share these findings with you.

Parents receive an outline of our SEN policy on entry to the school. The full policy is regularly reviewed and updated by the SENCOs and governors and parents wishing to read it can obtain a copy from the office.

There is a range of different interventions which are available to the whole spectrum of children from those with significant needs to those who, for a variety of reasons, are not making the level of progress which it is felt they are capable of and simply need an extra 'push' to move forward.

For children with severe and complex needs the SENCO and staff will work with the parents and appropriate professionals to try to secure a statement of special educational needs. However, this is only available to a very few children. Unfortunately, in the present economic climate funding and resources are being increasingly cut.

Both schools' SENCOs are active in forging links with other schools and external agencies with expertise to share.

As part of their role the SENCO is there to offer support and guidance to the staff in assisting children within the class. They also disseminate training and advice. Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Staff are highly valued by the school and receive both in-house training and external training in order to equip them to do their job to the highest possible standard. Recently, the teaching assistants in the junior school received INSET training on Widget ICT Technology, team teaching, the new Maths framework, behaviour management and motor skills interventions. The infant school has received training in child protection and literacy interventions.

Future targets which have been identified for the junior school development plan are to develop teaching assistants' knowledge and expertise in delivering Assessment for Learning strategies, to continue to prioritise appropriate differentiation across the school and to create an accessible physical site that will meet the needs of all disabled stakeholders, including children transferring from the infant school.

As parents will be aware, further interventions are available. Some children receive one-to-one or small group support outside the class. An annual review is made each year of the particular intervention groups to put in place depending on that year's particular cohort so that resources are employed to greatest effect. In general our results show that these schemes are highly effective in raising the attainment of the children.

If you would like to know more about the special needs department of either school please feel free to contact either Jaia Crebbin or Katie Kraiss through the school office.

## **Improving Access**

You may have noticed the ongoing redevelopment work taking place in the infant school. Our aim is to aid access into the school building for any children or adults who have particular mobility needs. The pathway into the lower corridor will now allow quicker access from the top of the school to the Early Years Foundation Stage area and the year two Hedgehog classroom. In addition a new ramp to the year one block has been installed. Work to improve accessibility in the junior school has also taken place this last school year, with the addition of further handrails. New flooring has been laid in the year six toilets and stairs. New flooring has also been laid in the dining area. The play area in the lower playground has been fenced off and locked to ensure it is only used during school time and is supervised play only. More work is planned for the summer holidays including new paths for improved access and ramps to allow for disabled access. In the year three blocks, a completely new disabled toilet is being fitted and it will include full changing facilities. Further locks have been added to the kitchen access for security purposes and an additional camera has been added to the car park.

## **Breakfast Club**

Since the last newsletter two breakfast clubs already running successfully in other Barnet primary schools have been visited and there has been further research and consideration given to the logistics of setting up a financially sustainable breakfast club in our own school. Many of you will be pleased to

learn that a definite decision has now been reached to open a breakfast club in Brookland Junior School, commencing at 8am each morning, from September and to make it open to children from year one up to year six. Details of the club, including costings and charges, are currently under discussion; we will inform you of them before the end of term.

### **Secondary School Transfer**

Last term parents from across Barnet were invited to attend an open forum meeting with the Director of Children's Services entitled Building Schools for the Future (BSF) to discuss secondary school provision in Barnet and in particular the redevelopment of six Barnet secondaries. The meeting was poorly attended so with two governors and two parents present, Brookland was relatively well represented! Many of those at the meeting expressed their concern and dissatisfaction over the lack of non-faith community secondary schools in our area. We were informed that unfortunately, the funding to be made available for the regeneration of the six BSF secondary schools cannot be transferred and at present further funding is lacking to tackle this problem directly.

Since then, we have met with Oliver Blond, Head Teacher at Henrietta Barnett, to pass on the frustration expressed by several parents that Henrietta Barnett is not a local school for local girls and to explore any scope for changing this for the future. This has been followed up with a letter to their governors asking them to consider this matter.

We have also met with Martin Lavelle, Head Teacher at Whitefield, who, having achieved Trust status for the school and formed a partnership with the Head Teacher of the Compton, feels in a strong position to make significant changes. In particular, efforts are being made to foster a positive learning environment, raise academic achievement and broaden the school's appeal. We plan to meet up with him later in the year to discuss the progress that has been made.

Together with a group of local primary schools who share our concerns we are proactively seeking other possible options. We will, of course, keep you informed on any progress in this area.