



Dear Parent/Carer

We would like to welcome back all our parents and extend a warm welcome to all new parents. Every term we send you a newsletter giving some information on the recent work of the governing body. If you would like details of your current governing body as well as a general overview of our role, please go to either the Infant school website at [www.brooklandinfants.co.uk](http://www.brooklandinfants.co.uk) (click on 'About us', then 'Meet the governors') or the Junior school website at [www.brooklandjuniorschool.co.uk](http://www.brooklandjuniorschool.co.uk) (Click on 'Our community', then 'Meet the governors'). Your child's teacher, the head teachers and governors are always happy to speak to you and hear your thoughts. Parent governors are often found in the playground - our photographs can be found in the outdoor school notice boards. Alternatively, you can contact any of us by leaving a note at either of the school offices.

A number of governors have recently left the governing body – Infant School teacher Ziz Chater who has taken up a post in a junior school, Junior School teacher and SENCO Katie Kraiss who is pursuing her own business and Linda Lewis a long serving community governor. We would like to thank them for their valuable contribution. At the same time we are pleased to welcome the following: Infant school teacher Rebecca Grint, Junior school support staff member Maria Chapman and Chris Rafferty, a former Brookland Junior School teacher who has joined us as a community governor.

### **Junior School OFSTED**

Towards the end of last term, the Junior School received a two day visit from OFSTED. The governing body is delighted that the commitment and dedication of the staff was recognised. The children as always also did us proud. As well as being judged 'outstanding' overall, the school received a judgement of 'outstanding' across almost every area. To view the report please go to the Junior School's website and look under 'Our school', then 'Key information'.

### **Breakfast Club**

As part of our commitment to meeting the needs of our parents and children, the school conducted a survey last term which established a demand for an on-site breakfast club. The club, which runs from 8am each morning, opened in the Junior School dining hall this September. Reflecting the feedback from parents and children, it provides a tasty, healthy breakfast and a sociable start to the day. After breakfast children can play outside or inside with a range of equipment and in wet weather, there are also toys, games and puzzles to keep them occupied. The club is open to all children from year one to year six and attendance can be regular or on an ad hoc basis. If you would like further information or would like to register your child/children, please contact Farnoush in the Junior School office (020 8346 6937).

### **After School Club**

An external provider, TEAMY, continues to run our after school club, located in the Infant School. In order to forge further links with our neighbours and to increase revenue, the club is now also open to children from nearby St Theresa Catholic Primary School. We feel this is a positive development, enabling our children to socialise with children from another school.

### **Premises**

The latest phase of redevelopment work in both the Junior School and the Infant School has been completed allowing far greater access for children and adults with mobility needs. The Junior School has developed ramp access, including new hand rails, to the main reception area, year 3 block, computer room, library and music room, with further development of the pathways to improve accessibility currently under tender. In addition, a new disabled toilet has been installed in the year 3 block including full changing facilities. Over the summer the kitchen was fully refurbished and new flooring laid in accordance with health and hygiene recommendations.

The Infant School has just been awarded an Early Years Grant to replace the cover in the reception year outdoor classroom. This is a significant improvement as it will allow children to access a wide range of activities in the outdoor classroom in all weathers.

Work to improve the nursery facilities in the Infant School is being planned and we hope will be starting in the Spring term.

### **Absences**

The level of absences across both schools is higher than it should be. Our staff invest much time and energy into ensuring our children receive an excellent education, and any absence from school will affect a child's ability to benefit from that; it is disruptive to their learning and can be disruptive for others in the child's class. We must therefore work with parents to reduce all unavoidable absence.

As you may be aware, absence is split into two categories: authorised and unauthorised. Absence due to illness is authorised but we ask parents to arrange medical and dental appointments out of school hours. Time off due to observance of religious festivals is also authorised although, of course, we would ask that parents do not abuse this. Unauthorised absences include family holidays which fall entirely or partly in term time and so we ask that parents ensure that they are aware of the term dates and stick to these when planning their holidays. All absences are counted in the schools' absence rates.

You may be interested to know that our high level of absences came very close to reducing some judgements from 'outstanding' to 'good' in the recent Junior School OFSTED inspection. This is an area where we therefore ask for your support to maintain the high rating of which we are all proud.

### **Traffic Around The School Gate**

Each of the two schools has a Travel Plan which it reviews annually and which looks at issues that parents, children and other stakeholders have when travelling to or from school – you may recall questionnaire being sent home periodically asking for information on how safe you feel your journey is.

As well as our normal work on the Travel Plans, for the last six months we have been liaising with a local resident about issues that arise from the residents' perspective. We have also received a petition asking for various works to be done to improve the situation at and around the school gate. We have put together an action plan in liaison with local police, Barnet advisers and Barnet traffic enforcement officers that we hope will address these concerns.

You will have noticed the increased uniformed presence around the school gate enforcing the yellow lines and zig-zags and the situation has improved. We are working hard to make changes that will further improve the situation but we ask that you support us by not parking on either the zig-zags or the yellow lines at any time nor using the school driveway within school hours (now 8am to 6pm) – ideally we would ask that you look at your journey and see if there is a way to build in a short walk so that you park away from the school gates, making that area much safer for all. We would like to thank all of you who are already assisting us in this area.

### **Secondary School Transfer**

Last month you will have received a questionnaire asking for your views on the possibility of Christ's College Finchley becoming fully co-educational (taking boys and girls throughout the school). Thank you to all of you who completed and returned this questionnaire. The view of parents from Brookland and from the three other primary schools we are working alongside, was firmly in support of this proposition. We took the results of this survey and our earlier survey, including all your comments, to the governors of Christ's College at the start of October and, we felt, a positive discussion ensued. Disappointingly, however, Christ's College governing body has just reported to us that they have voted against the school becoming co-educational. We appreciate that many of you, particularly those with girls, are concerned about the limited options open to your children and so, together with a number of other local primary schools, we will continue to liaise with the local authority to try to find a resolution. We will, of course, keep you informed.