

Longwill School
Headteachers Newsletter
April 2014

Welcome back to a new term at Longwill School. We were very pleased to see your children return to school at the start of the Summer Term. I am sure, with your continued support and our drive for real learning your child will continue to work hard and make excellent progress. We have a busy half term ahead of us with Parents' evenings, SATs and Assessment Week. Years 3 and 4 are going sailing and our Chickens are back as well. Do look out for our class newsletters which outline what pupils are learning this half term. This is also available on the website.

Some of the Year 6 children have been busy preparing for their SATs tests and will be taking them during the week beginning 12th May. On behalf of the staff of the school may I take this opportunity to wish them luck and for the success they deserve.

Breakfast Club

We continue to run our Breakfast Club for all children each morning. We use some of our Pupil Premium funding to support this. We offer pupils a healthy start to the day, they are able to eat cereal, bagels and have a drink of juice or milk. This means that when they start the school day they really are ready for learning!

New Curriculum 2014

The Government has introduced a new Primary School Curriculum for September 2014. The main changes are:

- A slimmed down national curriculum for foundation subjects (i.e. Geography, History, Art etc).
- A more prescriptive description of what to teach in English, Maths and Science
- More emphasis on using visual/physical resources to understand mathematical concepts.
- Specific grammar, handwriting and spelling programmes for all children with ongoing SPAG test in year 6 (spelling, grammar and punctuation).
- Higher expectations in Maths and English curriculum - a number of concepts will now be taught a year earlier.

The expectation is that the children will spend more time learning English and Maths. For Longwill it will not mean that much change. We already teach basic skills (English and Maths) all morning and specific lessons focus on spelling, phonics for Deaf children and handwriting. As the new foundation subject programmes are less detailed and we will be able to continue to teach them through our enquiry based approach which engages Deaf children and promotes their problem solving skills. We have adapted many of our long term plans to include the new curriculum, and this term we will hold a curriculum information session to share them with parents. We already personalise the curriculum to meet the needs of our Deaf sign bilingual pupils and this will continue to be the case even after September. You will have read in the paper that statutory assessment processes are also changing. At Longwill we will continue to develop our curriculum and assessment processes which secures pupil progress and development and which is in line with our mission statement.

Feedback from Parents Survey March 2014

I would like to thank all the parents who responded to the survey. We are now able to feedback some of your views about our school. The full report is available on our website and hard copy will also be sent home to parents separately. I am pleased to be able to report that all parents (100%) who responded are in agreement that Longwill is well led and managed school, where pupils feel safe, happy and secure and 97% felt their child has made good progress in their learning. All parents felt that pupils are well behaved and that the school deals effectively with bullying. Parents, therefore, believe the school to be offering a very good environment in which Deaf children can flourish. We will continue to do all we can to ensure that this continues.

Staff and Pupil Update

We bid farewell to Rachel Berridge just before Easter. Rachel worked tirelessly at Longwill for the last twenty five years as a Teaching Assistant and as a teacher of BSL to pupils and parents. We wish her well in her retirement. We are welcoming back Carol Sutton and Claire Collins from maternity leave. They will both be working in the Foundation Dept for the summer term. We also have welcomed several new children into school in the last few weeks of last term. Our pupil numbers now stand at 51 and we anticipate more pupils joining us during this term.

Gardening Project

We have been fortunate to have been successful in a lottery funded bid. Hannah, our Gardener, is now with us every Monday for the coming year. She will work with pupils throughout the school as well as teachers and TA's. She, along with our pupils, will improve our sensory garden and allotments and she has already established a gardening club. We are keen to encourage pupils to take a positive leadership in the gardening project and so School Council and our Eco warriors team are heavily involved.

Attendance

Thank you all for supporting the school in our drive to raise the attendance levels of pupils in school. We introduced Class Attendance awards in January and the children are really motivated by this challenge. This week I will be handing out individual certificates to 100% attenders for the Spring term. The impact has been enormous! We have seen a 3% increase on attendance last term compared with the same term last year! Well done everyone!

Sprucing up the school

We have painted the dining room over the school holidays. It looks lovely, refreshed and welcoming now and is a very contemporary shade of green, grey and pink! Also, we have repainted the hall and are in the process of installing a new ICT projector, sound system and screen there. It looks bright and provides pupils with a really super learning environment to work in.

Website

All previous newsletters are archived on the website, so you can catch up on anything you may have missed. Key dates and the latest school news are also available to view on the school website. Please let me know if you can think of ways of further improving communication between school and home. You can find it at www.longwill.bham.sch.uk

Diary Dates for the Summer Term

30th April	Y5 Forest Schools Morning
1st May	Swimming
6th May	Y3 and Y4 Sailing and Gardening Day
7th May	Y4 Forest Schools Morning
8th May	Swimming
12th May	Y3 and Y4 Sailing and Gardening Day
14th May	Y3 Forest Schools Morning
15th May	Swimming
16th May	Visitors Morning
19th May	Y3 and Y4 Sailing and Gardening Day
20th May	Parents Association Coffee Morning... All welcome!
21st May	Y2 Forest Schools Morning
22nd May	Swimming