

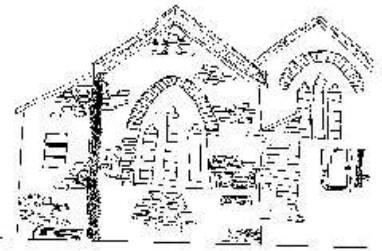
BRANSCOMBE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER 11 / 12 14
Friday 16th December 2011



Branscombe C of E Primary School
Children's Aims
We will try to:



The Branscombe Waves



Dear Parents,

With Christmas fast approaching we have now successfully completed all the children's festivities. The school lunch on Tuesday was delicious, a big thank you to Pauline and Mary Meadows and all the staff for cooking the meal and helping to ensure the children had a brilliant afternoon. It was lovely that so many parents were able to join us later in the day for our Christmas sing-a-long. Well done to all the children for learning some new songs - and new languages, and to the ukulele club for their brilliant rendition of 'The Little Drummer Boy'.

Our trip to 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' last Friday was really super and it was lovely that the children were able to see the art work, that they had done earlier in the term, of the river scene displayed. We would like to thank the PTFA for financially supporting the Bear Hunt trip, the Christmas Dinner and the swimming lessons that will be taking place in the new year. Without the PTFA to arrange fundraising events, these events would be too costly for the school to run.

We had a very positive Parent Forum meeting this week, thank you to the representatives for attending. A summary of the discussion is included below.

We hope you all have a lovely holiday and look forward to seeing the children again on Thursday 5th January. The Class 1 topic will be 'Growth' and Class 2 will be studying The Tudors.

God bless and we hope you have a very happy Christmas and New Year.
Best wishes from Katie Gray and the staff at Branscombe School.

Health Information

Please ensure you read the important letter below regarding a current health concern at the school.

Key Dates

Mrs Gray will be in school on Thursday of the first week of term and the following week on Monday 9th, Tuesday 10th, Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th of January
Thursday 5th January - return to school after Christmas.

Clubs

There will be no clubs in the first week of next term. Information regarding clubs for the **Spring term will be in the first newsletter of the term.**

Swimming lessons

Swimming lessons, for Class 2 children, take place for six weeks on Friday afternoons starting on the 12th January. There will be 5 sessions before half term and the last session will take place on the 23rd February. The cost of the lessons will be £17.50 and you may pay by cash or cheque, with cheques payable to Devon County Council please. You may pay in 3 instalments (of £5, £5 and £7.50) over the first three weeks of next term if you wish.

Norovirus

We have been given advice from the health protection agency regarding the prevention of the spread of norovirus (which causes sickness and diarrhoea) that is common at this time of year. Please remember that if your child has sickness and or diarrhoea they must stay away from school until they have been **free of symptoms for at least 48 hours.**

Netball coaching

Congratulations to Claire who has recently attended 3 weekends of netball coaching and is now a qualified level 2 coach. This course was funded through Active Villages. This now widens the opportunities available for netball club.

School meals

The first week of term will be week 3 on the school meal menu. The kitchen are hoping to produce a new menu for the spring term, but they are in the process of having this approved.

Science Evening at Honiton Community College

During the evening of March 14th a science evening for pupils and members of the wider community is being held at Honiton Community College. The college is offering an open lab session for people to try their hand at lighting a bunsen, looking through magnifying glass or making bulbs light up. It will take place from 3.30 until 5.30 - no booking is required.

Letter from the Vicar for Year 6

Children in Year 6 will also be bringing a letter home tonight from Rev Hilary Dawson regarding confirmation classes.

Feedback from Parent Forum meeting

The parent forum year representatives discussed some key areas noted below.

Positive things about the school	Frustrations that occur
Children are challenged and well cared for Lovely class sizes Fabulous family atmosphere Pauline's Christmas dinner There are no negatives about the school Schools values and aims are in line with parent's own Friendly staff Any problems are sorted quickly Teachers are brilliant After school clubs Happy school Help and support staff are brilliant Good after school care and clubs Parents working together Relationships between staff, parents and pupils are good The variety of clubs The happy ethos Staff know each child as individual Fantastic staff Staff pulling together when the Head is at the partner school	Space for lunch and whole school gatherings No access to the netball court Dependence on parental help PTFA volunteers The hill!

A discussion about how these frustrations could be minimised took place, mainly around the issues of the netball court and parent volunteers. It is brilliant news that Claire has now passed her netball coaching qualification as this means it should be more straight forward for the club to use the court at the hall. All schools these days rely on parent support so much due to central funding being so limited. This is even more appreciated in a small school with only a handful of staff. We would like to emphasise how much we appreciate all the parental support we have in this school - please keep up all the good work!

Positives of the Management Partnership	Negatives of management partnership
<p>We have a wonderful staff team who keep everything running smoothly</p> <p>A parent who initially had concerns said 'I was wrong I'm sorry'</p> <p>The school is running smoothly</p> <p>Good for staff to have other staff to share ideas</p> <p>Opportunities for children in both schools to mix with different children</p> <p>An opportunity to visit secondary schools jointly</p> <p>Opportunities for children to access new activities</p> <p>Headteacher gets fantastic support from staff team</p> <p>Staff cover well</p>	<p>A lot of pressure on Headteacher</p> <p>Headteacher not here all the time to talk to children about behaviour issues</p> <p>Parents driving children from one school to another</p> <p>Sometimes no answer on the phone which is sometimes difficult</p>

A discussion about these points was held. It was lovely that so many positives could be seen about the partnership. Governors had already discussed that in future parents would not be expected to transport children to Broadhembury, a coach would be provided. However, last time it was a good opportunity for our parents to visit the partner school. A parent suggested that each school could hold an open afternoon when partner parents and governors could visit. This will be arranged.

Mrs Gray has some ideas about how she can be kept informed of behaviour problems when not here. These will be thought through more thoroughly and implemented in the new year.

We are glad that parents raised the issue of the phone not always being answered as this has often been a concern of staff too. This situation is not a result of the management partnership as the same problem occurred when Mrs Gray had a teaching commitment at the same time as when Nicola was not working. We will discuss this as a whole staff and try to find systems to improve the situation. We will certainly try to listen to the answer phone more often. Nicola is changing her hours slightly next term and will be working longer hours during the school day rather than until 4.30 as she does now. This may also help the situation. We will keep you informed of our discussions.