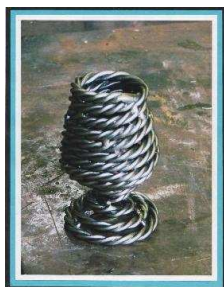


BRANSCOMBE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL
NEWSLETTER 07/08 23
Friday 29th February 2007



This week's winning team was the Reef Knot Team with 74 points.

PLEASE NOTE THAT TODAY'S NEWSLETTER IS PARTICULARLY LONG AND PERMISSION SLIPS ARE AT THE VERY END.

NETBALL Classes 2 and 3

Mrs Crawford sends her apologies that permission slips for netball club were not attached to the newsletter before half term and so we were unable to play at the Village Hall this week.

Netball club will take place each Thursday at the Village Hall commencing 6th March at 3.30pm. Children should be collected at 4.15pm.

To avoid any confusion, in wet weather the children will remain in school and they will walk to the Village Hall at 3.45pm with Mrs Crawford for collection as normal.

Please complete the form below and return to school ASAP.

SCHOOL MEALS

Just a reminder that orders for school meals together with payment must be handed in on Monday morning. We do have half termly ordering forms if this makes the process easier.

Please note - Although we can add some meals during the week, St Nicks kitchens will not allow us to order meals after 9.45am for that day.

Internet Safety

April went to the Internet Safety evening at St Nicks School this week. She has written a summary of what was discussed. If you would like a copy please ask Mrs Gray.

Tag Rugby

Just a quick reminder to you that Class 2 has been invited to a Tag Rugby training session and tournament next Thursday. Children will need to arrive at Sidmouth College at 3.45 and be collected at 6pm. For further details please see Mrs Crawford.

Gemini Radio

On March 13th the Eco Club will be involved with a second waste audit to monitor whether their efforts have meant that the school is now producing less waste. Gemini Radio have asked if they can interview a few Class 3 children on the day about this. If you have any objection to your child being interviewed for the radio please let Mrs Gray know. Thank you

Parking

We have been asked by the National Trust to remind parents that the small National Trust car park should not be used for dropping off and collecting children. The staff at the National Trust office have also noticed that a number of children are climbing on the banks of the new footpath. Please could you discourage children from doing this? The plants need to grow back so that the bank becomes stable again.

Allotment

We hope to be able to lay some paths on the allotment on Sunday 9th March. If you would be willing to help, please meet at the allotment at 1.30pm

The Grizzly

April will be taking part in The Grizzly this year which takes place on the 9th March. She is doing this to raise money for the PTFA fund for the proposed activity play area in the field adjacent to school. This year the route is about 19 miles long with lots of hills - and the odd extra hill thrown in for good luck! If you would like to sponsor April for this please fill in the form below. Many thanks.

Sainsbury and Tesco Vouchers

The two supermarkets are once again giving out vouchers for schools. We really benefit from these schemes and would encourage you to collect as many vouchers as possible for school. The collection boxes are in the entrance hall.

Sponsored Walk

The annual sponsored walk will be held on Thursday 24th April. We are sending home the forms today. The school council will be involved in choosing what to spend the money on. We are hoping the whole school can walk the longer route together this year as Class 1 are such good walkers.

Cake Sale

Just a reminder to you all that it's the cake sale again next Wednesday straight after school.

World Book Day - Thursday March 6th 2008

Branscombe School are going to celebrate World Book Day this year. The children are invited to come to school as a character from a book. A charge of £1 will be made; this will go towards new books for the Library. *The children must carry with them a copy of the book containing the character they have chosen to be.* Everyone will participate in a parade around the playground.

Tudor Day – Class 2 and 3

On Tuesday April 1st we will be holding a Tudor Event for the local community in the Village Hall. The class 2 and 3 children will be making Tudor cakes, performing Tudor dances and possibly even some Shakespeare! We will be inviting members of the local community to the event. We would appreciate it if the children could come to school in their Tudor Costumes on this date. Thank you for your support in this.

Foundation Stage

As many parents will know, Glynis Newman has been working for 18 months on the Effective Early Learning Programme run through the Centre for Research in Early Childhood. This focuses on promoting good practice within the Foundation Stage. Glynis has been involved in analysing the way the children work in Class 1, interviewing staff and a number of parents and writing numerous reports. An action plan has been decided upon for further improvements to the Foundation Stage provision. The majority of this work has been done in her own time and Mrs Gray and the governors are very grateful to Glynis for doing this. The programme culminates with an assessment visit, which is due to take place in the middle of March.

We have been asked by the assessment centre to bring it to your attention that if you have any concerns about the foundation stage provision that may affect the award of an Effective Early Learning Quality Assurance Accreditation for this setting, then please discuss your concerns with Mrs Gray. If after this discussion your concerns are unresolved, Mrs Gray will give you the address of the assessment team for you to contact.

Thank you for your interest and support in this project.

First Aid

We are starting a lunchtime First Aid course every Friday for Key Stage 2 children. The course will last for approximately 6 weeks. Please be aware that numbers will be limited, however Mrs Crawford will re run the course if there is enough interest.

Post It Note Exercise

Thank you once again to those parents who took time on the Parent Evenings to write your ideas and comments on the post it notes! As promised, we have now collated the results and a summary of the most common topics is printed below. Please don't hesitate to contact Mrs Gray if you require further information about anything that has been mentioned.

Premises and Grounds

- 1 There were lots of positive comments about the new pathway. Thank you to all parents who promote its use on a daily basis.
- 2 Many parents wrote about the lovely views that I'm sure everyone connected to the school values. The positive learning opportunities that the local surroundings provide were also commented on.
- 3 There were mixed responses regarding the children playing football in the playground. The children really enjoy being allowed to play with the ball, particularly now we have better fencing. However, the staff and children are aware that in such a small playground there can be problems with ball games. Mrs Gray is discussing the issue with the school council to try to find a compromise that ensures everyone continues to have fun in the playground.
- 4 There were many positive comments about the new security. Like the majority of schools, the governors felt we should enhance our security systems, particularly as the playground is so close to the lane. Therefore we have used a building grant to improve the safety for our children and staff. This is a pot of money that is completely separate to the annual funding received by the school for educational resources and can only be used for building and maintenance work.
- 5 Various comments related to the flower tubs at the front of school. The children in eco club work hard to water these in the summer months. It does become very expensive to keep re-planting these every year and we do appreciate any donations of flowers to brighten up the front of school. We hope the seed trays that were sent out before half term are proving useful. If any parents, grandparents etc would like to help with the gardening in school or the allotment then please talk to Mrs Gray.

Personal Development and Well Being

- 1 It was lovely to hear so many positive comments about how happy and confident the children are at school and about how well appreciated the staff are.
- 2 Some parents were disappointed that Year 5 and 6 were not involved in the Christmas play last year, especially as this was the last play for Year 6. We will consider these comments when reviewing the Christmas 2008 celebrations.
- 3 It was good to know that the after school clubs are enjoyed. Several parents asked for more clubs for all year groups. As you will realise from recent newsletters we are considering the types of clubs that are most needed i.e. just for hobbies or for child care purposes. We will keep you informed on developments in this area. We would ask parents to remember, however, that these clubs are run by teachers during their own time and we are reliant on their goodwill for this. If anyone would like to become involved in running an after school club, please feel free to have a chat with Mrs Gray.

Governing Body

The majority of comments for this area revealed that our governing body is an unknown entity and that there is a lot of confusion over what they do. Our Governors play a very important role in our school; they give their time freely and assume ever greater responsibilities. These

responsibilities include helping to raise the standards and performance of the school by supporting the work of the head teacher and staff, making decisions regarding the school budget and helping to plan the school's future direction. A Governing Body acts as a 'critical friend' of the school and is ultimately responsible for how a school is performing. Minutes of Governors' Meetings are always available in school.

Governors are appointed for a four year term of office and serve on various committees/working parties in addition to attending full Governors' Meetings. School governors form the largest volunteer workforce in the UK. Our governing body comprises of community governors, foundation governors, parent governors, LA governors and staff governors but individual governors do not represent any particular group and can only act as an entire body.

One of the aims of our Governing Body is to improve communication with parents and the local community in order to ensure a better understanding of our role. They are currently considering a half-termly or termly Governor Newsletter or a more regular contribution to the school's weekly newsletter.

PTFA

- 1 There were lots of positive comments about the fantastic job that the PTFA do for the school
- 2 There was a suggestion that the meetings should be more social occasions – perhaps meeting in a pub.

Achievement and Standards

- 1 There were positive comments about the school behaviour reward system (Knot Teams). Some parents said it would be good to have more feedback about which teams won each week – these are now being included in the weekly newsletter.
- 2 The variety of activities provided at school was appreciated e.g. using local area, becoming involved in external projects, various trips and clubs.
- 3 There were a number of post-its written in relation to PE and health issues. The school is working very hard on this area of the curriculum; indeed we have just been awarded the Active Mark for the second year running. To start the day the majority of children walk up the new path to school. Class 1 start every day with half an hour of Physical Literacy which is a planned programme of multiskills activities to develop gross and fine motor skills and has been devised by PE specialists and physiotherapists.

The key stage 2 classes are timetabled for the advised two hours of PE a week following a planned programme of activities to include a variety of gymnastics, dance and games activities. We also take class 2 swimming during the summer term. As part of the Kings School Sports Partnership the children have the opportunity to take part in a wide variety of Sports festivals and inter school tournaments to include e.g. tag rugby, golf, cricket and athletics. Forthcoming events include High Five netball, rounders, tag rugby, golf, gymnastics, dance swimming tennis and athletics. We are also planning to run a multiskills clubs for class 1, lunch time use of the field (staff permitting). Membership of the School Sports Partnership also gives us the opportunity to take advantage of expert coaches. To date we have had coaching in cricket, tag rugby, multiskills and dance and a golf professional will be working with groups in the summer term.

The children take part in "take ten" sessions at selected times during the school week and we encourage active playtimes. We regularly run a football club with Andy Widger and various walks around the village and allotment activities also contribute to the children's physical activity even if they are not arranged with PE in mind.

- 4 There were a number of post-its relating to individual children's circumstances which would be inappropriate to comment on here but please do discuss any concerns with your child's class teacher or Mrs Gray.
- 5 There were some post-its regarding the volume and nature of homework received by children in Year 5 and Year 6. We have recently updated our homework policy and a copy is available in school for anyone who wishes to view it. Our aim is to work with parents to encourage children to study independently. If a parent has any real concerns regarding this area of learning then please speak to the class teacher or Mrs Gray.

Community and Extended School

- 1 It was lovely to read positive comments about our links with the community.

Quality of Provision

- 1 Again in this section many parents wrote positive comments about the variety of activities we offer e.g. Greek Day, teaching weekly French lessons etc.
- 2 Parents also commented on how some resources needed updating. You may have seen in the press recently that Devon is the 146th worst funded authority out of 149 and therefore our budget for purchasing resources is always a struggle however, the PTFA are very supportive in this area. Indeed the monthly cake stall money is used to update resources. As part of setting the budget at this time of year all staff carry out an audit of their needs for each classroom and where this links with key areas of school improvement we try to provide a budget to purchase these items. Without the PTFA contribution we would struggle to update equipment and resources in the school - indeed it was the PTFA's money that bought the first interactive whiteboard.
- 3 For some time the governors have been considering the issue that many parents raised in relation to supply teaching. Unfortunately, there have been many national initiatives relating to education and this has meant that we have been required to send staff on a number of compulsory trainings and briefings. Because we are a small school this situation is heightened. In other schools a teacher is generally responsible for one or two areas of the curriculum. In small schools each teacher can be asked to manage 5 or more areas of the school and therefore may need to carry out training related to a number of these.

Please be assured that the governors and Mrs Gray are putting a lot of consideration into this problem and are in discussions with various departments at county to try to find ways to improve the situation. The issue that we are trying to address is not a financial one as most courses and meetings are free and supply expenses are paid for. Our key aim is to ensure continuity and consistency in education and the governing body will consider this as a matter of priority. We will ensure that we keep you updated with developments in this area as we are aware that it is of real concern to the majority of parents.

Netball Club

I give my permission for to attend Netball club

Thursdays 3.30pm – 4.15pm

Signed.....

The Grizzly

I will sponsor April Rose £..... for taking part in the Grizzly to raise money for Branscombe Schools PTFA activity area fund.

Name _____

Signature_____

First Aid Course

I give permission for my child _____ to take part in the First Aid course on Friday lunchtimes with Mrs Crawford.

Signed _____