



# A View from The Bridge



## Newsletter for Parents and Carers

January 2012



### Happy New Year 2012

I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year and already it is in the dim and distance past! Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to the fundraising we did just before Christmas. The draw on Primary Campus raised £95 for Shelter and we were able to send £150 to our link school, Hart House in Gambia. Geoff Hunwicks who runs the school wishes me to pass on his thanks to you all. We will continue to support the school at different events over the coming year.

We have had unseasonably warm weather so far this winter but that can change at any time and if we have bad weather we have good systems in place to get the message of any closure out to you as soon as possible. Many parents/carers have remarked how well the text system is working for all messages. Please be assured that it is a very difficult decision to close due to bad weather and I consider many different factors before making it such as: what is the weather forecast for the day, will drivers be going out, are the roads safe, can staff get to work and so on. At the end of the day it is a judgement call and I can only make the decision that I feel will ensure everyone's safety. Please be assured that the initial intention is always to be open as usual and the decision to close is always a last resort.

Please make sure we have all current contact telephone numbers for you especially if you had a new mobile with a different number for Christmas.

### Simon Black – Campus Director of Primary Campus

Many of the Parents and Carers have had the opportunity to meet Simon Black, our Campus Director on Primary Campus who started with us in September 2011 when Sara retired. He has now finished his first term and would like to share a few lines with you.



*"My name is Simon Black and I took up post as Campus Director on The Primary Campus in September 2011. I am delighted that I got the post and feel very privileged to work at such a 'special' special school. The staff have been very welcoming and supportive in my first term and I have also met quite a few parents. If I have not met you yet then I am looking forward to doing so. I come from Norwich and have worked at Sidestrand Hall School which is a school for children with Complex needs. Sidestrand is near Cromer so I had a 20 mile commute each day. Now I live in Ipswich I have a 5 minute drive which is a truly wonderful change. This is my second term at The Bridge School, and I already feel an immense sense of pride in working here. This is the only school I have worked in where I spend a lot of my time laughing and smiling with the staff and pupils. There's an old adage – 'Be careful for what you wish for because you might get it' Well, I have got what I wished for and I am the happiest man on the planet."*

### Staffing

We have two new additions to the teaching staff. Clem Vinten on Secondary Campus with 3A and Nicola Chilvers class teacher for Red Class on Primary Campus. They both have experience of working in Special schools before and I am sure they will settle in well.

On Primary Campus Fran Wolton left to go on Maternity leave in October and in December she and her husband Adrian became proud parents to Martha Faith. Fran and Martha visited Primary Campus this week but unfortunately I was at Secondary Campus so I will have to wait a little longer to meet Martha.

### Invite to Pantomime

You may recall we were invited to attend the dress rehearsal of the Tuddenham Players last year. I am not sure how many of you attended but you have all been invited to their performance again this year.

They will be performing `Robinson Crusoe` at the Tuddenham Village Hall on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 7.30 pm. Admission is free and tea, coffee and biscuits will be served but you will need to provide your own transport. If you wish to attend please call Joy Harris on 01473 333508 or email [joy.r.harris@btinternet.com](mailto:joy.r.harris@btinternet.com)

## Parents' Group

At the Parents Group on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January I was able to give some feedback to the Parents that attended on the Parental Survey. Thank you very much for everyone who took the time to complete the forms last term and the overall response was very positive from the 54 surveys that were returned. Below I have given a brief synopsis of the results:-

61% of the responses were from Primary and 39% were from Secondary. When looking at the responses 2% roughly equals 1 response. The average positive response rate is 88% and the average negative rate is 1%



### Key Positive Messages:-

- 98% - happy with child' experience at school
- 96%- Bridge is a good school and recommend it to others
- 98%- child likes coming to school
- 98% - feel school is a safe place
- 100%- school is welcoming to parents and carers
- 96% - school take account of suggestions and concerns
- 98% - school encourages child to become independent

### Key Negative Messages:-

- 9% do not feel well informed of involvement by therapy staff
- 6% do not feel staff explain how to help their child home
- 6% do not know which therapy staff are involved with their child
- 6% feel being on two sites has a negative impact on what the school can offer their child

### Areas to follow up on from the open questions

- Parents Group – regular opportunities to meet informally and for “training” sessions.
- Development of Sensory Integration Occupational Therapy Project.
- More opportunities for parents and carers to meet with teachers
- Regular updates on progress towards a single site.
- Investigate transport and funding issues for ASC

We have already started to address the first two areas. We have just had the third Parents Group Meeting with a PECS awareness session booked for next week. Please remember that you are welcome to attend Parents Group meeting on both Campuses. Toni Martin, our Sensory Integration OT has now completed her training and is keen to start working with the staff and pupils.

I am looking into how we address more opportunities to meet with teachers and the funding and transport for the After School Club.

## Parents Evening Dates:-

**Secondary Campus: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 6-8 pm**  
**Primary Campus: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 6-8 pm**

We will be having Parents Evening on different days again this term to allow me to attend both Evenings. A letter will be coming out soon offering you times. We will do our best to offer times as requested.



## Health Matters



I know this is often a very difficult decision to make especially early in the morning but I have outlined a few details to help you make an assessment of the situation.

### When to Keep your Child at Home

- Cough or Cold. A child with a minor cough or cold may attend school. If the cold is accompanied by a raised temperature, shivers or drowsiness, the child should stay off school.
- Raised Temperature: If your child has a raised temperature, they shouldn't attend school. They can return 24 hours after they are feeling better.
- Vomiting and Diarrhoea: Children with these conditions should be kept off school for 48 hours after the last episode.

I hope this assists in making the decision whether or not to send your child in but if in doubt please call the school and speak with Simon or Viv.

## Money to the Office



Please can any money that comes into school be put into an envelope with your child's name, class, amount and what the money is for clearly written on the outside. Although we are a small school we do have several pupils with the same names and this can sometimes cause confusion. Dinners are currently £2.10 per day and need to be paid for in advance and if possible with the correct money. £10.50 per week. Many parents prefer to pay a half term in advance and this is fine and any absences are deducted off the next bill. If you wish to pay for a half term in advance please contact the office and they will let you know how much it is.

Please remember that we ask for a voluntary contribution of £1 per week £15 per term for Social Skills/Life Skills. This goes towards drinks and snacks in the classrooms

## 'Phil the Bag'



Please remember that if you are sorting out your wardrobes and wish to send in any old clothing for 'Phil the bag' please bring your bags into the Primary Campus by Thursday 26th January. The money we receive will be used to buy items for our raised Sensory Garden

## Christmas on Primary Campus

It was lovely to see so many of you at the Christmas Production on Primary Campus. I'm sure you will all agree it went very well. We celebrated Christmas in several different ways and had a lovely time listening and dancing to the Jazz Band and a recital by students from Ipswich School. We of course had the usual Christmas lunch and disco.



We have a couple of spare DVDs of the Christmas Production if you wish to buy them, they cost £15. Please contact the Primary school office.

## Fund Raising

One pupil's carer plays in a band playing a lot of 60s, 70s and up to date music. The band are holding a charity event and splitting the profits between The Bridge School and Hart House, the school we support in Gambia. The event is on Saturday 24th March 2012, 8pm -11.30pm at The Whitehouse Club, Limerick Close Ipswich. The tickets cost £3 adult and £1 child. They will be holding a raffle so if you wish to donate a raffle prize they would be very grateful (you can send these into school and we will pass them on). If you wish to purchase tickets please contact Bev and Kev Bultitude on Tel 01473 787420.

## Dates for your Diary



25<sup>th</sup> January – Parents' Group PECS Awareness Session  
26<sup>th</sup> January – 'Phil the Bag' Primary Campus  
10<sup>th</sup> February – Break up for half term  
20<sup>th</sup> February – Back to school  
23<sup>rd</sup> February – Parents' Group – Voice Ability  
7<sup>th</sup> March – Parents' Evening – Secondary Campus  
14<sup>th</sup> March – Parents' Evening – Primary Campus  
24<sup>th</sup> March – Fund Raising Event in aid of School and Hart house  
30<sup>th</sup> March – Break up for Easter  
16<sup>th</sup> April – Staff Training Day  
17<sup>th</sup> April – Pupils return to school

## Governors

Just a few lines to keep you up to date with the Governors information as they play a very important role in the running of school. Sue Riley who was a Governor for Belstead School and moved to the new Governing Body when the two schools merged has recently resigned and I would like to thank her for her time working for both schools. Martin Bennett and Rachel Barritt have both been reappointed for another term of office and I would like to welcome Carol Stewart to the Governing Body as our new Parent Governor.



The photo is of Liz, Simon and Adrian, three of our Governors helping out at Christmas Lunch on Primary Campus. Peter helped with lunches on Secondary Campus. Thank you for giving up your time at a busy time.

## Christmas on Secondary Campus

The Christmas Lunch, Carol Service and 'The Bridge has got Talent' show all went really well and were enjoyed by all the pupils and staff alike.



We also had a day learning all about Australia, taking part in art, cooking and playing a Didgeridoo. Some pupils also went to David Lloyd and took part in all types of indoor games. There are photos of both on the website.

## And finally.....

When Sara Pells retired in July after 33 Years at Heathside and The Bridge we nominated her for the opportunity to attend a Garden Party with the Queen at Buckingham Palace. I am very pleased to report that she received an invitation just before Christmas from the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk and she is due to receive her official invitation soon to attend the Royal Garden Party in May.

Congratulations Sara we look forward to seeing the photos!