

Newsletter for Parents and Carers

September 2010



A View from The Bridge



The Bridge School – It's Official!

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for Parents and Carers – *A View from The Bridge*.

I will be aiming to keep in regular contact with you through the newsletter and to keep you updated on developments on both campuses of The Bridge School. We are entering a new era as we bring the two schools together and as we review what we do, and how we do things, we will have exciting opportunities to develop the very best education, care and support services available to assist the work that we do with you and the children and young people at The Bridge School.

It will take a little time for us all to get used to the new arrangements, and the fact that we are located on two sites. I will be spending time each week at both campuses but not necessarily on set days. A few other staff will also travel between both campuses but the majority of staff will be based in one campus or the other. The children will not be travelling between the campuses for their education.

I will welcome your feedback and comments on how you feel things are going and you will be able to contact me at either the Primary Campus or the Secondary Campus. The telephone numbers are the same but the email addresses have changed. The general email address is: office@thebridgeschool.org.uk

I look forward to meeting you and working with you as the term unfolds. There will be an opportunity to meet with me and also your child's class teacher at this term's Parents Evenings. Dates have yet to be set and a separate letter will be coming home soon about this.



New Staff

We have some new staff starting with us at the beginning of the term and also a few weeks into the term.

Nicky Peters and Jenny Steel are new teachers at the Secondary Campus. Nicky is working on Monday to Wednesday and Jenny from Wednesday to Friday. Helen Szabo also joined us at the start of the term as Director of Learning for Curriculum & Assessment as well as teaching in Key Stage 3 on Thursday and Friday.

We said good bye to George Byford, our caretaker at Heathside, at the end of last term and wished him well in his retirement. George will continue to be part of the team because he has volunteered to drive the minibus for us on a couple of mornings.

We welcomed Robert Hannan as our new caretaker at the Primary Campus on 1st September.

Later in September we will welcome Jan Bowley as our new administrative assistant at the Primary Campus and also Helen Banham as our new administrative assistant at the Secondary Campus.

School Uniform

We have had the first delivery of school uniform with the new logo on it. It looks great and if you placed an order at the end of last term you should have received it by now.

If you want to order any items of school uniform just let the office staff know at the campus where your child attends and we will ensure you receive an order form. The next order will be sent on Friday 24th September.

Harvest Festival

Our Harvest Festivals are planned for Friday 1st October. The Secondary Campus Harvest Festival will be at 10.00 a.m. and the Primary Campus at 2.00 p.m. Rev. Clare Sanders will be joining us for both celebrations and you are also welcome to attend. Please let your child's class teacher know if you are coming.

We welcome donations of tinned, packaged and fresh food which we will pass on to a charity working with local people experiencing hard times. The charity prefers tins and packs because they are easier to store but will happily accept fresh food. If you are sending in fresh food please send it in on 1st October

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New School Buildings?

You will be aware from my letters, and the national and local news, that the proposals to build a new special school, and to locate the Foundation Stage children in a new primary school at the Westbourne site, have been scrapped by the new Government.

This was very disappointing news and a bitter blow just before the end of last term.

Gordon Cochrane, our chair of governors, and I met with representatives from the Local Authority during the holidays to establish what alternative plans were being put in place.

Unfortunately, because the Local Authority does not have capital funds for major building works we were unable to obtain any firm assurances about plans for the future.

The Local Authority recognise that The Bridge School is a top priority for capital investment but cannot say whether, under new criteria yet to be announced by the Government, we will be eligible.

The situation should become clearer in October when the Government sets out its plans for capital investment in education.

In the meantime we will continue to make the best use of the buildings that we have, and to maintain and look after them.

Most of the rooms that will be used at the Secondary Campus were decorated during the summer holidays and everywhere looks fresh and bright.

We have had large photographs of the pupils and students, taking part in different activities, printed onto acrylic and they will be permanently displayed around both campuses to help illustrate the work that goes on in the school. You'll see them when you visit either campus and I'm sure you will agree that they are fantastic.

These are a couple of examples:



Governing Body

The Governing Body for The Bridge School was set up at the end of last term but there is a vacancy for a parent representative.

The parent of any child attending the school can apply for the vacancy and where more than one person applies an election has to take place.

If you are interested then let Odran know.

The Governing Body is made up of the following people:

Gordon Cochrane (Chair) - Community representative

Peter Holden (Vice Chair) - Community representative

Simon Linford Wood - Community representative

Judith Curtis - Community representative

David Ball - Local Authority representative

Sue Riley - Local Authority representative

Adrian Ilott - Local Authority representative

Lizzi Flisher - Teacher representative

Christine Leigh - Staff representative

Martin Bennett - Parent representative

Vivienne Tincombe - Parent representative

Rachel Barritt - Parent representative

Sarah Newell - Parent representative

Meetings of the full governing body, and the various committees, will take place on both campuses so that the governors develop a good understanding of the issues affecting the whole age range of the school.

The Family Fund has recently announced that they have changed the criteria they use to decide whether they can provide financial assistance to families with a disabled child. They have adopted a new "Fair to All" approach which means that any family with income below £28,000 after tax, but disregarding DLA and Child Benefit, may be eligible for a grant.



Grants can be awarded each year and can be used for a wide variety of things including: outings, washing machines, computers, driving lessons, holidays, specialist equipment and much more.

You can obtain more information from:

www.familyfund.org.uk, email: info@familyfund.org.uk or telephone 0845 130 4542

School Meals

Suffolk County Catering have asked me to pass on information about a price increase that will take effect from **4th January 2011**.

The prices of a school meal will increase by 10p. to £2.10. I will remind you of this again before the end of this term but felt you might like to know about it now. Please remember to send all dinner money in to school in an envelope with your child's name clearly marked on it. You can pay weekly, half-termly or termly in advance if you wish.



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School Photographs

The photographers will be coming to both campuses in the coming weeks to take photographs of the children.

They will be at the Primary Campus on Thursday 16th September and at the Secondary Campus on Friday 24th September.

You will be receiving a separate letter about this with more information.



Sonia Stephens who runs STARS has asked me to remind you about what is on offer for the students on the Secondary Campus.

What's available?

After school Club 3.30-5.25pm (11-19yrs)

Youth club 6.30-8.45pm (16-25yrs)

Holiday clubs 10am-3pm (11-25yrs)



STARS offers the following activities:

- Refreshments
- Food preparation
- Cooking activities
- Art & crafts
- Swimming
- Soft play
- Computers

Coming soon - Mum's & Dad's Lunch club, 2nd Wednesday in every month 12-2pm at: The Bridge School, Secondary campus.

Occasionally - information coffee mornings- next date: 10th November 2010, 10-2pm with Contact a Family at the Secondary Campus.

You can contact Sonia for more information on:

Tel: 01473 691947 Email:

starsbelstead@btconnect.com

After School Club

The After School Club at the Primary Campus has started up again after the Summer break.

Amy, Michelle and Jasmine have welcomed back many of the children who attended last year as well as some new faces.

The After School Club runs each evening after school from 3.00 p.m. to 5.45 p.m. The children have opportunities to take part in art and craft activities, play outside, go to the studio or soft play, watch DVDs, have a snack or just relax and take it easy.

There are some places still available for more children on some nights. If you would like more information about the After School Club you can give Amy a call on: **0795 664 8536**.



Free Computers & Access Equipment

In these days of cut-backs it is good to know that there are still some schemes where you can receive support if you have a child with a disability in your family.

One such scheme is **Home Access**

Home Access is a government drive that helps low-income families who currently lack access to a computer and/or internet to get online at home to support learning.

The programme is aimed at those that need it most. If you are a low-income family in receipt of certain benefits you could qualify for a Home Access package with Assistive Technology.



You could be eligible if you are a parent or guardian responsible for and living with a child...

...who is in school years 3 to 9 inclusive?

...who attends a state-maintained school in England full time?

...who has not already had a computer from a Home Access Grant or similar programme, such as Computers for Pupils?

... who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or receives a Disability Living Allowance, or whose school/local authority representative can certify they have Assistive Technology needs?

And you receive at least one of the following?

- Free School Meals for your child
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income support
- Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit and an income of less than £16,190
- Guaranteed Pension Credit (not Savings Credit)
- Income-based Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 199

Do you qualify?

If you think you qualify for a Home Access package with Assistive Technology please call the Home Access Helpline on **0333 200 1004** to get an application form.

Vouchers for Schools

Thank you to everyone who sent in Tesco Computer vouchers last term. Lots of boxes of equipment have been arriving in school and the children will enjoy getting to grips with it all very soon.

We are currently collecting Morrison's and Nestle vouchers so if you have any that you would like to send in please do so.

In fact if you have any vouchers from any supermarkets etc. we can usually make good use of them.

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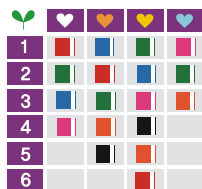
Key Stage 3 & Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Parents and Carers of some students at the Secondary Campus may have received home a very complicated looking timetable which detailed how the curriculum is being organised and delivered across the week. Apologies if it was confusing. We will soon be sending home simpler timetables for individual students which will clearly identify what they are doing during each lesson. You will recall that we had to re-organise the curriculum into Areas of Learning because of the reduction in the number of teachers at the Secondary Campus. Some of the initials on the timetable relate to the Areas of Learning. I thought it might help if you knew which subjects are being grouped together to form an Area of Learning:

Key Stage 3

5 Areas of Learning:

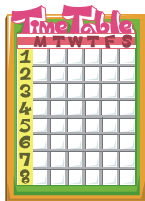
- **Exploring & Understanding the World**
 - Science, History & Geography
- **Functional Mathematics**
- **Communication & Languages**
 - Communication
 - ICT
 - Modern Foreign Language
- **Creative**
 - Art
 - Design Technology
 - Music
- **Physical Development, Health & Wellbeing**
 - PSHE – including Citizenship
 - Physical Education
 - Religious Education



Key Stage 4

5 Areas of Learning:

- **Exploring & Understanding the World**
 - Science
- **Functional Mathematics**
- **Communication**
 - English
 - ICT
- **Personal, Social, Health & Economic Wellbeing**
 - PSHE – including Citizenship
 - Physical Education
 - Religious Education
- **Foundation Learning**
 - Independent Living Skills
 - Vocational/Work Skills
 - Suffolk One



We will be spending a considerable amount of time during the coming year reviewing and evaluating the curriculum that we offer to all of the children, right through from the Foundation Stage (3 year olds) to the end of KS 4 (16 year olds). We will share the outcomes with parents and carers and keep you fully informed of the developments.

Parents Group

I would like to ensure that we have a good working relationship with all parents and carers because it is important that we know your thoughts and feelings about the school, what we do well and what we could improve.

I'm also keen to provide the right support and advice that you want and would like to build on the good work we did with the Heathside Parents Group.

So that we know what you think, Sara Pells and Viv Salisbury will be writing to you soon to invite you to a meeting at the Primary Campus on 5th October.

This will be an opportunity to meet with other parents and carers and to let Sara and Viv know what you feel we can do to support you through a Parents Group.



Seaside Cottage



Seaside Cottage is a specialist respite care home for children with complex care needs aged up to 18 years. They have well experienced and trained staff who are used to working with children who have a variety of complex needs.

They offer short term and longer term placements and are based in a four bedded home in Clacton.

You can find out more about Seaside Cottage at:

www.childrensrespitcare.co.uk or

info@childrensrespitcare.co.uk or 01255 223146.

The Parent Factor in ADHD

Parent Partnership and Barnardo's are organising a six week programme to help parents of children with ADHD to better understand the implications and impact of the condition.

The programme is free and runs for two hours on 13th, 20th, 27th September & 4th, 11th, & 18th October.

Sessions are held at The Quaker Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich between 11.30 and 1.30 p.m. Refreshments are provided.

For more details contact Frances Desborough on 07720 349309 or Sian Monteith on 10473 584644

And Finally

I hope you have enjoyed reading the first edition of *A View from The Bridge* and have found it useful and informative. I'm not sure it will always be so long but there was a lot to share at the start of term.

If you have any ideas for items to be included in the newsletter please let me know.