

Newsletter for Parents and Carers

November 2010



A View from The Bridge

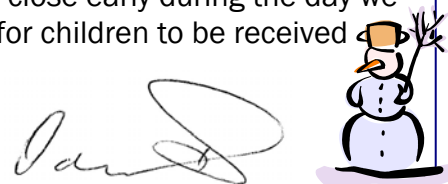


I hope you all had an enjoyable half term and now, unbelievably, it's time to start thinking of Christmas. On the Primary Campus there will be the usual two Christmas Productions. The Lower Team (Nursery Thursday/Friday children, Purple and Red classes) will be on Friday 10th December and Upper Team (Yellow, Orange, Green and Pink) will be on Tuesday 14th December, they will both start at 10:00 am so make a note in your diaries. The Secondary Campus will be putting on a Carol Concert on 9th December led by Ipswich School Band.

SNOW!!

Unfortunately we had several days of bad weather last year and this resulted in me making the very hard decision to close the school. Hopefully this year the weather will not be so severe but I still need to remind you of our bad weather procedure. In this eventuality an announcement will be made in the morning on Radio Suffolk or Heart FM and on our website. www.thebridgeschool.org.uk We will also be trialling a text messaging service and if we decide to keep this we will use this as an additional way of contacting you about closures. If the school needs to close early during the day we will contact parents and carers individually to organise for children to be received at home.

Please make sure we have up to date contact details.



Changes and additional Professional Development Days

As you are aware Professional Development Days are days when the staff have important training to keep their skills and training up to date. It is very difficult when dates are fixed nearly a year in advance to be fully aware of all of the training needs that may arise. Since the amalgamation of the two schools some specific training needs for staff on the Secondary Campus have emerged and we have found it very difficult to secure the relevant trainers on the dates we had already set as PD Days. Because of this I am afraid we have had to change one of the dates I had previously told you would be a PD on the **Secondary Campus**. The date which the students will now be attending school is January 4th. This will be substituted with March 28th.

There will also be an additional date for both campuses and this will be 4th April. I am sorry for these changes but hopefully with this advance notice it will not cause too much inconvenience. To avoid any confusion you will receive an updated PD Day list shortly.



The Bridge School – Strapline

Part of the work that the staff did on the Professional Development Day in September was to look at suggestions for a strapline for the school. The idea was to create a phrase that would encapsulate what we believed The Bridge School was about.

A number of different suggestions were made and a shortlist of four was drawn up.

Just before half-term all of the staff were asked to vote for their favoured option and there was a clear majority in favour of:

Achieving Excellence Together

I hope you approve of the new strapline and look out for it in our communications with you.

Multi Cultural Week/ Modern Foreign Language Day

On both campuses we will be celebrating our multi cultural links.

On the Primary Campus we celebrated Judaism in the week after half-term and on the Secondary Campus we will be having a special day on November 17th where usual lessons will be suspended and all the lessons will have a link with India. The staff are planning a variety of different experiences and activities and we will have dancers, musicians and a cook helping to make the day special.



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Bringing the Schools Together

A lot of work has been going on to bring the two schools together and to create a single identity.

We have our logo and now a strapline and we are working hard at reviewing important policies such as Child Protection, Attendance etc. to ensure we are all working in the same way.

The new approach to delivering the curriculum at the Secondary Campus, through Areas of Learning, is beginning to settle down and we have set up a Secondary Curriculum Development Group to investigate the different options for the way forward in the longer term.

The group consists of Viv Salisbury, Helen Szabo, Charlotte Alexandrou, Kevin Wilson and Catherine Lee from the Local Authority. Members of the group have been visiting other special schools to see how their curriculum is organised and delivered so we can learn from them and develop an approach that is right for us.

As ideas begin to harden up we will share information with you.

Other things that have been happening include visits by link classes to see each other on the Primary or Secondary Campus. Green Class have been over to see 4A and 3B have visited Purple Class as well as joining in the special assembly on Judaism. The Evening Star captured the visit of 3B to Purple Class so look out for the photographs in the paper.

Staff from the two campuses have also made some visits to see each other and take part in joint training and staff meetings.

The governors and the Leadership Team are also working closely with the Local Authority to ensure the successful amalgamation of the two schools. Meetings have been taking place during the term, and will continue throughout the academic year, to look at what practical support can be provided. We have jointly identified key areas which need to be addressed including: Leadership, Curriculum & Assessment and Teaching & Learning.

We will be working with the Local Authority to ensure that the new Leadership Team works effectively and meets the demands placed on it through operating on two sites. We have support from the Human Resources and Finance Departments in the Local Authority with this. Already we are tackling the issues related to curriculum development through the Secondary Curriculum Development Group, and with the assistance of our School Improvement Partner, and the School Improvement Service, we will be identifying and promoting excellence in Teaching & Learning across both campuses.

At the moment there is no further news about a replacement for the Building Schools for the Future programme. We are waiting to hear what the Government's priorities are regarding schools' building projects.

It is no small task to bring the two schools together and it will take time, but we are very clear about what we need to achieve. With everyone's support I am confident that we will live up to our new strapline and can demonstrate that we are:

"Achieving Excellence Together"

Parents' Group

Letters went out before half term inviting you to Parents' Group sessions on both Campuses. Thank you for your suggestions and as you will have seen we have managed to arrange for the Manager from Clarke's Shoe Shop to attend a session and offer advice on how to make a visit to buy shoes less stressful. There will also be dates for Makaton and PECs training. We have also been very fortunate that one of our student's older sister is a qualified hairdresser and has agreed to come onto both campuses to cut hair if parents would like. Stephanie will be using a comb, scissors, cape and if required clippers and the cost will be £5 per hair cut. If you haven't already expressed an interest please ask the school office for a permission slip. We are hoping to make the experience as stress free as possible for the pupils/students but please let us know if they are likely to find the experience daunting.

If you wish to sign up to all or any of the Parent Group sessions please ask for an additional form, it's not too late.



School Meals/Social Skills/Life Skills

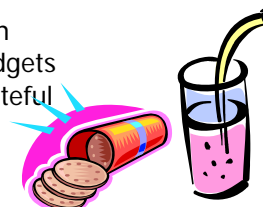
I have been asked by both school offices to remind you that dinner money must be sent in to school in an envelope with your child's name clearly marked on it. Dinners need to be paid for in advance either weekly, half-termly or termly.



We will be having Christmas lunches again this year. On the Secondary Campus it will be Wednesday 15th December and on the Primary Campus Thursday 16th December. We will not be passing on the additional charge of 90p as this will be paid out of school fund. If your child usually has a packed lunch but you would like them to join in the Christmas Lunch please send £2 into the school office by Friday 10th December.

As you know we ask for a weekly donation of £1 toward social skills/life skills so we can provide drinks and snacks in the classes/pastoral group. For the Autumn term this equates to £15. On the Primary Campus this can be paid weekly, half termly or termly and on the Secondary Campus we ask that this is sent in either half termly or termly.

This is a voluntary contribution but as you are aware with budgets being so tight we are very grateful for any donation you feel able to contribute.



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Christmas Events



As mentioned earlier in the newsletter the two Christmas Productions at the Primary Campus will be held on Friday 10th December and Tuesday 14th

December. The Lower Team production is called *Whoops A Daisy Angel* and the Upper Team production is called *A Special Tree*. We will again be having Moving Memories videoing both performances and the DVD will be available at £15.

There will be order forms coming out nearer the time and once again we will endeavour to get the DVDs to you before we break up for Christmas so long as they are ordered and paid for by 10:00 am on Tuesday 14th December. There will also be a Carol Service at Copleston High School for all the local Primary Schools on Friday 3rd December and some of our Year 5 and 6 Students will attend. Unfortunately parents are not able to attend due to lack of space.

The classes on the Primary Campus will be making visits to see Fr. Christmas as the end of term draws near and the classes on the Secondary Campus will also organise trips out for a special meal or to do some Christmas shopping.

The Secondary Campus students will also be able to enjoy themselves at a disco in the afternoon of 15th December.



Suffolk New College

Suffolk New College will be holding a transition evening on Tuesday 23rd November 6:00 to 8:00 pm in The Link. Staff will be on hand to discuss the wide range of courses that are offered to students.

If you would like more information, or would like to visit the college please email janewegg@suffolk.ac.uk



Dates for your Diary



- 17th November – MFL Day on Secondary Campus
- 18th November – Children in Need on Secondary Campus
- 19th November – Children In Need on Primary Campus
- 3rd December – Carol Concert , Copleston High School for Y5 & Y6 (Sorry no Parents)
- 10th December – Lower Team Christmas Production on Primary Campus
- 14th December – Upper Team Christmas Production on Primary Campus
- 15th December – Christmas Lunch Secondary Campus
- 16th December – Christmas Lunch Primary Campus
- 17th December – Break up for Christmas
- 21st December STARS Christmas Party for Students at Secondary Campus 10-3pm
- 4th January 2011 – **Staff Development Day Primary Campus only**
- 4th January 2011 – Secondary Campus open for students
- 5th January 2011 – Primary Campus open for pupils
- March 28th – **Staff Development Day Secondary Campus only**
- 4th April 2011 - **Staff Development Day for Whole School**

And Finally

Thanks to everyone who sent in donations for the Harvest Festivals. Both went very well and you can see photographs of them on the web site in the near future. The donations were sent to Families In Need & Distress and they have written to me and asked that I pass their thanks on to you.

Ben Creswell & Jacob Harrison from the Secondary Campus have become members of the Youth Parliament and will be attending meetings & workshops to help influence services for our pupils and students.

Ross Heward & Ryan Simpson represented the whole school when they attended the launch of the refurbished Tesco store at Copdock. They also brought back a cheque for £350 which is being used to buy playground equipment & resources.

Don't forget, if you have any interesting information you would like to share with other parents and carers please let me know and I will include it in a future newsletter.



Ross & Ryan receiving the Cheque for £350 from Tesco.

Children In Need

We will be supporting Children In Need on both Campuses. The Secondary Campus will be having a fund raising afternoon on Thursday 18th November organised by the School Council. On the Primary Campus please can the pupils come in clothes with spots on Friday 19th November. Please send in any donations you would like to make with your child.



BBC

Friday 19 November 2010

Children in Need