

Newsletter for Parents and Carers

November 2011



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 and the possibility of 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. Please be assured that it is not a decision I make lightly and I take into account all the weather forecasts and the advice from Education Transport before I make the final decision. If I do have to make the decision to close, announcements will be made in the morning on Radio Suffolk, or Heart FM, and a statement will be posted on our website. www.thebridgeschool.org.uk, on the Suffolk County website <http://schoolclosures.suffolk.gov.uk> and we shall also be using the very popular text messaging service. 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. With this in mind we will be sending out a test text on Thursday 17th November. If you would like to receive text messages and for some reason you do not receive a text on 17th November please contact the school office to ensure we have current contact details

Christmas Events



I am sorry to now move from information regarding bad weather straight into arrangements for how we celebrate Christmas but as we are constantly reminded by advertisers the Christmas Season will soon be with us.

On Secondary Campus we will be having the very enjoyable Carol Concert again this year with Rev Simon Robinson at Shepherd's Drive Baptist Church on 15th December, more details to follow. Another equally enjoyable event is where students from Ipswich School Band perform Carols and they will be visiting both the Primary and Secondary Campuses before the end of term. Secondary Campus will be having 'The Bridge has got Talent' show again this year and I'm sure rehearsals and costume fittings will be taking place very soon. Christmas lunches will be held on both campuses; on Primary Campus it will be 13th December and on Secondary Campus it will be on 14th December. If your child does not usually have a school lunch but you would like them to have a Christmas Lunch please can you send in £2.10 in a sealed envelope on Monday 12th December in order for a lunch to be provided. There is always an additional charge for Christmas lunches but this is paid for by the school. In the afternoon after the Christmas lunch on Primary Campus the pupils will have the opportunity to listen to some festive jazz from 'The Gipping Valley Stompers'. They are always very well received by the pupils and the last time they were with us was at the Celebration Day for Sara's retirement. There will be the usual Christmas Disco's at both Primary and Secondary on the last day of term.

For several years we had two separate Christmas performances on Primary Campus for the lower and upper teams. This can often prove problematic for rehearsals and Production days as several of the pupils and staff are not in every day. With this in mind we will be having a slight change this year and we will be having one musical production for all ages. Although it will have a slightly different feel to it I am sure it will be up to the usual high quality production that we have enjoyed in previous years. The date for Christmas 'Musical' will be Thursday 8th December at 10.00 am.

There will probably be other events organised nearer the time but these are a few dates for your diaries and there will be more details later.

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Governors

The Governing Body

The Bridge School has a Governing Body which is responsible for overseeing all aspects of school life. The governors meet every term to ensure that all necessary policies and procedures are in place to meet statutory requirements. Minutes of the meetings are available for viewing in the school office. The Governing Body also decides how the school's budget will be spent and what priorities are included in the School Improvement Plan.

The Governing Body works with the Principal, the Leadership Team, and the staff to ensure that the children attending the school are kept safe and are provided with the right opportunities to learn, develop and grow.

Membership

The sixteen members of the Governing Body are made up of: 5 parent governors, 3 Local Authority governors, 4 Community governors and 4 staff governors. Governors are elected for a four year term of office.

The Chair of Governors is: Mr Gordon Cochrane and he can be contacted through the school office.

The parent governors are: Rachel Barritt, Martin Bennett, Judith Curtis and Sarah Newell. There is one vacancy.

The Local Authority governors are: David Ball, Adrian Ilott and Sue Riley.

The Community Governors are: Gordon Cochrane, Peter Holden, Liz Gerrie and Simon Linford Wood

The staff governors are: Odran Doran, Lizzy Flisher, Christine Leigh and Kevin Wilson.

Committees

The work of the Governing Body is carried out by the following committees:

- Finance and Personnel
- Premises, Health And Safety
- Curriculum
- Extended School

Governors regularly visit the school and observe the work that is being carried out by the staff.

Following our last full Governors Meeting on October 14th the following and key decisions were made:-

- Gordon Cochrane, Chairman and Peter Holden, Vice Chair where both re elected.
- Governors agreed the following Key priorities for the School Improvement Plan for 2011-14:-

1. We will develop a whole school curriculum that ensures the needs of all pupils and statutory requirements are met.
2. There is high quality teaching and learning across all Key Stages.
3. There are consistent and robust systems in place to track and evaluate pupil progress.
4. All mechanisms for promoting the school, and all essential policies will be reviewed and updated.

The Governors also received information about how the pupils are progressing. With our data analysis of pupil's progress over the last academic year, 2010-2011, 88% of our pupils made expected or better than expected progress.

Governors were also updated about us all being located onto one site. The Local Authority have carried out an initial feasibility study and I am due to meet up with them later in the month to discuss possible options. I will keep informed as soon as I know anything.

Holiday Club

The Holiday Club on Primary Campus was very well supported again this half term and we seem to almost be too popular! Unfortunately, we had pupils on the waiting list and were not able to offer them any days at all this holiday. With this in mind can I please ask that you send your requests back by the deadline on the letters that will be coming out soon and if you are unable to take up a place that has been allocated to you for any reason you call Michelle, Lisa or Sara on 0795 664 8536 in order that we can offer the place to someone else.



School Meals

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. Please remember they are £2.10 a day. If you pay by cheque please make your cheques payable to 'Suffolk County Council' Dinners need to be paid for in advance either weekly, half-termly or termly. The new school menus have started and from what I have been told from both the kitchen's they seem to be very well received with lots of empty plates! If you wish to see the new menus please go the school website.

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History Day and Multi Cultural Week

On Primary Campus we have been celebrating the history of toys as well as our multi cultural links.

In October there was a whole morning dedicated to the History of old toys. Pupils and staff had the opportunity to play with a whole range of traditional toys such as hula hoops, skittles and traditional wooden toys and they also played old playground games and as you can see they really enjoyed themselves.



Key Stage 3 at Secondary Campus have also been looking at History and several students went to Framlingham Castle and were able to walk around the wall.



We also celebrated Diwali in the week after half-term and then we had a celebration assembly where everyone has the opportunity to share a variety of different experiences and activities that they had experienced over the week. There will be more photos on the website soon.



Parents' Group



Letters will soon be coming home inviting you to Parents' Group sessions on both Campuses. The first meeting will be an informal coffee morning where you have the opportunity to meet with other Parents from both campuses. We are in the process of finalising a series of meetings with speakers including:-

- Steph Harsant our Music Therapist
- Activities Unlimited
- Suffolk Advocacy Service
- Suffolk carers

amongst others.

We also plan to arrange PECS and Makaton training sessions. We will let you know about these when the details have been finalised. If you have any suggestions for other organisations that you would like to attend the coffee mornings please let me know. I look forward to seeing as many as possible of you at these events

Fund Raising



Thank you to everyone who sent in donations for the Harvest Festivals. Both went very well and you can see photographs on the web site. The donations were sent to Families In Need & Distress (FIND) and they have written to me and asked that I pass their thanks on to you stating that "It is very encouraging to know that your pupils have shown such concern for those families who are in real need. We couldn't help them (families) without this great support".

Secondary Campus supported Jeans for Genes Day by wearing Jeans for the day and donating money. We raised £55 .65.

The Pamper Evening on Primary Campus was another great success. The proceeds were split between The Bridge School and Hart House, the Special Needs school in Gambia that we help support. At the time of writing we have made over £500 with some of the commission still to come in. My thanks go to everyone who made this a great success either by helping organise it or by coming along and spending your money! I would have liked to come along to offer my support and possibly even fit in a therapy but unfortunately I had a Governors Committee meeting that night on Secondary Campus.

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Christmas Events



As mentioned earlier in the newsletter the Primary Production is on Thursday 8th December. ***Unfortunately due to limited space each family will be limited to two tickets, a separate letter and reply slip will follow shortly.***

We will again be having Moving Memories videoing the production 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 Friday 9th December.

There will also be a Carol Service at Copleston High School for all the local Primary Schools on Friday 2nd December and some of our Year 5 and 6 Students will attend. Unfortunately parents are not able to attend due to lack of space.

We are hoping to arrange for the classes on the Primary Campus to see Fr. Christmas and for those on the Secondary Campus to either go out for a special meal or to do some Christmas shopping!

'Return to Teaching' (RTT) course, spring 2012

I have been asked to pass on the information below to anyone who is considering returning to teaching.

Suffolk's schools value the experience of teachers who have been on a career break and/or have taught in other local authorities. Teachers who have been away from the classroom for some time will benefit from the RTT course which is being run by the Teacher Recruitment Service in January and February 2012. This is a two-day course (with additional placement time in school/s) and is for teachers who have QTS for primary or secondary age pupils.

The course is also suitable for teachers who might consider returning to teaching in one of the county's special schools or working with SEN pupils in mainstream schools.

For more details contact the Teacher Recruitment Service:

- teachsuffolk@suffolk.gov.uk
- Tel: 01473 583517

Transition Evening & Year 11 Visits

There will be a Post 16 Transition evening on Tuesday 22nd November 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Holiday Inn London Road. There will be representatives from Suffolk New College, Suffolk One, Genesis and Youth Support Services on hand to discuss the wide range of courses that are offered to students. Invitations have already been sent to Year 9, 10 & 11.

Year 11 students have just finished the first of their visits to Post 16 providers. They visited Otley College first where they experienced horticulture and animal husbandry.



They have just started Suffolk One where they are doing Media Studies.

Children In Need



We will be supporting Children In Need on both Campuses on Friday 18th November. The Secondary Campus will be having a fund raising afternoon organised by the School Council. Primary Campus will be having Karaoke so please can the pupils come in clothes with spots and or party clothes.

Please send in any donations you would like to make with your child.

Dates for your Diary



- 11th November – 9.30-12.00 Year 11 Application/information Morning on Secondary Campus
- 18th November – Children in Need
- 30th November – Possible strike action
- 2nd December – Carol Concert, Copleston High School for Y5 & Y6 (Sorry no Parents)
- 8th December – Primary Christmas Production (Parents only)
- 13th December – Christmas Lunch Primary Campus
- 14th December – The Bridge has got Talent Show
- 14th December – Christmas Lunch Secondary Campus
- 15th December – Carol Service at Shepherd's Drive Baptist church for Secondary Campus
- 16th December – Disco on both Campuses
- 16th December – Break up for Christmas
- 3rd January 2012 – Staff Development Day
- 4th January 2012 – Pupils return to school

And Finally

You may have heard on the news that several unions have, or are in the process of balloting and there may be industrial action on 30th November. I need to make you aware that if they decide to strike this may have implications for the school. I will keep you informed and let you know more as soon as I know.