



NEWSLETTER

23rd October 2020

Issue No. 2

Welcome

To say this half term has been unusual is an understatement! However, it has been great to see all the children back and into a routine. This half term has really brought our motto to the forefront. It has shown us that school is so much more than just academic learning; While this is essential, school is equally about learning to socialise; to play; to learn to develop and manage friendships and relationships with others. School is also about helping children become independent and learning to be confident. What it has also shown us is the Together strand – we need to work together to support our children.

Many thanks for all your support this half term and I hope you have a restful half term. We look forward to seeing you on Tuesday 3rd November.

Staffing

Reception Teaching Assistants (TAs)

After 13 years working in Reception, Mrs Sharon Kelf has decided to change her work pattern and move to part time work. Mrs Kim Foster will be the Teaching Assistant in RA and Miss Lauren King will be joining us as the Teaching Assistant in RW. They will spend a little time after half term settling into their new classes and getting to know the children.

Mrs Ruth Nutley has also decided to change her work pattern after nearly 18 years working full time, and will be doing a job share with Mrs Kelf in 3H after half term.

We have increased Miss Abi Kerslake's hours to work full-time in Year 1.

Parents Consultations

Many thanks to everyone who attended Parent Consultations this week. I hope you found them useful. Many thanks also for your patience with the technology. We know there was confusion regarding the timings of the meeting (the email link included the start of the whole session), some parents didn't get invites for siblings, and there were also a few issues with 'end meetings' for the parents and teachers having to manage lights in their room. Let us hope we can get back to normal practice as soon as possible!

Assessments (Y2-Y6)

I know there was some feedback from parents regarding the PiXL assessments we handed out before parents evenings. Due to COVID-19 we decided to complete a range of diagnostic assessments in Reading, Maths and Grammar, Spelling & Punctuation (GPS). These assessments identified gaps in the children's learning from their previous year, i.e – if your child is in Y4 – the assessments identified gaps from the Year 3 curriculum. These assessments were completed during the first 3 or 4 weeks of term. Teachers have been using these to fill any 'gaps' in children's understanding. This does mean that by the Parent Consultations, children had probably already made progress.

We decided to hand these assessments out as we thought you would find them helpful and a point to start discussions at Parents Consultation Evening.

Children will complete a formal 'standardised' assessment (against the current year group objectives) in November/December. We will feedback back to parents about these levels in the spring parents consultations evenings.



Friends

Many thanks to Friends for their hard work and support this half term. It is lovely to see all the children in their dressing up outfits today, and a huge thank you to Kelly and her kitchen team for providing cakes today for everyone! Friends are running a virtual Bingo/Quiz on 13th November and have their AGM (virtually) on Tuesday 10th November (7pm). They would really like to see as many of you as possible.

School Events

PE

Miss Stark has had her first meeting with the football club this year and is looking forward to getting out on the field for some practice. We are hoping to play some games once the league begins. For the time being, Year 5 will practice on Thursday lunch times and Year 6 on Tuesday lunch times.

Year 4

The pupils in Year 4 have been writing fantastic poems about the power of hope. Some stanzas have been combined into a whole class poem, which has been filmed and will be shared on our Twitter page. Here's a snippet from one of the poems:

*Delicious dinner warms me from the inside,
I snuggle up in cosy pyjamas—keep the cold outside.
My family gives me hope when I feel down,
Their hugs and kisses always get rid of my frown.
There is always a place for hope.*

School Council

Congratulations to the School Council reps who have been elected to the School Council this year. Miss Mustoe is running the Council and Houses this year. We look forward to developing a range of initiatives and events throughout the year. We are currently working on our first fundraiser for Children in Need in November. We have written a letter to Mr Dillon with some ideas of ours (see attached letter).

Sensory Garden

The children are beginning to make use of the new Sensory Garden area. We're planning to get new paving completed over the next half term, which will enable the children to make even more use of the area. Over the spring we will begin to plant some sensory plants and build more resources.

Nursery Edibles

Nursery harvested last year's crop & weeded the bed ready for this year's planting.



Nursery & Reception 2021 - Prospective Tours (Virtual)

We are running prospective parent tours for Nursery and Reception via ZOOM at the moment. All the information, including dates, are available on our website. Please contact the school office if you need to arrange a school tour, or know someone looking for a school space for September 2021.

<https://www.birchhillprimaryschool.co.uk/page/?title=Virtual+Tours+%26amp%3B+New+Parents+Information&pid=161>

School Menu

We have a new lunch menu for after half term with one extra meal choice per day. Please remember to order at home the day before.

Free School Meals

We are very grateful to Oakwood Youth Challenge in Wokingham who kindly contacted us today to offer children eligible for benefits-based free school meals a £15 food voucher for over half term. All eligible parents have been contacted today about how the voucher will be issued to them.

Secondary Admissions

Please remember that Secondary School applications need to be completed by 31st October. All the information is available online. <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-admissions/starting-secondary-school/how-do-i-apply>

Dates for your Diary

INSET DAY	MONDAY 2ND NOVEMBER
Friends AGM (Virtual)	7pm Tuesday 10 th November
Scholastic Virtual Book Fair	Friday 13th November (further details to follow)
Year 6 Residential Meeting	6.00-6.45pm Thursday 12th November
Year 4 Residential Meeting (Oakwood)	6.00-6.45pm Thursday 19th November
Year 5 Residential Meeting (Oakwood)	4.30-5.15pm Thursday 26th November
Friends Virtual Family Bingo	6:30pm Friday 13 th November
Flu immunisations Rec-Y6	Tuesday 15 th December