

## Dear Parents and Carers,

The new term has started well with the children very quickly settling back into routine and fully focused upon their learning and enjoying the company of their friends across the school. I am very pleased with the children's attitudes, both to their learning, which they do enjoy and in relation to their vast capacity for kindness and consideration to others - this combination makes school a happy, busy and convivial place to be and as a community we will be looking to take this forward as the school year continues to unfold. I am especially proud of our Year 6 children who are embarking on a very important and quite intensive learning block across the next eleven school weeks. They are attending some extra sessions across the week at the moment and are working so well and making such good progress under Miss Carrahar's direction - well done Y6 and Miss Carrahar!

Y6 and parents and carers are invited to a meeting on Monday January 29<sup>th</sup> at 3.45 in the Y6 classroom when Mr Kevin Foster, the leader of Explore4All, will outline all of the details around our June 25/27 residential to Berwick / Edinburgh. This is just a reminder but with a full complement of staff and pupils now booked to go it will clarify any queries anyone may have and set the scene for what will be a fun filled and well deserved outing for the Y6 team.

On Tuesday February 6<sup>th</sup>, Y6 will be travelling to The Word to take part in a Lego and Technology day - a separate letter will be sent but as it will be a full day then a packed lunch will be needed (these can be supplied by the kitchen if required). Of course our champion Lego League team are gearing up for their trip to the National Finals in Bristol, leaving for their late afternoon flight on Friday February 23<sup>rd</sup> with the competition on the Saturday and the return flight on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>. Exciting times! A meeting has just been held to look at the organisation etc. with Mrs Thompson still looking to attract sponsorship to help with the costs. We were very successful last year in meeting the bill and it just may be that there are some parental links with businesses that might be willing to lend a hand? If anyone can assist in this was please contact Mrs Thompson at the school.

A reminder too that it is not just Y6 who will enjoy a residential with a special Thurston Experience meeting scheduled for all of Y5 and parents / carers, on Tuesday January 30<sup>th</sup> at 4pm in the Y5 classroom. Mr Alex D'Ambrosie who knows all that there is to know about Outdoor Education, will be available to talk through the trip and answer any questions.

Father Weymes visited school late last week and has kindly agreed to say Mass for us along with a Penitential Service at the following dates / times:

- Thursday February 8<sup>th</sup> at 9.30 - Lenten Mass (parishioners are kindly invited)
- Tuesday March 6<sup>th</sup> at 2pm: Penitential Service for all KS2 children
- Tuesday March 27<sup>th</sup> at 9.30 - Holy Week Mass (parishioners kindly invited)

Father Weymes always makes the effort to celebrate Holy Mass here at school for us and this is especially important in the light of the loss of Holy Rosary.

Further ahead, the school photographer has been booked to arrive at 08.30 on Thursday March 15<sup>th</sup>. As ever, invitations are invited to all pre-school children too.

Week beginning February 5<sup>th</sup> is Internet Safety Week, something the school takes very seriously. We have two CEOPS (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) trained staff in school and have worked with eSafe on all our computer systems since 2010. We are also a KidsSafe school and Mrs Blackwood is carrying out the training with Y6 this week.

Our Y3 and Y4 class will be presenting an Internet Safety assembly to which Y3 / Y4 parents are kindly invited, on Wednesday February 7<sup>th</sup> at 11.30. Internet safety, online security and know how are so important in this day and age and I am sure that everyone across the community is looking to see our children benefit from all of the opportunities that the new technological advances can offer but at the same time, taking every precaution to keep our children safe. It is a daily challenge.

The Director's cut of the school's Nativity performance has been posted on line along with some lovely footage of the Y5 and Y6 musical production and their visits to local care homes. Please do take a look and comment if you get the chance. There is so much to see about the children's activities and the work they are covering - I'm sure that you will enjoy a visit to the site. Mr Faircloth and Mrs Blackwood and increasingly other staff are making sure that the site is up to date. Thanks are due for this sterling work!

You will notice too that attendance details are posted every Friday. The week just gone Y2 were the top class in the school and they enjoyed having every play in the MUGA yesterday as a reward. The DFE are taking an even closer look at attendance these days. It is no longer sufficient to see the school end of term figures; they increasingly dig deeper to look at all sorts of categories of pupils. It takes very little for a child to be earmarked as a "persistent absentee" - any holiday in school time, a hospital stay, a bout of chicken pox or similar, or any recurring bouts of sickness can see names added to the termly list. Unfortunately, the amount of names that are triggering this unwanted category for the pupil and indeed the school is increasing. The LA would prefer that I write to parents of pupils who fall into this category but a general alert may suffice. If absence is an issue then we can discuss this at the termly open evening meetings. In the meantime I am sure that you will do your utmost to make sure that your child or children attend every day that they are able. Thank you in anticipation.

On Thursday February 1<sup>st</sup> at 4pm the school will be hosting the termly Local Authority Healthy Schools Meeting at Miss Watson's invitation. This will mean that we will have a number of staff from across the borough visiting. As a one off, visitors will be allowed to park in the school yard and staff will be on hand to assist with entry around 3.45 after the children have departed for the day. Pupils at after school clubs should have left before the meeting finishes around 5pm.

Best wishes - I look forward to seeing you as the term progresses.

Yours sincerely

**K J Smithson**  
Head Teacher.