

SCHOOL NEWS

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Parent Council

Breakfast & After School Club

I am delighted that 11 parents have come forward to make up this year's Parent Council. All class reps will be contacting you soon with details of how best to communicate with them. Please forward your questions and items you would like to be discussed. We will then give full feedback to all parents and post on the website.

We are holding our first meeting on Thursday 4th November, the first week back after half term. We will be discussing setting up communications then so don't worry if you haven't heard from your class rep before then. Items for the meeting can always be sent to me directly.

The main area of discussion I would like to address is the Breakfast and After School Club provision. If you have any thoughts about how the provision can be improved, please pass them on and they will be discussed.

PTA donation days

The new PTA have given a great deal of thought to the format of the Christmas Fair this year. They have tried to reduce the number of donation days leading up to Christmas and strike a different theme by introducing the Makers Market. We will however, be holding the most popular stalls that the children (and adults) enjoy.

On **Friday 6th November** we are asking for jars of wrapped sweets or boxes of chocolates for the tombola. This is the first Friday back after half term, so a good way to use up those left over Hallowe'en sweets! Please make sure all chocolate and sweets are in date for 4th December - in previous years, we have had to dispose of donations which were past their use by date. In exchange for a donation, please come to school in **SILLY SOCKS** - anything goes, but must be worn with school uniform.

On **Friday 27th November** please bring in a bottle for the tombola in exchange for **NON-UNIFORM**.

Remember all donations are voluntary and children can take part in silly socks and non-uniform anyway.

Competition

Coming home in bags today and attached to this newsletter is a competition sheet for your children to enter a design for a poster (KS2) and programme cover (KS1) for the Christmas fair. It costs 50p to enter. Please look at the instructions on the sheet if you are interested.

Newsletter

Also attached to this week's School News is a newsletter from the PTA. It is just a 2 page letter with key information and dates - please take the time to read it.





Homework

We have listened carefully to comments and feedback given to us at Parent's Evening regarding homework. After discussions with the Senior Leadership Team, we are happy to put the following changes in place:

KS2: just one written and one creative task to be completed, as well as reading, spellings, tables and maths tasks. In Year 6, homework will start to be set more regular and formally as the children prepare for their End of Key Stage Tests and their transition to High School.

KS1: written and creative tasks will still be set but these will be optional. To avoid pressure on parents, there will be no additional reward for completing these tasks. As parents however, it is worth knowing that tasks which involve parental engagement have a much greater influence on the child's progress than worksheet completion.

In KS1 it is vital that the counting and tables activities are completed and completed well. Fluency in counting and learning of number facts underpins the New National Curriculum in maths. Likewise, spelling and reading remain of upmost importance. We would like parents to focus on these tasks and complete the written/creative tasks as an optional extra.

After much consideration, we have decided that from April 2016, we will no longer continue with the Active Learn maths homework. We are looking into other forms of online maths homework which are very successful with other schools. In the meantime, we will try to vary what is set for maths, using a range of websites, apps and Active Learn for the time being.

New Building

We have been extremely lucky that the building project has gone almost without a hitch! The handover date was slightly delayed which made for a nail-biting time as we tried to coordinate removal men, staff time after school, furniture swapping and the emptying of the container which has been sitting at the front of the school these last few months. Due to a couple of paperwork delays, we were unable to move the children in until Wednesday afternoon, but they are now installed and really enjoying their new space. The staff have done an amazing job coming together as a fantastic team to get the four classrooms set up in record time.

Everyone is curious as to what the classrooms look like inside and so we are inviting you in for a quick peek! We will be opening the 4 new classrooms for all parents to have a look from 2.15pm on Friday 6th November. Please feel free to come inside and have a look around and talk to the children.

Holiday Dates 2016-17

The holiday dates for the next academic year are now on our website. Please make sure you note these down and pass to anyone who may be booking holidays. Family holidays and weddings will continue to be unauthorised and may result in fines, so please make reference to the dates. The 1st and 2nd of September will be INSET days and there will be 3 further days for INSET which will be announced at a later date.

It's been a long and very busy 8 week half term! Have a good rest and a safe holiday. See you on Tuesday 3rd November at 8.45am.

Kind regards,

Cathy Beddows and the Etchells staff

