



# Elm C of E Primary School

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Head Teacher Mr. C. Child



## Newsletter November 2009

### New Appointments

As you know we had hoped to appoint two new lunchtime supervisors during the summer holiday, but time was against us and term started before we could complete the process. However, we have now managed to hold interviews and complete the necessary checks, and I am delighted to tell you that we now have three new supervisors, bringing the total team to seven. Miss Bibby, Mrs Harwin, Miss Rae and Mrs Parnell have been with us for some time, and they have now been joined by Mrs Reynolds, Mrs Roy and Miss Williamson. I am sure you would wish to join me in welcoming them to the staff of Elm School.

Just when we thought everything was settled, Mrs Rand, who is one of our teaching assistants in the Reception class has decided to leave. She has a background in Science, and has decided that this is an area she would like to take up again. She will be leaving just after half term to take up a post in Thomas Clarkson School as a Laboratory Assistant in their Science Department. On your behalf I would like to thank her for all she has done at Elm School, and offer her every good wish for the future. I have a feeling that many of the children she has been working with at Elm over the past few years will be working with her in her new role. We are in the process of finding a replacement for Mrs Rand who I hope will be in place within the next three or four weeks.

I have delayed sending out this newsletter so that I could let you know about the appointment of my successor. As you know, I will retire at the end of this academic year and the governors have been working hard to find my replacement. I am sure that they would not mind me telling you that they had more interest in the post than they expected, and that they felt the calibre of applicants was very high. Following interviews on Tuesday and Wednesday, they have appointed Mrs Fiona McCallum. She is currently the Deputy Headteacher of a school in March. She will take up her post in September 2010, and between now and then, the governors and I will be working closely with her to ensure the handover is as smooth as possible.

### Building Work

During half term the finishing touches were made to our first-aid room and toilets. They are now in operation and will help to ensure playtimes are safer and more pleasant for everybody. I have to give my compliments to the builders, Wayne Cowling and his team, who throughout the building process have gone out of their way to ensure that they caused as little disruption to the work of the school and to the children as possible. I should also mention that the standard of their work is excellent. Thank you Mr Cowling.

During half term our new climbing wall was built, and is also in operation. As you will see it is a low wall studded with different coloured grips, which allow the children to climb along it. By asking the children to restrict the colours they use, the climbs, (or traverses as they are properly known,) can be made more or less difficult. The children will not be allowed to climb up the wall, in fact given the arrangement of the holds that would be very difficult. As a result they should never be more than a maximum of one metre from the ground. We have taken extensive advice from the County Outdoor Education Advisor, and he has assured us that this is safe.

### **Early Morning Clubs**

You may be aware that we run before school clubs on three of the five school mornings. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings we run a wake and Shake Club, when we encourage children, (and some parents – no staff yet though) to come into the hall at 8.15 am and start the day with some exercise to music. It is a fun way to get everyone going and is open to all children. If you or your child would like to take part, just turn up.

On Wednesday mornings we run a netball club. This is open to boys and girls in Key Stage 2, (Year 3 upwards) and is led by a qualified coach. If the weather is kind this takes place on the playground, if not it takes place in the hall. Once again, if your child would like to take part, they just need to come along on a Wednesday morning at 8.15 am.

### **Copse Pack**

We have obtained a copse pack from the Woodland Trust, comprising of 10 silver birch trees, 10 rowan trees and 10 cherry trees. We intend to plant these on a corner of the school field so that in a few years time we will have a small copse offering shade to the children and a different habitat for the wildlife on our field. Some years ago we planted a hedge along the eastern boundary of the field, using a hedgerow pack from the Woodland Trust. At that time there were fewer children in the school, and we allowed each child to plant a small section of the hedge. This time we intend to allow every member of our Reception class to plant a tree. They will then be able to watch it grow during their time at Elm, and hopefully come back as adults, perhaps even as parents themselves, and look at “their” tree.

### **“Proud Of” Permission**

During every Friday assembly, we give “Proud Of” certificates to children who we feel deserve a special recognition. Copies of these certificates are then posted on our school website where they can be seen by aunts, uncles, grannies etc, who may live some way away. Of course they can also be accessed by you, by the children themselves and by anyone else. Given the sensitivity of posting any personal details onto the internet, we will only send your child’s “proud of” to the website with your written permission. We have sent out the permission form before, but in case you missed it I have attached another one to the end of this letter. If you have not filled in a form like this and sent it back to school, we will not allow your child’s proud of to be displayed. If you are not sure you have filled in a form and you would like your child to be able to see their Proud Of on the website, please complete this form and send it in anyway.

### **Trips and Visits**

Just before the end of last half term we had a theme week where every class looked at a variety of other cultures and religions and based much of their work on these visits. I have to say that during that week, there was a particular buzz in school, and the children seemed really enthusiastic and excited about what they were doing. A number of children told me how much they had enjoyed visiting the places they went to see, and this was echoed by staff. I feel that it is particularly important that we undertake this sort of work with our children. The society they will live and work in as adults will be multiracial and multicultural. Elm and to a lesser extent Wisbech does not reflect this. It is vital therefore that we help our children develop an understanding of people and their differing faiths and beliefs.

I personally visited the new mosque in Peterborough with Year 6 and found the day really informative and interesting. I felt it was a real privilege to have had an opportunity to tour the building and listen to some of the leaders of their community. It has left me wondering how many parents would be interested in taking part in a similar experience. To that end, I have asked the Elm School Association to consider organising a trip later this term. If we can manage it I thought that we could leave Elm at about 9.00 am, travel to Peterborough by coach, tour the mosque and then go on to do some Christmas shopping at Queensgate. The coach would return before the end of school. If you are interested, keep an eye open for a letter from the ESA.

### **Freaky Fridays**

As they did last year, Elm School Association have organised a series of Freaky Fridays which will take place immediately after half term. On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November we are inviting children (and staff and parents) to donate 50p to ESA funds and come into school wearing a hat. On the 13<sup>th</sup> we are inviting everyone to make a similar donation and come in wearing odd socks, and on the 20<sup>th</sup> to wear a truly striking tie. The last Freaky Friday will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> November, when the requested donation will be £1 for the privilege of wearing anything other than school uniform. Hopefully each Friday will give a bit of fun, and all the funds raised will go to ESA funds to be spent on the children.

### **Late Children**

Just before half term we had one of our regular visits from the Education Welfare Officer, who inspected our registers. He was very concerned to see the number of children who are recorded as arriving in school late. I am sure that you will appreciate that when a child is late it affects all of the children in that class. It also means that the late child is usually flustered and is in no position to begin the day as they should. Finally it gives a very poor message about the importance of punctuality and shows a lack of respect both to school rules and the other individuals in that class. I have to say that this message will be of little relevance to the vast majority of our parents as most children arrive at school on time and ready to begin the school day. However, if your child is frequently late, the Education Welfare Officer has instructed me to point out that anyone arriving in school after 8.45 am will be recorded as late. If they arrive after 8.55 it will be noted that they arrived after the registers have closed and this will be counted as an unauthorised absence. Our registers are inspected at least once every half term, and if the level of absence or lateness of any child is seen to be unsatisfactory, it could result in the prosecution of the parents.

### **Harvest Service**

I was really pleased with our recent harvest service and would like to thank you all for your generosity in sending in so much produce. At the end of the service I became really worried that it would not all fit into my car, but with some careful packing and by filling every nook and cranny in the boot, the back seat and even the passenger footwell, I did manage to cram it in. I took it direct to Jimmy's Nightshelter in Cambridge, arriving on a cold and wet evening having driven through the rain from the church. I have to say that the weather during that drive, particularly coming at the end of the warm and dry autumn we have experienced this year, brought home to me how important your donations were to the homeless of Cambridge. Thank you.

### **Support Our Soldiers**

We have been asked to take part in a Support Our Soldiers coffee morning which will be held at All Saints' Church Elm on the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> November. Our Year 6 class will be helping at the church, and will then go over to the war memorial at 11.00 am to observe a minutes silence. All parents, friends and other relatives are welcome to attend the coffee morning and at the memorial. Year 6 will also be organising a collection of goods to be packed into welfare boxes and sent to the troops serving overseas. If you would like to make a donation to this, please send items such as sweets, nuts, shower gel, wet wipes, puzzle books, socks and anything else that you think a soldier serving away from home might like to receive. The only restrictions are that the items should be light, small enough to fit into a shoebox and not include aerosols, lighters, glass items or alcohol. You might also like to include a message. If you send the items into school, we will arrange for them to be packed into the boxes and sent off. You can find further information on [www.supportoursoldiers.co.uk](http://www.supportoursoldiers.co.uk)

## Date Changes

Since my last newsletter we have needed to change the dates of our Christmas Carol Service and Easter Service. They have each been bought forward by one day and will take place on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December and Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March respectively. I have amended the dates in the list below to reflect this. Please accept my apologies if this causes any inconvenience.

## Dates for this Year

I have listed the dates for this year as we understand them at the moment. Some dates may be liable to change.

Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> November	Open Evening
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	Open Evening
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> November	School photographer
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> December	Light Christmas Tree
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Carol Service
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2009	School Closes for Christmas Holiday
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> January 2010	Staff Training Day - School Closed
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2010	School Opens – Spring Term
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2010	School Closed – Half Term Holiday
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> February inclusive	
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March	Open Evening
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Reception Class Open Day
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Open Evening
Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Easter Service
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> April	School Closes for Easter Holiday
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2010	School Opens – Summer Term
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2010	School Closed May Day Holiday
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> to Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	Year 6 SATs
Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2010 to	School Closed – Half Term Holiday
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> June inclusive	
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	Sports Day
Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2010	Staff Training Day – School Closed
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> July	Y3 and Y4 Production
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	Y5 and Y6 Production
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> July	Reports Out
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Y1 and Y2 Production
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> July	Open Evening
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Final Assembly
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2010	School Closes for Summer Holiday

Child's Name ..... Class .....

I consent to any Proud Of certificates awarded to my child being displayed on the school website

Signed ..... Date .....