



# Elm C of E Primary School

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## Newsletter January 2011

Dear Parent/Carer,

First of all, I would like to thank you for your support with our Christmas fundraising. The collection at the Church Service together with staff contributions raised £197 for CLIC Sargent, the children's cancer charity. Enclosed with this letter you will find an 'Awareness Card' which is designed to help parents be alert to the signs and symptoms of cancer in children and teenagers – I hope you will find this a useful reference. Thankfully childhood cancer is rare, but it is good to be aware of this issue. We are planning to support CLIC Sargent with further fundraising activities later in the year.

### **Parent Questionnaires**

Thank you very much to those parents who completed the questionnaires sent out before Christmas. We have looked very carefully at your responses and they will be discussed further at Governors' meetings this term. We had responses from a very small group of parents so it is hard for us to draw general conclusions from this feedback, but the comments made at the bottom of the forms received have been very helpful. The results of the survey are posted on the school noticeboard.

One area of concern for several parents who responded to the questionnaire was the issue of school uniform. Please can I remind you that as a school we encourage all children to wear our uniform, which consists of royal blue sweatshirts, cardigans or polo shirts. The girls wear grey skirts or trousers in winter and blue and white check dresses in summer. The boys wear grey trousers or shorts in summer. Suitable shoes for active play at break times are also important. The school office has good stocks of our uniform for you to buy. We discourage children from wearing hooded sweatshirts or sweatshirts in bright colours with prominent logos. In the interests of safety pupils are requested not to wear any earrings other than studs, and for the safety of your child, these should be removed before taking part in PE or swimming. Your support in this area is very much appreciated, as it helps us set high standards for the school and helps to avoid competition and disagreements between children.

### **Our focus this term**

Since the beginning of term all the staff have been sharing our two main focus areas for this term with the children. The first is handwriting – we are asking all children to improve the standards of their presentation in written work and teachers are supporting this with extra input into handwriting skills. Our second area for improvement is reading. Within school we have invested in new, attractive books which will be added to our reading scheme and class libraries very shortly. We are allocating additional time to supporting children with reading at school, and we would also like to enlist your support at home.

When children are learning to read, 'little and often' is the best approach. Support at home as well as school makes a great difference in establishing children as confident, successful readers. So I would like to ask you to set aside a little time each day to read with your child if he or she is in Reception, Year 1, 2 or 3. There is no need to read the whole book if it is too long to be completed in five or ten minutes. It is great to spend some time talking about the pictures and the characters too. It doesn't have to be a parent who reads with the child – why not enlist grandparents or older siblings to take a turn? Your child's class teacher will be very happy to help you with ideas and strategies if your child is reluctant to read at home or if you would like further support with hearing your child read.

For older children who are well established with basic reading skills, it is still very important to read every day. You can support your child with this by encouraging him or her to read for at least 20 minutes each day so that they build up the stamina to tackle longer books. It is useful to ask your child to chat with you about what they are reading and show their understanding of the characters, plot and style of the book.

With your help, I am sure we can enable every child to improve his or her reading skills.

## Parents' Evening Dates

Due to other events happening in school, we have had to change the dates of some of our parents, evenings later this term. Please make a note of these dates, and we look forward to seeing you then.

Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	2.00 to 6.30 p.m. 3.30 to 6.30 p.m.	Years 1, 3, 4 Years 2, 5, 6
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	2.00 to 6.30 p.m. 3.30 to 6.30 p.m.	Years 2 and 5 Years 1, 3, 4
Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	9.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. 2.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.	Reception Year 6

## Open Classrooms

We would like to introduce a regular opportunity for you to visit your child's classroom and see some of his/her recent work. We have decided to call these events 'Friday Pop-Ins' as they will take place on the third Friday of each month at 2.50 p.m. You are invited to come a little earlier than usual when collecting your children and call in to the classroom to see their work. Every class will choose something they would like to share with you – it may be a wonderful piece of writing, some super maths work, a model or a painting. If you are not able to make it yourself, please feel free to send a grandparent or another family member along. If no-one from the family can come, we will make sure your child brings a photograph or a photocopy of their work home.

Dates for 'Friday Pop-Ins' this term, all at 2.50 p.m:

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January  
Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February  
Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March

We will remind you of these dates with a text message if you have signed up for parentmail.

## Monitoring of Parking

As part of our Travel Plan, each half term I carry out some simple monitoring of the parking situation outside school at the beginning or end of the day. Many of you will recall seeing me with my Year 6 assistants carrying out this task last week. I know that many parents are concerned about the levels of traffic near the school at these peak times and specifically that it is very dangerous when cars mount the pavement to try to squeeze through. I have passed these concerns on to our Police Community Support Officer, and I would like to ask you all again to walk to school if you possibly can, and park at a distance if you must drive.

## School Website

Finally, I would like to mention that our school website has been updated during that last few months and is full of examples of work from the children and other useful information. Please take a look!

Yours sincerely

Fiona McCallum

