

HANDCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

London Road, Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 6HB

Telephone: (01444) 400291

Fax: (01444) 401176

Email: office@handcross.w-sussex.sch.uk

Website: www.handcrossprimary.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Pedersen

Thursday 11th January 2018

Dear Parents

Welcome back to school! We hope that you had a really good break with your family and that you are all rested and ready for the new term.

Holiday Homework

We try to take great care to ensure that the children are set homework that will extend their learning over the holiday period (or at the very least ensure that they do not go backwards). We are extremely impressed with the amount and quality of the work that many children have managed to do over the busy Christmas period and would like to thank (and congratulate!) you for your stalwart support in this respect; it makes a huge difference to the overall progress of your children.

We will be giving certificates to those children who have made a special effort over their Christmas homework. Those children who successfully completed the homework are to have a treat which will be organised by the teachers in phase groups.

Results of Parent Survey 2017/18

Thank you very much to all of you who took part in the Parent Survey last term. The results have now been collated and a response to your special comments is included in the document at the end of this letter. I hope that you find it as interesting as we did to read your comments.

We find it very useful to have your feedback and have taken note of or acted upon many of the points you raised. Sometimes, it is not possible to take action in which case, a rationale has been supplied which we hope you will understand. While we always value the more critical feedback because it helps us to improve our practice, we are also very appreciative of the many positive comments you made about us and our practice – many thanks – it helps to keep us going!

Collection for AJ and Rosie's family

Thank you so much for your generous contributions to AJ and Rosie's family Christmas collection. We raised £240 altogether and I know that Aaron, the children's father, appreciated this.

An Extra PGL Adventure Residential for Year 4

When you ask Year 6 children what they enjoyed most about their seven years at the school, they usually say the PGL residential and, for this reason, I have always wanted to extend this provision. So, I am very pleased to announce that we have arranged a PGL Adventure Residential for our Year 4 children this term. Year 5 will be attending soon enough when they enter Year 6 next year, so we think that it is appropriate for the Year 4s to be given the opportunity. They will just be going for one night and two days to a site much closer to home than the Year 6 residential in Dorset. The site is called Windmill Hill and it is near Heathfield in East Sussex.



There are many reasons why the Year 4s should go quite apart from the fact that they will have an absolutely fantastic time. Some children have anxieties about attending the Year 6 residential (although they invariably have a whale of a time when they actually go) and this can be for all sorts of reasons: some children have never been away from home before; some children are worried about the food choices; some children have medication and this can cause anxieties for them; others are worried about feeling homesick and not being able to go to sleep without their usual sleep time ritual. I am sure that if they can meet the challenge of a one night stay, their fears about the longer trip will be allayed and they will just be able to look forward to it.

We had an offer we could hardly refuse because it was a last minute booking with PGL. All the Year 4 parents have agreed to it, so the trip will take place on Monday 5th March & Tuesday 6th March. I know they will have a brilliant time...and, who knows, if it works well, perhaps we can extend the provision even further! There will be a PGL meeting at 3.30pm on Thursday 18th January for all parents and children in year 4 (Roedeer) to find out more details of the trip.

Dates

- Tues 9 Jan Mandarin lessons commence for higher achieving children in Upper Juniors**
- Wed 10 Jan am only Mrs Vallance Managing Medicines Refresher Course
- Wed 10 Jan New Parent Tour 9.05am
- Fri 12 Jan Forest School commences**
- Mon 15 Jan Basketball Tournament Worth Abbey Y5/6**
- Wed 17 Jan Amelia, Jamieson, Finn, Tom, Oliver at Mid Sussex Cross County 1-3pm**
- Thur 18 Jan PGL Windmill Hill talk for parents and children**
- Fri 19 Jan Mrs Stone and Mrs Greaves Prevent Training CHN 10-12am
- Mon 22 Jan Mrs Goodenough First Aid Refresher Course
- Wed 24 Jan Miss Durrant PGCE commences Teaching Practice Badgers till 23/3
- Thur 25 Jan Mrs.Turvill teaches higher achieving Y4/5 children – enrichment Maths**
- Thur 25 Jan Governors Safeguarding Committee 9.30am
- Thur 25 Jan Miss Young and Mrs Ford Worthing Fire Station Fire Extinguisher Training
- Thur 25 Jan Big NEARS Schools Football League Triangle 4.00-5.00pm**
- Tue 30 Jan NEARS Schools Netball League Triangle 4.00-5.00pm**
- Tue 30 Jan Speech and Language Therapist Chris Bradshaw Speech and Language training – all teaching staff 3.30-5pm
- Thur 1 Feb Child Protection Briefing pm
- Tue 6 Feb Safer Recruiting Course CHN – Chair of Govs and Head all day
- Tue 6 Feb Mrs Cozens Y4/5 higher achieving Children Enrichment Writing pm**
- Wed 7 Feb Rainbow Theatre Juniors ‘A Day in the Life of a Child in Ancient Greece’**
- Thurs 8 Feb PARENT EVENING 1 2.30pm – 5.00pm**
- Fri 9 Feb Celebration Assembly French song led by Sandrine – Roedeer**
- Fri 9 Feb Pancake Races and Making**
- Half Term Mon 12 Feb – Fri 16 Feb (60x new IPADs installed JSPC on Wed 14 Feb)**
- Mon 19 Feb Second half of term commences**
- Tue 20 Feb PARENT EVENING 2 2.30pm – 5.00pm**
- Thur 22 Feb Netball League Triangle 4.00-5.00pm**

- Thur 1 Mar **World Reading Day School Council organise activities**
- Thur 1 Mar Y4 Higher Achievers’ Maths Challenge Christ’s Hospital**
- Thur 1 Mar Big NEARS Schools Football League Triangle 4.00-5.00pm**
- Mon 5 – Tue 6 March Roedeer Windmill Hill PGL Centre – one night and two days**

Tue 6 March Netball Tournament Triangle 1-3pm
Fri 9 Mar Robins Oral retell in Celebration Assembly
Mon 12 Mar Infants author visit: Margaret Bateson Hill all morning
Tue 13 Mar Grounds Safety Inspection
Tue 13 Mar Football Tournament Y4/5/6 Warden Park 1.15-3.30pm
Thur 15 Mar Scholastic Bookfair arrives – up to 22 March. World Book Day tokens may be used.
Thur 15 Mar Mrs.Turvill Higher Achievers' Maths Enrichment Y4/5
Fri 16 Mar Hedgehogs Dance Performance at Celebration Assembly
Tue 20 Mar Maya Leonard Beetle Boy (with beetles...and her husband!) and book signing for Juniors
Tue 20 Mar Mrs.Cozens Higher Achievers' Y4/5 Enrichment writing
Tue 20 Mar Y3/4/5/6 NEARS Celebration of Gym and Dance Balcombe pm
Fri 23 Mar Miss Durrant PGCE placement in Badgers finishes today; Badgers choral retell at Celebration Assembly
Mon 26 Mar Transition Mentor speaks to Y6 children going to Warden Park 1.15pm
Tue 27 Mar Tag Rugby Tournament Y4/5/6 1.15-3.30pm
Wed 28 Mar Two x PGCE trainee teachers in Y5 and Y3 return fulltime until 29 June
Thur 29 Mar Term ends: Easter Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt

Two remaining INSET dates

Mon 25 June

Mon 16 July

Celebrations of Work

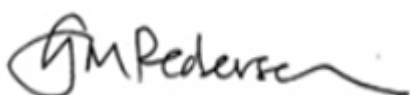
Hedgehogs Thursday 22 March 9am
Robins Monday 26 March 2.45pm
Caterpillars Thursday 22 March 2.45pm
Badgers Wednesday 28 March 2.45pm
Dragonflies Friday 23 March 2.45pm
Roedeer Tuesday 27 March 2.45pm
Foxes Wednesday 28 March 9.00am
Kestrels Wednesday 21 March 2.45pm

Easter Celebrations

You will see from the dates above that on the final day of term, we intend to have some Easter celebrations. This includes an Easter Breakfast, and Easter Egg Hunt.

Well, you can see that we have plenty to get on with this term and I would like to thank you in advance for all your cooperation and support, without which none of our plans would succeed!

With very best wishes and a very happy New Year to you all,



Gill Pedersen
Headteacher

ANNUAL PARENT SURVEY 2017-18

Comment from Parent/Carer
POSITIVE COMMENTS
Absolutely amazing over all the years. Thank you everyone.
Love ALL teachers, TAs, Admin Staff and Headteacher's positivity. Great moral throughout.
Fantastic provision to support personal and social development – great learning mentors, past and present.
Mel and Sarah are amazing at reception. New teachers are amazing and always ready to listen. Mrs Pedersen is always with a smile at the door and always helpful.
Keep up the good work.
Both my children have started brilliantly in the school year and I am more than happy with the teaching and support I am getting from the teachers, so a huge thank you to Ms Ralph and Ms Lane.
Thank you for sending out more texts/emails than before. Previously some announcements were only made on the board (handwritten outside Reception desk area). These were 'missed' by working parents who don't do the school runs, so thank you for the electronic communications.
We are very happy with the school and all the lovely staff. Thank you very much.
I am extremely pleased with how much help and extra support this school is giving my child. I love that the communication between school and parents is important to the school as it is important to me also.
The level of support for children is fantastic.
Where I have ticked 'don't know' it is because I have nothing to compare in terms of performance.
The admin staff are extremely helpful and always accommodating. Miss Stratton is an excellent teacher as is Miss Ralph and my children are very happy here.
I think we have some very good teachers and staff who put a lot of effort into children's happiness.
Miss Lane is a great addition to the school. My child is gaining in confidence and we feel this is mainly down to her taking time with him individually rather than just a face in the class.
Email communication is great. Personally prefer this to paper based information. Our children love the school and are very happy here.
I believe the level of involvement with parents is great. Celebration assemblies are a good example of this. It would be better if others of these were timed to suit working parents eg: Harvest Festivals, Christmas Celebrations and parents evening; either at beginning or end of the day or even in the evening.
The school is a happy and safe environment which our child loves. Trips are well planned and organised.
My 2 children now attend and I have been made to feel totally secure in that my children are in a safe environment and are cared for. They are both happy and well-adjusted to the school which is a huge compliment.
Thank you for all of your hard work to make my daughter's school experience a positive one.
My child is doing very well. He really loves Handcross Primary. All of the staff are great and do a good job. I would recommend this school to anyone.
My daughter has made very good progress at Handcross and she loves coming to school. She feels safe and cared for and we wouldn't hesitate in recommending Handcross to other parents. Well done and keep up the good work.
Mrs Pedersen is a fantastic Headteacher who deals with problems/situations very promptly.
Our child has really enjoyed his start to Yr 4 especially Science and History. He loves Breakfast and After School clubs as well. A great service.

Excellent start to Yr4 – fantastic trip – Science is very enjoyable and the talk of the evening. Thank you.
We are very happy with both of our boys' progress at this school. We feel it is a happy, safe, friendly environment for them to be in. Compliments to all the staff.
Handcross Primary continues to be a strong and excellent school at which our children are very happy.
As a new parent, I have been made to feel welcome. Thank you for making the transition for my child so easy.
I am very pleased with my child's progress over the last year. I want to keep on top of any issues. Teachers are all very approachable and respond well to any issues/requests.
Teachers and office staff always helpful.
Only half term into this year so hard to comment on the current year but last year very happy with Miss Jones. I have nothing but praise for her.
A wonderful school – no doubt.
I wish I were a student at this school.
Our daughter is very happy at this school. Has made friends and finds the lessons informative and beneficial.
Thank you for all the effort you put into our children's education.
So very pleased with everything.
Just a good school.
We are really happy with the school.
We couldn't be happier with the school, teaching and the environment for our children. Many thanks for all your hard work.
My child is very happy at the school and I feel she receives the support she needs.
My daughter recently joined the school. Currently I am happy with her progress and teacher's report.
Fantastic school.
We are very pleased and happy with our daughter's progress. Sincerely appreciate all your efforts.
Very pleased with the school.

Comments from Parents/Carers NEGATIVE	Response from School
Special Needs Provision	
I would like to know earlier than the end of the year that my child needs more support at school so he can have more help and reach the targets at the end of the year.	All children with additional provision have targets and records of these. You should receive a copy of these records at the beginning of each term and a review of progress at the end of each term. If you have not received these, I apologise. We will try to make sure that you have these records in future because we want you to know about this information and also because there are ways in which you may be able to reinforce the support at home.
I have some minor concerns over SEN and the level of updates received/plan of action. However day to day implementation of extra 1:1 tuition, I cannot fault.	
Clubs	
More clubs variety.	We note your comment and strive to provide as many clubs as possible with as wide a range as possible. The range depends on several factors: the expertise and availability of the staff; the availability of suitable spaces (the Hall and playground are in use every day for clubs); and the uptake from the children (if club attendance drops to below about five children, we try to find a more popular alternative).
There is a wide choice of after school clubs but they do vary greatly from term to term, not always to my child's taste.	When you say 'more variety', please let us know more specifically what you would like. We will do our very best to respond to requests! Please note that our research shows that we provide many more clubs than other schools around us! But, we will still try to improve this aspect of our provision so that everyone is satisfied. Please see comment above.
Good variety of clubs, but they often get cancelled.	Of the 312 club sessions that we ran in the Autumn term 2018, 18 sessions were cancelled. We feel this is not too bad!! Last term, clubs were cancelled on Mon 30 Oct so that fire safety training could be delivered to all staff. On Tue 14 Nov three clubs were cancelled to enable 3 staff to attend Child Protection training. Three clubs were cancelled due to teachers having to attend training after school. Two clubs in total were cancelled due to rain and only three due to staff illness. We try our absolute best <i>not</i> to cancel clubs and only do so for very important reasons. We warn parents that the following clubs have to be cancelled if there is heavy rain: Tag Rugby, Junior Dance and Infant Ball Games. (The (almost) free Junior Dance has to be cancelled when it rains to make Hall space for Steve's club which costs a considerable amount to parents.)
Homework	
Reading – I would find it useful if we could be told via the book journal if my children are read with. It's really good to reward children who read lots. However to take the number of times they read back to '0' if they don't read 5 times is quite harsh. I think it would be good to understand why they don't achieve the 5 times before taking away. Would be more understanding. In addition, does reading at school not count?	This issue was discussed at a Teachers' Meeting. This is what the teachers said: All children who have not achieved fluency in Reading, read daily with an adult. All children who have achieved fluency, read four times a week with an adult. This almost always happens except possibly towards the end of the term when there are other activities taking priority or on the days of a trip. So, you know how often they have read - even though your child may not remember the reading session! The teachers say that they would rather spend precious curriculum time reading with the children and making progress, than using the time to write this information daily in the Home School Diaries. The teachers did discuss your suggestion to make allowances in the reward system but they feel that many children do manage to achieve the target five sessions per week and so they prefer not to reduce the challenge level. It is only five times in a week of seven days which (although challenging) they think is attainable. They don't want to make the achievement too easy. Reading at school does not count because it is additional Home Reading that we wish to promote.

My son has lost interest in Spellodrome. There are a few words spelt the American way. He did enjoy playing against other children but when he now goes on it there is only the computer to play with, making him lose interest.	The teachers respond: only Live Spellodrome has some American spellings and the children are told not to use Live Spellodrome (because they can cheat!) Your child is a very good speller, so if Spellodrome is not for him, it does not matter too much. Perhaps it would be good if you could see his classteacher about what he could do instead?
Sometimes the maths homework that is set from generic websites has duplications or conflicting questions (only occasionally). This can cause confusion/frustrations with homework.	Sorry for our occasional mistakes in this respect. We hope it is not too often! If it should happen again, please feel free to amend the duplicate copy to provide challenge.
Sometimes feel homework is a bit too much for some year groups.	If you are finding that the homework is too much, please would you kindly see the teacher to see how it can be adjusted for your child? It's always difficult to get homework right for everyone because there is such a wide range of opinions about its importance amongst parents. Some want more and some want much less. We try to aim for the middle ground, but we want to know if we do not get it right for you and your child.
Homework set is too easy for my child, I feel harder homework needs to be given to push him.	Please see comment above. We want to get this right for your child.
Homework varies in levels of ability – sometimes too easy.	Please see comment above. We want to get this right for your child.
Too much homework in the juniors – on average we've been getting 3 or 4 maths sheets plus English plus spellings. This massively impacts on quality family time.	It's true that children receiving additional support in order to meet age related expectations at the end of the year do receive additional homework. However, we do not want to spoil precious family time. Please would you kindly make an appointment with the teacher about this? Maybe we could come to a compromise?
Communication	
There are many emails/text messages, although it's sporadic which ones I receive compared with my wife. I think in some cases decisions are communicated too late for working parents. An example of this would be changing the time of Sports Day or assemblies.	Please would you kindly ensure that the Office Staff know that you would like to receive all texts and emails, as well as your wife? Once we have announced a date and time we do our very best not to change this because of the confusion which can ensue and also because it may be difficult for parents to arrange changes due to work commitments. Please understand that the change in the Sports Day timing last year was due to the excessive heat predicted in the afternoon. Rather than cancelling the event altogether, we decided to reschedule it to the morning when the temperatures were cooler. It had to be on that day because it was the only alternative time available at Handcross Park. We have learnt from the experience last year. Owing to generally higher temperatures, we have decided to move our Sports Days to mornings in the future and thus avoid a repetition of last year's cancellation.
There seems to be a lack of communication from the school to parents. Often have to ask/enquire to find out what is happening.	Please would you kindly check with the Office Staff that we have all your latest contact details? It could be that they are out of date. We send all letters by email and they also appear on the website. We are very happy to supply paper copies if you prefer. We also send reminders and urgent information by text. If there is any further information that you require, please let us know what this is so that we can improve our communication service.
Last minute changes ie: Sports Day 2017 change with 30 minutes notice leading to many disappointed children, parents and grandparents.	Please kindly read comment above.
More notice for sporting events please.	We will endeavour to give more notice for sporting events. Please kindly read comment above.
More progress reports possibly, especially Yr 5/6.	We are going to experiment with our newly acquired electronic data and tracking system to see if there are any reports which would be suitable for parents. Watch this space!
Parent behaviour is often very concerning. Feedback already been given to school.	

Year 2/3 issues	
Infant/Junior issues – meal times, clubs, school trips, homework, communication by email.	The Year 2s in the mixed Y2/3 class may choose which toilets to use, which lunchtime to attend and which clubs to attend (and they know this). However, once they have chosen which lunch sitting they want to attend, they must stick to it.
I feel there could be better clarity of the expectation placed on the infants in Badgers class as there is inconsistency in their infant/junior status which causes unnecessary upset eg: lunchtime issues and issues with using junior toilets.	As for the homework, they have to do what is required of the remaining children in the class because this is followed up in the lessons. The age range in this class is actually no greater than that of any of the other classes because the oldest Y2s are mixed with only the younger half of the Y3s, so none of the homework set is inappropriate for any member of the class. If your child has difficulty keeping up with the homework, please kindly see the classteacher and discuss it with her. She will be able to help.
Being in a mixed class, my child is sometimes treated as a junior and sometimes an infant – inconsistent and not sure emotional needs are considered enough ie: topic of WWII for 6 year olds.	The topic you mentioned was not WW2, but just the specific topic of Evacuees, which we consider to be very suitable for this age group.