

PILGRIMS POST

UP TO DATE NEWS FROM PILGRIMS PRE-PREPARATORY SCHOOL

ISSUE DATE: 16TH JANUARY, 2009

Welcome back to the New Year at Pilgrims. I have decided to send this newsletter out in both a paper format and an electronic one to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to read about the coming term. Please check that you have received a copy by email. If you don't then please contact the office on pilgrims@harpur-trust.org.uk to ensure that we have the correct email address.

Many of you will now have met Otto, the school dog, who is joining us in school on a daily basis. The majority of children have been brilliant with Otto and can't wait to see him. I have a steady stream of children at my office door throughout the day who want to meet him. Year 3 has geared a lot of its curriculum this term around making observations of Otto and recording the changes as he grows. Although Otto is proving himself to be a calm and placid dog he is a puppy and as such he is still learning to behave. If your child is nervous please reassure them that they will never be made to visit Otto and he won't be allowed out to play with them unless he is on a lead and under close supervision.



Our chosen charity this academic year is Save the Children. So far we have raised £1098 for this very worthwhile cause. On Tuesday 13th January Mrs Walls visited the children to talk to them about the work that the charity does. She spent time in each classroom from nursery to Year 3 and also spoke in the school assembly. The children all enjoyed the visit and hopefully they will have talked to you at home about what the charity does.

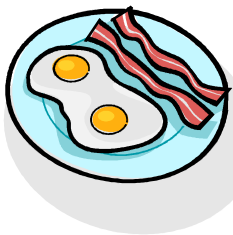


On Wednesday of this week one of the children from school had the day off to travel to London and meet Richard Hammond. Kirsty Stark, in year 2, won a competition in the Guardian to interview a celebrity. She had to send in her questions and say who she would like to interview. Kirsty had a very exciting day and her interview will be in the Guardian next week. It will also be online and we will post the link on our school website as soon as we have it.



This week is Mrs Hewitt's class assembly. The dates for the rest of this term's assemblies have been sent out with the date card for the Spring Term which should be in your child's book bag today.

I have received a complaint from a parent about an accident in the car park. After dropping her child at school she returned to her car to discover that someone had bumped into it and pulled the bumper off. This was clearly a considerable knock and the person who hit her must know who they are. If you have a pang of guilt upon reading this then please contact school and we can put you in touch with the owner of the damaged car so that she claim the costs of the repair from your insurance.



Next Wednesday 21st January we will be holding our termly Pilgrims Breakfast. This is held in the dining room from 9am. You can have a full English breakfast or something lighter and there is no charge although we do ask for donations for our chosen charity. It is a good opportunity to meet other parents and to chat with me. After the breakfast there will be a short meeting, for any available parents, with MTM Consultants. They have been employed by the Harpur Trust to look at different aspects of the schools and they would like to canvass the views of a small group of parents. If you are able to stay for this meeting please let me know via the office.

On Saturday 24th January we will be holding our annual quiz night. There are a very limited number of places available. If you would like to join us please contact Pilgrims Parents.



On Monday 26th January there will be a meeting for all of the parents in Reception. It is a government requirement that we complete a profile of every child who is of Reception age over the course of the academic year. This year we will be sending home the profile scores as part of the reports at the end of the academic year. The process involved is not straightforward and we feel that it would be beneficial to explain the way in which the system works before the next Consultation Evenings. The class teachers can then go through the working profile documents with parents at this point. We will provide light refreshments for parents. I hope that as many Reception parents as possible are able to attend this event which starts at 7.30pm. A reply slip can be found at the end of this letter.



The next Pilgrims Parents second hand uniform sale will be held on Wednesday 4th March between 3pm and 6pm. We have extended the closing time to allow working parents to come along. We will monitor the changed hours to see how useful it is before we decide whether to change the times on a permanent basis.



The week beginning the 9th of February is our themed week for the term and we will be offering the children lots of opportunities to take part in special maths activities and challenges. We have The Puzzle Company joining us for one day and Bubblz the mathematical clown for two further days. We have also got students and staff from the other Trust Schools joining us to inspire and excite the children. If anyone would like to come in and help during the week then please let your child's class teacher know.

On the 5th February we will be holding our termly Curriculum Evening. This term we will be looking at Personalising Learning and Mind Mapping. As a staff we have been developing our knowledge and understanding of these areas for the past two years. A lot of the techniques are now used on a daily basis with your children to improve their learning opportunities. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend the evening. A slip is attached to the bottom of this letter or just let the office know that you are able to attend.

Thank you to those parents who have been co-operative about the new security door leading from reception to the main school. Just to clarify, parents should drop off and collect their children via the playground. The exceptions to this are before 8.30am when children are being dropped off at Larks and after 4pm when Owls and clubs are running. Also, all parents whose children are late must sign the late register situated in reception. The safety of your children is important to us so I am sure you will appreciate this new security system.

May I also remind parents that the school day starts at 8.45 am. However, children may be dropped off at 8.30am to their classrooms through the playground. If you need to leave your child before this they should be taken to Larks which is situated in the dining room. Children should not be left unsupervised at the gate. Children who are found without a parent or guardian, prior to 8.30, will be taken to Larks for safety reasons.

During the summer term this year we will be having a full school inspection. As a team we are looking forward to the week. We have an ongoing system of school self evaluation and planned improvement which we review on an annual basis and which is shared with you in the parents handbook. However, we are always happy to be given suggestions about how to improve the school further.



As part of the inspection you will have the opportunity to complete a questionnaire for the inspectors and a group of parents will be invited in to share their feelings about the school with the team. If you do have any concerns or comments about any aspect of the school I very much hope that you will discuss them with me or another member of the School Leadership Team before the inspection so that we can do our best to sort out any issues you may have. Mrs Elizabeth Fordham, the parent elected governor, is also very happy to be contacted through the main school office. The inspection will be in two discrete sections. One team of inspectors will look at the provision in Years 1 to 3. Another team will look at the Early Years' Foundation Stage which includes all of the children from the Baby Room up to the end of Reception.

We know the dates of the main school inspection but we will only be told the dates for the Early Years' Foundation Stage inspection 5 days before it begins. When the inspection is over the team has 8 weeks to write the report which will be published in full on our website. A copy will also be sent home to all current parents.

In spite of the financial picture at a national level we are still operating waiting lists in many areas of the school. In line with our normal practice, we will we will be writing to you at the end of this term with an indication of the fee levels for the autumn term. As always, my aim is to keep the increase as low as possible and staff planning is a key factor to this. Staffing is, of course, reliant on pupil numbers so may I take this opportunity to remind you that if your child will not be returning to Pilgrims in the autumn then you must give notice by Friday 27th March in line with your contract. If notice is not given until the start of the summer term a term's fee will be charged to you in lieu of that notice. Should you make a decision earlier than 27th March then please do let me know as soon as you can in order that I might plan for the school's ongoing needs.



During consultation evening week in February we will be selling old library books in the main corridor outside the staff room.

Don't forget that photographs of children's events and daily school life are posted on the website, so it is well worth a look when you get a moment.

It has become apparent that some children are attending Owls who have not booked in advance. This is causing catering difficulties because the kitchen prepares the tea for the number of children booked. Could parents please make sure that they book their child into Owls by 12 noon at the latest. If a regular booking is required please notify Deborah Slade on dslade@harpur-trust.org.uk and the child's name can be added to the daily registers on an ongoing basis.

Unfortunately there was a communication error regarding the karate, tennis and gym clubs for which we apologise. All parents of children who attend these clubs will be notified shortly of their child's time slot.

If you have paid for a DVD of the Christmas production and not yet picked it up it is available for collection on reception.

Would parents of children who have swimming certificates please let Mrs Edwards, Pool Manager, know so that she is aware of their capabilities and does not duplicate tests.

Anyone travelling to school from the direction of Cardington should avoid Smeaton's Bridge on Bedford Road which will be closed completely to all traffic from Monday, 19th January until Tuesday, 27th January.

This term is packed with opportunities for the children. The music, speech and drama festival starts in a few weeks time and we are entering children in the speaking classes for the first time. There are many opportunities for you to come into school and I hope that I will catch up with you over the coming weeks.

Best wishes for 2009

Maxine Shaw
Headteacher

Breakfast Meeting with Mrs Shaw and MTM Consultants
Wednesday, 21st January at 9am

I would like to attend the above event

Name of childClass

Signed

Date



Reception Class Parents' Evening
Monday 26th January at 7.30pm

I would like to attend the above event

Name of childClass

Signed

Date



Curriculum Evening
Thursday February 5th at 7.30pm

I would like to attend the above event

Name of childClass.....

Signed

Date