



# BRICKHILL LOWER SCHOOL

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Headteacher:

Vyveanne Francis

*"Building a better future for your child"*

14<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is hard to believe that we are almost at half term, although the sudden change in weather to an unmistakable autumnal temperature tells us that Summer is over!

We have a number of important events coming up, many involving parents directly. Please do check the end of this letter for key dates for your diary.

As the colder weather is fast approaching, we are reminding children to bring their named coats so that they can enjoy their outdoor playtimes in comfort.

We were delighted with the tremendous support shown at the school at the recent Harvest assembly. The children genuinely rise to such occasions with such appreciative audiences.

## Christmas Productions

Each year group will be participating in a Christmas performance, dates and times for which are on the back of this sheet. Your child's class teacher will be sending out a letter with more detailed information about your child's role, costume and props.

## Reminders

We are grateful to parents for their ongoing support of the school in ensuring that children:

- Come into school with all their necessary named equipment
- Arrive and are collected on time
- Years 3 and 4 only, bring in a fruit or vegetable snack each day for an energy boost - younger children receive fruit from the Fruit Scheme.
- Complete and bring their homework into school on time
- Practise their reading every night
- Use flat book bags only, as cloakroom space is VERY limited!
- Wear full uniform and appropriate, flat, closed in footwear (strapped or laced)
- Avoid wearing nail varnish, jewellery or stick on tattoos
- Please remove earrings on the day that your child has PE lessons
- Have long hair tied back
- Understand the 6 Golden Rules

As you know, these simple measures help to ensure that every child maximises their learning opportunities, making the most of their time at school.

## CLUBS

You will have been told already about the number of weeks for which your child's activity club runs and further details of new clubs will follow. Although the types of clubs being run will vary from term to

term, priority for places in the next round of clubs will be given to children who applied for, but were not successful in gaining a place in a club this half term.

In addition to clubs run by the school, there are other privately run clubs, based at the school for which parents may apply for a place for their children ...and some for adults. There is a charge made for attendance at these clubs:

CLUB	DAY & TIME	WHERE	DETAILS
Brickhill Children's Choir (Years 2, 3 and 4)	Mondays 3.30 - 4.15pm (term time only) Charge £10 for 10 sessions	School Hall	Mrs Evelyn Sutherland Tel:07974 742552
Adult Community Choir	Monday 7.30-9.00pm £3.50 per session	ICT Room	Mrs Evelyn Sutherland Tel:07974 742552
Falcon Gym	Friday 3.30-4.30pm (currently full)	School Hall	Sue Birchall Tel:07917 657956
Shotokan Karate	Monday 6.30-8.30pm	School Hall	Roy Richards Tel:07733 222495
Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness	Tuesday 6.00-8.30pm	School Hall	Margot Needham Tel:01234 843747
Kidsize	Monday - Friday 8.30-4.30pm	School Hall	Dan Yusuf Tel:07791 553343

#### Private Instrument Lessons

If your child is interested in learning to play a violin, guitar, cello or piano, please let us know. There is a charge for these school time lessons and a minimum of 6 children is needed for them to run.

#### Share Your Talents

If you feel that you have a particular interest or talent (from knitting to card making to chess) and you could offer to run an after school club to run for 5 or 6 week block, please do come and see me.

#### Staffing

Alison Cole, our After School Club leader, has resigned from this post (but not her teaching assistant post) at the end of this half term. I am sure you would wish to join me in thanking Alison for her hard work in the club and I know that she will be very missed. We are advertising for Alison's replacement and will advise parents as soon as we have made an appointment. The advertisement for this post is accessible on the Bedford Borough Website. If you are interested in applying for this term-time only position, an application pack will also be available from the school office from Monday next week.

#### PTA

With your continued generous support of school events, and the tireless work of the PTA, a new fridge and cooker for the curriculum kitchen have been purchased, really improving the end product from the children's cooking. Please do see your child's class teacher if you are able to spare any time to come into school to cook with a small group of children. We'd love to hear from you.

#### Communications

We are delighted that almost all parents have returned their Parent Mail data sheets. This system ensures that key information can be shared with all parents in a timely way, without the risk of pieces of paper going astray or falling out of bags. For parents who do not live with their children throughout the week, Parent Mail is also a very effective way of ensuring that you receive information at the same time as everyone else. Please speak to the office if you are not receiving regular emails to enable us to update your information.

### Learning Platform

The school is in the process of exploring alternative integrated online services, and parents and children will be notified when a new system is in place. In the meantime, unfortunately, the previous system is no longer accessible.

### Free School Meals

A reminder that, if you think that your child may be entitled to free school meals, please do come to the front office where we can provide you with an application form for this purpose.

### Making Payments to the School

The school would ask that, where possible, payment for items and trips are made by cheque. Please send into school in an envelope, marking clearly your child's name, class and purpose of the payment. Cheques can be posted through the internal mail box. Thank you for your support in this matter.

### Questionnaire results

At the end of the Summer term, we asked parents to complete a survey about the quality of provision made by the school. Thank you for your time in completing this survey. Results show that parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with provision made by the school, but as always, we seek to improve further wherever possible. Below are the results and actions the school intends to take.

Number of children represented via questionnaire									
Foundation Stage		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
7	9	6	7	5	11	4	6	2	1
Total boys : 24					Total girls : 34				

Question	Agree or strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My child enjoys school	60%	38%	2%		
My child is making good progress at school.	48%	52%			
Pupil behaviour is well managed at the school.	33%	57%	5%	3%	2%
All pupils are supported in fulfilling their potential.	31%	43%	22%	2%	
General communication in the school is improving.	33%	62%	3%		
I feel able to approach staff with questions or concerns.	45%	52%			
I feel that my views are taken into account by the school.	34%	43%	16%	3%	

NB: Where borderline with a lower grade, the lower grade has been calculated. All values have been rounded to nearest whole and a small number of questions have not been answered. Therefore, percentages will not always add up to exactly 100%.  
1 pupil = 1.7%

As a result of this questionnaire a number of actions have emerged:

1. The school will endeavour to encourage more parents to complete questionnaires to provide a more representative set of results.
2. A Curriculum Evening Workshop will be planned to explore what "fulfilling potential" means for *your child*, what it looks like and how we can work together to promote it (details to follow).
3. We will endeavour to make clearer the link between parents' views and subsequent school development.
4. We will continue to work closely with parents, pupils and agencies to support good behaviour in school.

#### Year One Outdoor Alterations

Over the next half term, alterations are being made to the outdoor space in the lower playground. These will include a fenced off area which will be set up each morning as the 'outdoor classroom' for Year One pupils. This gated area will, therefore, be out of bounds to parents and children coming into school in the morning, so that activities are not disturbed before the start of the day. At the end of the day, the gates to the Year One outdoor area will be opened for parents collecting children from either of these classes. These arrangements should not affect parents collecting children from other year groups.

#### Attendance Target

The school's attendance target, set by the Local Authority for this academic year is 96%. Our current attendance figure for this academic year is on track at 96.3 %. Because of the unequivocal link between pupils' attendance and attainment, we are working very hard to reduce all absences. We will be sending out to parents over the next half term some important information about requesting approval for term time holiday and the very specific circumstances under which authorisation will be given. In the event that your child is unwell, please ensure that you call the school as early as possible on the first day of illness absence, maintaining contact with the school throughout.

#### A Health and Safety Message

We are delighted to have our new entrance doors and ramp in place and parents have commented on how much easier it is to enter and leave the school with buggies. There have been a number of instances where children have been swinging on and even jumping off the green bars. Parents of children in both Mrs Trainer's and Ms Bennett's classes are asked to ensure that for safety reasons at the collection time, their children should not :

- climb up the canopy poles and fencing
- play on the steps, grassed banks or top playground

These messages have been discussed with the children in school and I would be grateful if parents could reinforce these messages and be vigilant in these areas and reiterate this safety message.

#### Halloween

As Halloween approaches Bedfordshire Police is reminding parents and guardians to keep their children safe. If possible, parents and guardians should go out trick or treating with their children, sticking to well-lit areas and only knocking on the doors of people they know. Some people may have 'No trick or treat' posters up at their doors and we ask that these are respected. Bedfordshire Police is also reminding children and parents to be mindful that some of the more vulnerable or elderly members of the community may feel intimidated by people calling at their doors and appeals to all residents to look out for their neighbours who may feel frightened during this time. Extra patrols will be on hand over the Halloween and Bonfire Night period to ensure that the evenings can be enjoyed safely.

For more advice about Halloween please visit [www.bedfordshire.police.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.police.uk)

The children will be breaking up for half term on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October and, following a training day, children will be returning to school on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely,

Vyveanne Francis  
Headteacher

<b>DIARY DATES</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
Thurs 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct		Consultation Evening (Skylarks only)
Weds 19 <sup>th</sup> Oct		Consultation Evening (Whole School)
Thurs 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct		Consultation Evening (excl Skylarks)
Fri 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	6.30 - 8.00pm	Kidsworld - PTA Event
Mon 24 <sup>th</sup> Oct - Fri 28 <sup>th</sup> Oct		<b>HALF TERM</b>
Mon 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct		<b>Staff Training Day - School closed to pupils</b>
Tues 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov		Year 2 Trip to Rockingham Castle
Fri 18 <sup>th</sup> Nov		Mufti Day- Donation of chocolate
Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup> Nov	3.30 - 5.00pm	PTA Xmas Bazaar
Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	6.30 - 8.00pm	PTA Xmas Disco
Tues 6 <sup>th</sup> Dec	2.30 - 3.25pm	Foundation Stage Christmas Play
Weds 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec	1.30 - 2.30pm 2.30 - 3.30pm	KS1 Christmas Performance KS2 Christmas Performance
Thurs 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	2.30 - 3.30pm 6.00 - 7.00 pm	KS1 Christmas Performance KS2 Christmas Performance
Mon 19 <sup>th</sup> Dec - Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan		<b>CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS</b>
Tues 3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan		<b>Staff Training Day - School closed to pupils</b>
Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Feb - Fri 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb		<b>HALF TERM</b>
Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup> Apr - Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> Apr		<b>EASTER HOLIDAYS</b>
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> Apr		<b>Staff Training Day - School closed to pupils</b>
Mon 7 <sup>th</sup> May		<b>MAY DAY - School Closed</b>
Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> June - Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> June		<b>HALF TERM</b>
Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> July		Last day of Summer Term