

December Newsletter



Melbourn Primary School 4th December 2009

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is hard to believe that we are just 2 weeks away from the end of the autumn term and that the KS1 Nativity and KS2 Carol Services are quickly approaching.

Children in Need

Friday 20th November saw the school “invaded” by hundreds of teddy bears and other cuddly toys in support of the BBC’s Children in Need Appeal. This along with a stall run by a number of KS2 children, managed to raise £328.72, a fantastic amount!

Parent Questionnaires

As I promised last month here are the results of the parent’s survey that was sent out at the end of October.

Questions	Strongly Agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	Don’t Know
1. My child enjoys school	98%	2%	-
2. The school keeps my child safe	100%	-	-
3. The school informs me about my child’s progress	86%	14%	-
4. My child is making good progress at school	81%	16%	3%
5. The teaching is good at this school	100%	-	-
6. The school helps me to support my child’s learning	77%	23%	-
7. The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	91%	6%	3%
8. The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future	88%	-	12%
9. The school meets my child’s particular needs	92%	8%	-
10. The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79%	12%	9%
11. The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	82%	9%	9%
12. The school is led and managed effectively	100%	-	-
13. Overall I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	100%	-	-

It is reassuring to see such a positive set of results. However a number of issues have arisen and the school will now try and address them quickly. Many of the “don’t know” results came from parents

whose children have recently started in Reception. To address the 23% of parents who said that the school did not do enough to help them support their child's learning, we will hold an evening of activities to introduce parents to the methods now taught for addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Another issue raised was homework. Within the same year group we had comments about there not being enough homework and there being too much. We will be setting up a parent / school working group during the summer term to review this important aspect of school work. There also appeared to be some misunderstanding about parent's evenings. The next parent's evening will be held at the beginning of February.

Holiday Requests

I think this must be one of the most contentious issues associated with the job of a Headteacher. The school follows the guidelines set by the local authority when deciding on whether to authorise a term time holiday. The current legislation makes it clear that parents do not have the legal right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purpose of a term time holiday unless there are "exceptional circumstances."

Exceptional circumstances are:-

- 1) A one off, unique situation such as a seriously ill family member and the proposed holiday is likely to be their last such holiday.
- 2) There may have been a significant trauma in a family and an immediate holiday may enable the **child** concerned to better deal with the situation.
- 3) A **unique** one-off never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

If leave is granted it would be for the purpose of a single period of absence which occurs only once in the school year and is not a series of long weekends or several 2 or 3 day breaks. When completing a holiday form it is important that you give us as much relevant information as possible so we can be clear about the reasons for the request and can make the appropriate decision immediately. It is also important to ensure that requests arrive at the office at least 2 weeks before holidays are taken. Authorisation may not be given for requests that arrive less than two weeks before the start of the holiday and will not be given for holidays taken without informing the school.

Young Voices

On Tuesday of this week many of our Year 5 and 6 children performed at the O2 Arena in London as part of a massed choir made up of 8130 children. After an afternoon rehearsal and second packed lunch of the day the children returned to their seats to wow a capacity crowd of parents. The singing was out of this world as were the solo performances and dance routines. The parents who were able to attend have given us very positive feedback and it would be great to see this event as a bi-annual part of the curriculum.

Medical Issues

I hope that the recent inspection for head lice has reaffirmed the school's commitment to try and help parents deal with this ongoing issue. Unfortunately the team were unable to return for the checks on the second day but there will be further inspections throughout the year. We will not reissue permission letters but will of course ensure that children whose parents requested they were not checked this time will not be checked in the future.

I have also become aware that a number of children in school are suffering from thread worms. This is an extremely infectious condition and unless treatment has started children should not be in school. Treatment is simple and the required tablets which quickly cure the condition can be purchased from a pharmacy. Please remember that the whole family should be treated. Please monitor your child/ren closely.

May I also remind parents that if medication is required by children during the school day, parents must discuss this with the teacher or teaching assistant, and not send the medicine in with children to self administer.

Internet Safety Evening

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the parents who attended the Internet Safety Evening in November. The feedback we received from those attending was very positive and the materials Miss Wolfe produced for the evening are now available on the school web-site. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Craig Peacock who has kindly agreed to take on the responsibility, along with Natalie Mulvey, of updating the school web-site on a regular basis.

School Dinners for the Spring Term

School dinner money should be handed in to your child's class teacher on a Monday in a sealed and named envelope. If you would like to pay on a half termly basis cheques can be written for £56 for next half term. Cheques should be made payable to Melbourn Primary School.

In addition, there has been an alteration to the school dinner offered on Tuesday 15th December. This will now be the meal selection shown for Thursday 17th December. This is due to our Christmas dinner taking place on the Thursday.

And Finally...

As the parents of children in Turquoise Class are already aware Mrs Constable gave birth to a baby boy in November. His name is Fred Benjamin Constable and mother and baby are fighting fit. We look forward to a visit from the pair of them next term.

I hope you all have a relaxing, happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Yours faithfully

Gary Casey
Acting Headteacher

Dates for the spring term

Monday 4th January – School closed for staff training

Tuesday 5th January – Spring term opens

Tuesday 2nd February – 3.40pm – 6.30pm - Parent Consultations

Wednesday 3rd February – 3.40pm – 5.30pm - Parent Consultations

Friday 12th February - School closed for staff training

15th to 19th February – Half term

22nd to 26th February – Maths Week

Wednesday 24th February – 7pm - Maths Evening

29th – 31st March – Year 4 Grafham visit

Thursday 1st April – End of spring term