



Newsletter 4

Summer Term 2017

20 July 2017

Dear Parents

As we approach the end of the school year this is always a time of reflection over the highs and lows of the school year before looking forward to exciting new prospects ahead of us.



This has been a great end to the school term with a French day celebrating French culture. Our thanks to all of the children who brought in French food for us all to taste and to the children who dressed in the colours of the French flag. The children undertook lessons in geography, maths, music and of course French throughout the day.

Staff have continued to work hard to make learning both enjoyable and inspiring through the many trips, visits and imaginative activities that we have on offer. This term alone the children have visited Paulton's Park, as part of a business enterprise day, Botley Manor Farm to learn about the Victorian way of life and burnt a model of a life-sized Viking Longboat, just to mention a few activities!

This has been another exceptionally successful year for our children at Durley School academically, in sporting opportunities and in the arts. Once again, we have participated in over 40 sporting competitions against other schools involving more children from years 1 to 6 than ever before and for our children on many occasions reaching the competition finals. We were so proud of our netball team finishing in first place in the area netball finals and entering the School Games in Aldershot earlier this month. We were delighted to have received the Gold level National School Games Award for sport at Key Stage 2. We were so pleased with our Key Stage 1 rounders team playing against Fair Oak, Botley and Shakespeare schools to finish in first position. The Government sports funding has been used to subsidise the Key Stage 2 gymnastics curriculum, swimming tuition and purchased more resources and training for staff. We are most grateful to all of you who have contributed Sainsburys vouchers this term which have enabled us to buy a new Key Stage 1 sports kit for future sporting competitions as well as a wide range of other resources. Many thanks to all of you who were able to join us for sports day this year and particularly to any parents brave enough to take part in the races.



We are a small school but are extremely fortunate to have such supportive families within our community. Our thanks to parent Rod Webb and Miss Kristina Baldwin for all their work with our girls' football team. Rod has given his free time to coach the team throughout the year which has been central to the many successes they have had.

Our thanks to all of you who came along to our school grounds day to help with planting and tidying up the school grounds. A big thank you to Mr Whalley and Mr Rutherford who came back in their spare time to undertake repairs to our Early Years shed and Key Stage 1 garden.

I am sure you would also like to join me in thanking the Rappini family for their wonderful strawberries for all of our children and staff.

We have continued to expand musical opportunities for children with participation in the Vocal Festival in Thornden Hall in February with three of our pupils taking solo parts in a production of Disney's Jungle Book. Last week we were able to take all of our pupils from years 4-6 who have peripatetic music lessons to the lunchtime concerts in Botley Church as part of the Botley Music Festival, giving pupils' opportunities to see and take part in live music concerts.

The end of year Key Stage 2 school play was an insight into just how talented and confident our pupils can be when we set high expectations! Many parents and visitors commented on this year's production of "Robin and the Sherwood Hoodies" being the best they had seen and were extremely generous in giving over £500 in donations after the performances. The children threw themselves into their roles with perfect timing for the jokes, singing, acting and dancing ensuring a wonderful atmosphere throughout.

Academically, this year it has been a similar story. We had our highest ever Year 1 phonics results with 100% of our Year 1 pupils passing and many achieving full marks. Many thanks to all of the Key Stage 1 staff involved and children for their continued hard work.

Our pupils in Year 2 have also excelled in their end of year National tests with all of our judgements being looked at and agreed by external moderators. 75% of our pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading writing and maths which is well above the National and Hampshire averages.

Congratulations to all of our pupils in Year 6 who performed so well in their National Tests. This will be the second year of the new testing arrangements and new Curriculum which is considered to be far more challenging than in previous years. This year Nationally 62% of pupils achieved the expected standard in English and maths. We have managed to continue to buck the National trend with 94% of our Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard. Our thanks to all of the staff who have worked with the children over the years and particularly to Mrs Hanratty and Miss Baldwin for ensuring they were so well prepared for the tests.



Our year 6 pupils will be leaving us this week. Quite rightly they are very excited about the next part of their journey which will be to Wyvern College, Wildern School, The Gregg and King Edward V1 School. They have been a caring and responsible group of children that have certainly played a large part in setting the tone for the rest of the school this year. Every single one of them has played their part in music, sporting competitions against other schools and giving their best. We will certainly miss them all and wish them the very best of luck as we say goodbye.

We also say goodbye to the families that have had long standing and recent association with the school and thank them for their support over the years. The children attended a very moving Leavers Service in Portsmouth Cathedral along with many other children in the Portsmouth Diocese from Church schools. They were accompanied by our now very colourful school sheep as part of a local project 'Ewe Matter'. Some of you may have seen it in our entrance area! We will be saying a proper

goodbye to all our leavers in Holy Cross Church this Friday at 1:30pm. Everyone is very welcome to join us and we will be walking from the school (regardless of the weather) at 1:00pm.

We also say goodbye to Miss Daisy Chetwode who has worked as a Teaching Assistant in Yellow class this year in preparation for starting a teacher training course in September. Ex-pupil and member of our After School Childcare Club team Josh Knight will also be leaving us to start a University Degree in Loughborough. We thank them both for their commitment to the school and wish them all the very best of luck for the future.

The DSA this year have worked tirelessly to raise much needed funds for the school putting on community events for adults and children to enjoy. The ice cream Fridays have been extremely popular with children parents and staff. Every year we say that it has been 'the best fayre ever' and this year is no exception with a wonderful Village Fayre theme, good weather and lots of energetic parents, the fayre raised £3,400. We are enormously grateful to everyone who worked so hard to make the event such fun for us all! The money raised will go towards re-designing the muddy area on the Key Stage 2 playground running along the side the track. The section of playground will be resurfaced with higher fencing and new seating to be completed over the summer holiday.



Pupil attendance this year has been at an all-time high. I am very grateful to parents who have reconsidered holidays and not taken children out in school time despite the price difference of cheaper holidays. Nationally, the absence rate for primary schools is 3.9% and we were delighted with our 3.4% absence in 2016. This year however, absence has fallen to an amazing 3%! Many congratulations to 14 of our pupils for maintaining a 100% attendance throughout the with particular congratulations to one who has maintained 100% attendance for the past 4 years!

Finally I would like to thank all of the staff who have had to 'step up' this term in my absence for two days a week as I took on the role of Acting Interim Headteacher at a school outside Newbury. Budgetary constraints continue to challenge us with a reduction to our budget share allocation in this financial year approaching £20,000 and continued reductions ahead of us. We are keen to maintain our current staffing levels which we consider have been central to our ongoing pupil successes academically, socially and emotionally.

Before closing I would just like to take this opportunity to also remind you of a few things for next term.

Breakfast Club

There will be a slight increase in charges for the Breakfast Club for September. A full session will be £3.50 and £3.00 for Siblings, a half session will be £2.50. I hope you agree that this is still excellent value.

Lunches

If your child is starting Year 3, this unfortunately marks the end of the Universal Free School Meals scheme. Lunches therefore will be charged at £2.15 per child which will provide them with a varied and healthy selection of hot meals, salad, vegetables, homemade fresh bread and deserts.

Woodwind

Lessons with Mrs Sarah Finch will be changing from Wednesday to Thursday afternoon. Please ensure your child has their instrument with them each week.

Term Dates

The school closes for the summer holiday period this Friday 21 July and will re-open on **Tuesday 5 September 2017 at 8:50am**. Monday 4 September is a teacher training day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff at Durley School for their commitment and care for your children over the year.

On behalf of the staff, I would like to thank you all for the tremendous support once again this year and for the many generous presents we have received. We wish you all a fun packed holiday and look forward to seeing you for the start of the new term in September.

Yours sincerely

Kirstie Baines

Headteacher