



Merry Hill Matters

Issue 15 - 2nd September 2004

Dear Parents

I hope that you all had a restful and enjoyable holiday and welcome you all back to a busy and exciting school year at Merry Hill. I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to all those families who are joining our school for the first time, and hope that you and your children enjoy your time as members of our school community.

End of Term Gifts

The staff and I would like to thank parents for their gifts and very kind words at the end of last term. We were all extremely touched by your generosity.

Wedding 'Belles'

Miss Del Greco and Miss Pitt both had very happy wedding days and have returned to school as Mrs Anderson and Mrs Haworth respectively. We wish them both all the best in their married lives.

Busy Time

It has been a busy time at school whilst the children have been away. Extensive maintenance and repair works have been carried out and I would like to thank Jim Whitaker, our caretaker, for his commitment to this.

Teacher's Cars

Parents who passed the school in the holidays will have noticed teachers' cars parked outside. This was because, at different times, the teachers spent several days in school preparing for the Autumn Term. I would like to thank them for their dedication.

Teaching Assistants

I would also like to share with you just how lucky Merry Hill is in the calibre of the Teaching Assistants. On 16th July and on 1st September the Teaching Assistants joined the teachers and me for In-Service Training Days (INSET) on Dyslexia, Handwriting and Speaking and Listening. I was delighted that the Teaching Assistants wanted to join the teachers for this important training opportunity and I would like to publicly thank them here.

Name Badges

To make it easier for parents to get to know the staff we will now all be wearing name badges - please remind us if we forget to put them on!

What's Happening When?

I have attached a list of the main diary dates for the term.

Continuous Cursive Handwriting

A note accompanies this letter explaining our new handwriting scheme and inviting you to a workshop about Continuous Cursive Handwriting. I am very keen for as many parents as possible to come along and find out about Continuous Cursive Handwriting, so I have arranged a choice of three sessions - I do hope you can come to one of them.

Curriculum Information for Parents

This is an opportunity for parents to get to know their child's Class Teacher, to see their child's classroom, to be given information about class routines and expectations for the year and to ask questions.

Whilst I wish to keep these sessions relaxed and informal, it would be really helpful if you are able to make alternative arrangements for children, toddlers and babies.

Drop-In Coffee Sessions

Following the success of the Drop-In Coffee Sessions in the Summer Term, I have arranged for a series of get-togethers over the course of the Autumn Term. Please note that the day has moved from Wednesdays to Fridays - this is in response to some working parents who said that they would find it easier to ask their employer if they can finish work early at the end, rather than in the middle, of the week. As before, younger children are welcome.

Tesco Vouchers

Parents collected a magnificent 19,269 Tesco 'Computers for Schools' vouchers - thank you. We have 'spent' 13,500 of these on a Sony Digital Camera. As we had insufficient vouchers to buy a second camera we have 'banked' the balance of 5,769 vouchers to use next year.

Home/School Link Book

Your child now has their own Home/School Link Book - this is a very important document!

Teachers can use the Home/School Link Book to:

- liaise with you after they have supported your child with their reading
- let you know how you can help your child at home
- celebrate your child's achievements

Parents can use the Home/School Link Book to:

- liaise with the teachers after you have supported your child with their reading or writing
- celebrate achievement from home
- share special news from home

Please note that the Home/School Link Book should not be used for sensitive or confidential information.

This should always be sent in a separate letter.

Other letters and messages from school will be put into your child's bag as normal and I would ask that you check every night for anything which may have been sent home.

Homework

At Merry Hill we encourage home learning right from the start so that parents can become involved in their child's learning - but we always remember that children at Merry Hill are very young and are generally tired when they get home, so the homework will be age appropriate.

For example, your child will bring their reading book home to share with you and you are asked to comment in the Home/School Link Book. Children in Year 1 and Year 2 will start to bring home some additional work; this might be Literacy or Numeracy or research for information or pictures connected with work that is going on in the classroom.

Please help your child to complete their homework and return it to school when it is finished. Good habits start here!

Our new Homework Guide will be available shortly to explain how you can support your child's education.

Road Safety

I have become increasingly concerned about road safety outside the school at the beginning and end of the school day.

During the summer holiday I contacted the local Traffic Management Officer (PC Andy Chittenden) and Hertfordshire County Council Environmental Department (Linda Clarke and Alan Story). I have arranged a meeting at the end of September to identify practical ways of managing the traffic around our school and I will report back to parents after that meeting.

In the meantime...

Please be aware that Police Officers will be visiting School Lane at the beginning and end of the school day to speak to parents who are parking inappropriately.

Merry Hill Website

During the school holidays I worked closely with Peter Roper an ICT support professional constructing the Merry Hill website. More details will follow shortly.

Late Arrivals

Some parents were surprised to see an official reference to 'Lateness' on their child's End of Year Report. Please note that this is a statutory requirement.

School opens at 8.50am and the register is taken at 8.55am. The gate and doors are locked at 9.00am, so if you arrive after that you must come in via the main office and your child will be marked as late.

Get To Know Other Parents

An ideal way to get to know other parents is to become an active member of the Friends of Merry Hill (FOMH). Please contact Marci Homewood on 020 8386 7547.

Partnership

Finally, I should like to end as I began by welcoming you to the new school year - I look forward to working in partnership with you.

Pauline Hannibal
Headteacher