



# Merry Hill Matters

Issue 30 - January 7th 2005

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the first Merry Hill Matters of 2005. I hope you all had a restful and enjoyable Christmas and wish you a very happy New Year.

I would like to extend an especially 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.

The staff and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the Christmas cards and gifts we received at the end of last term.

## **Alan Grant**

I was informed last week of the very sad news that Alan Grant, Headteacher of Highwood Primary School, died as the result of a stroke on Monday 27th December. Alan had worked in Hertfordshire for many years and is a sad loss to the profession.

## **Mrs Forster and Mrs Archer**

A reminder that Mrs Forster will now be working for four and a half days a week, providing Special Educational Needs support and PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time. Mrs Archer will be joining us for one and a half days a week providing PPA time.

## **Mrs Collings and Mrs Hopkins**

Mrs Collings and Mrs Hopkins join our Midday Supervisory Assistant team this week:

RP Mrs Whyborn  
RC Mrs Lang  
1M Mrs Williams  
1S Mrs Collings  
2G Mrs Chang  
2H Mrs Hopkins

## **Mrs Rouse**

Mrs Rouse has decided to step down from her role as Senior Midday Supervisory Assistant, and this role will be shortly be advertised internally. Happily she will continue as Teaching Assistant with 1S.

## **Mrs Tanya Jacques**

Next week we welcome a new member of staff, Mrs Tanya Jacques, who will be working alongside Mrs Eells in the school office. Tanya has previously worked at West Herts College, so she understands the mysteries of education administration! Tanya will be working on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9.00-12.00. If you meet Tanya in the office, please do say, 'hello' and make her feel at home.

## **Severe Weather**

This term, although the shortest in the year, often has the worst weather. If the weather is severe, and it is considered too unsafe or difficult for staff to get to school, I may be forced to close the school.

We are currently designing a 'telephone tree' where parents can telephone each other to advise of school closure. More details about this will follow shortly. In the meantime I will put a message on the school gates and the answerphone advising of school closure - but this will only be possible if a member of staff can get to school to do it! I will also put a message on the school website ([www.merryhill.org.uk](http://www.merryhill.org.uk)).

In addition to this, local radio stations have agreed to pass on information if we have to close at very short notice. A message will be broadcast on Chiltern Radio (97.6 FM 828 AM) and on BBC Three Counties Radio (103.8 FM / 95.5 FM or 630 MW / 1161 MW). Although I will always endeavour to ring the radio stations early in the morning if the school is to be closed, it is often difficult to get through quickly if their lines are busy, and the information may not be broadcast immediately.

It is very rare for the school to be closed and we will remain open if at all possible.

### **Emails**

Please remember that you can always contact the school office by email at:

admin.merryhill@thegrid.org.uk,

or you can contact me direct at:

head.merryhill@thegrid.org.uk.

### **Lost a Newsletter?**

I know from my own experience that school newsletters have a habit of getting lost in book bags, so don't forget you can have Merry Hill Matters emailed to you by clicking on the 'Newsletters' button on our website [www.merryhill.org.uk](http://www.merryhill.org.uk) and following the instructions.

### **Payments to School**

A reminder that all payments made to school should be sent in an envelope clearly marked with your child's name and class. For small amounts of money cash is acceptable, but we would prefer payments of larger amounts to be paid by cheque. This is because this is a safer and more secure method of payment. It is also easier for us to account for separate cheques to be used for different items. Thank you.

### **Coffee Afternoons**

The Drop-in Coffee Sessions this term will take place at 2.30pm on the LAST FRIDAY in every month - 28th January, 25th February, 18th March, 29th April and 27th May. These sessions are open to all parents and carers from Nursery to Year 2. As before, babies and toddlers are welcome.

### **Nursery Places**

We still have a few places available in our January 2005 afternoon Nursery. If anyone with young children moves in near you, please mention Merry Hill Nursery to them.

### **Herts Catering**

As you are aware, we have been working closely with Herts Catering about the promotion of healthy school dinners. Twenty-four parents returned the survey and these have now been passed to Herts Catering.

### **Winter Menu**

Following the evaluation of the trial of the new three week menu which Merry Hill participated in, Herts Catering has now issued it's new winter menu. A number of significant changes have been made:

1. The introduction of chips with 33% less fat (only served once a week)
2. Healthier options for breaded shaped products, which are lower in fat and salt content
3. Menu cycle to feature recipes with reduced sugar content
4. Increased daily provision of fresh fruit and yogurts
5. Menus to contain a high proportion of homemade dishes and foods that are oven baked wherever possible

Hopefully these changes will help achieve a healthy balance between serving meals that the children will enjoy, whilst complying with the Nutritional Standards for Schools.

The new menu is colour-coded to indicate the various food groups. The children will be able to choose one choice from the protein group, at least one choice from the starch group, at least one choice from the fruit and vegetables group and one choice from the sugar and fats group. A 'cooks hat' logo indicates homemade dishes made on site.

### **Fast Food Fridays**

Fast Food Friday (FFF) will begin again on 4th February. We will be sending out letters shortly to enable you to sign up for FFF.

### **Football Club**

The Football Club will start again on Thursday January 27th. More details will follow shortly.

### **Free Football Boots and Shin Pads**

The size 13 football boots have now been joined by a pair of shin pads! Please see me if you would like them.

### **Art Club**

Art Club starts on Monday 10th January - you will already have received notification if your child has been successful in securing a place.

### **Did you get a new mobile phone from Father Christmas?**

You can help the National Kidney Research Fund raise money by dropping your old mobile phone into school. The charity will collect the old mobile phones from the school and recycle them.

### **Tsunami Earthquake**

Following the tragic events in Asia, Year 1 and Year 2 children held a one minute silence at 12.00 on Wednesday in remembrance of the victims of the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster.

We will be holding a non-uniform fund-raising day on Friday 14th January - please see separate leaflet.

Pauline Hannibal  
Headteacher