

Dear Parents,

Governors

Mrs Josie Dougall has resigned from the Governing Body after 24 years as a school governor; she will leave at the end of this summer term. Mrs Dougall has been involved with Bledlow Ridge School for 27 years and during that time has shown exceptional commitment. She became a school governor in 1992, at a time when the school was struggling to enrol and keep pupils and there were threats of closure. Since 1995, when I was appointed as Headteacher, I can personally testify to the huge contribution she has made, working tirelessly to support the pupils, parents and staff and to improve the education offered at this school, on governing body committees and as safeguarding and special educational needs governor, with the BRSA and as a regular voluntary helper. In 2004 she moved from Vice Chair to Chair of Governors, a position she still holds and where her hard work, wisdom and astute judgement are greatly valued. Always approachable and professional, Mrs Dougall has become an integral part of our school community; it goes without saying that she will be hugely missed.

Moving forward, we are delighted that at the last Governors' Meeting Mr John Forsyth was elected Chair and Mrs Lucy Edwards the Vice Chair of Governors from September 2016. Mr Forsyth is already Vice Chair and Mrs Edwards the Development Governor. With governors of such a high calibre taking up their new positions of responsibility for Bledlow Ridge School, alongside Mr Haywood as the new Headteacher, Mrs Dougall and I are completely confident that the school will be excellently led and managed in the new and exciting phase of its history.

Staffing

Governors are extremely pleased to have appointed a new Deputy Headteacher from September 2016 to take the place of Mr Haywood, as he takes up the post of Headteacher. Mrs Harman is a highly experienced teacher, who joins us from Oxfordshire, where she has previously worked as an Assistant Head. In addition to her leadership responsibilities, she will teach Y4 and Y5/6 Maths and be overall class teacher for Y4 next year.

Sadly, Miss Harris will be leaving at the end of term as she is relocating back to Northumberland. We are grateful to Miss Harris for all she has brought us in the four years she has been at Bledlow Ridge School. Besides successfully teaching Y1 and then Y2, she has always been fully involved in the life of the school. This has included accompanying Class 4 on their residential visit to Devon last year and running popular extra-curricular clubs such as dance and drama. I'm sure you will join me in wishing her all the best for the future.

There are more changes as Mrs Starling will go on maternity leave at the end of June and Mrs Chaplin-Stephens, who has been job sharing with Mrs Starling in Class 1 this year, will leave at the end of term. However, we are pleased to have recruited a very experienced KS1 teacher, Mrs Mace, to teach Y2 in September. She will also teach Y1 for six days at the end of this summer term, which will help her get to know her new class ahead of the new academic year. An advert has been placed for another KS1 teacher and governors are hopeful that a good candidate will be found to take the Y1 Class next year.

This term, we were joined by Mrs Bulmer, who is working as a Learning Support Assistant, prior to going into teaching in the academic year 2017-18. Mrs Bulmer has settled in very well and we hope she will find her time at Bledlow Ridge School happy and fulfilling. Miss Mills will leave to take up her teacher-training place in September and an advert will shortly be placed for another Teaching Assistant to replace her.

SATs Week

Last week was KS2 SATs week, a crucially important time for Y6, not just because the results form an essential part of their individual school records but also, of course, because our school is judged so much by these results. The children worked hard to revise and practise their English and Maths and have been well prepared by their teachers, in spite of the greatly increased demands of the new curriculum. The new reading test, however, was very hard – with many more questions at an old Level 5/6 standard.

Y2 continue to be assessed on a formal and informal basis for their KS1 SATs. We were one of the schools chosen to take the reading test early in order for the national standard to be set and the children, some of whom are still only 6 years old, coped incredibly well with the test. There continues to be much public debate about the nature of the new Y2 tests and indeed they are very challenging.

Safeguarding – Acceptable Use Agreements for Volunteers

Last term, safeguarding policies and practice were thoroughly reviewed, to bring them in line with current legislation. We have a new E-Safety Policy and as part of this, we have updated the Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement for all groups - parents, pupils, staff and volunteers. If you are a voluntary parent helper or a member of the BRSA Committee, could you also please sign the agreement? We need to ensure that all adults involved in the on-going life of the school follow the agreed safeguarding guidelines and are aware of what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare.

There are still some pupils' Acceptable Use Agreements that have not yet been signed by the children and their parents. Please may these be returned to the school office as soon as possible?

Hockey – Thursday afternoons

Class 3 children and those in Class 4 who belong to the after-school Hockey Club should please wear gum shields and shin pads to protect themselves from injury.

Inset Days - Monday 6th June - Tuesday 7th June

School will finish at the normal time of 3 p.m. on Friday 27th May and re-open for children on Wednesday 8th June at 8.40 a.m.

Free NHS Health Checks – Wednesday 8th June

On Wednesday 8th June from 9 a.m. until 5.30 p.m. we are inviting people aged 40 -74 years old to come into school and have a free NHS health check. The checks will all be carried out in complete confidence by NHS staff. To book appointments go online: www.nhshealthcheck.com/buckinghamshire or phone: **01296 871132**. An information sheet is attached to this newsletter; please share this information with anyone you know who might benefit from this, regardless of whether or not they have any association with Bledlow Ridge School.

Phonics Screening Check and Optional SATs Week 13th – 17th June

The week of 13th June is an important week in the school calendar, since all Year 1 pupils and some Year 2 pupils will take their statutory Phonics Screening Check during that time. ‘Optional’ SATs for pupils in Years 3-5 will also take place then. We will be using these tests to track progress across the new programmes of study, so pupils in those years also all need to be in school please.

Active Learning at Bledlow Ridge School – Meeting for Parents Tuesday 14th June at 2.30 p.m.

Last term, we held a series of in-service training sessions at Bledlow Ridge School for all schools in the Liaison Group entitled ‘Improving Learning’. Following this, we asked the pupils and teachers what they thought were the characteristics of an active learner and discussed the findings. The result is our ‘Active Learning at Bledlow Ridge School’ Initiative, which we plan to launch on Tuesday 14th June, during a special morning assembly for pupils and at a parents’ meeting for parents and carers at 2.30 p.m. in the school hall. This initiative will run throughout the second half of the summer term and on into the next academic year and the hope is that in the future **all** our pupils will become more active in their learning. If children are passive in lessons, and regrettably some are, this has an adverse effect on their learning and rate of progress.

New Parents’ Meeting Thursday 16th June

If you have younger children due to start Bledlow Ridge School in September 2016, then please note the date of our New Parents’ Meeting at 7.30 p.m. on 16th June. This will enable us to share useful information with parents and give them the opportunity to meet each other and Miss Dolan, our Reception teacher.

Art Focus Days – 22nd / 23rd – 24th June

Since it is her 90th birthday this year, we have decided that our theme for the Art Focus Days should be the Queen. The children will participate in a range of group and individual art projects, using a wide range of differing techniques and media. It is a wonderful opportunity for them to try something new and develop skills in all sorts of areas, not just artistic, since in real life, children need useful attributes such as patience, perseverance, resourcefulness and the ability to get on with and work with others. If you have any resources that you think might be useful for us during this time, please do get in touch.

SSAP / 11+ Meeting Thursday 23rd June

On Thursday 23rd June at 7.30 p.m. there is a meeting for all Year 5 parents and any other parent who might be interested, to give information on the 11+ and Secondary School Allocation Procedure (SSAP) for Secondary School entry in September 2017. This is very important for parents of our present Year 5 pupils and I would urge them all to attend.

Barton Hall 2017 Meeting for Parents and Children - Thursday 30th June

Class 4 (Years 5 and 6) are going on a residential visit to Barton Hall, in Devon, from Monday 19th – Friday 23rd June 2017. There will be an important meeting for all concerned on Thursday 30th June at **7 p.m.** and we hope all current Y4 and Y5 pupils and their parents will be able to come, as initial deposits are required before the end of term.

Pupil Annual Reports Y1 – Y6

The government’s expectation is that children will have a secure understanding of 100% of the Programmes of Study for their Year Group. In the pupils’ annual reports this year, we have decided to keep the format of the pupils’ annual report broadly similar to previous years; however we are unable to compare your child to a national average as there will be no reliable data for this. Governors have requested that instead, there should be a section reporting on the depth of understanding that has been reached in Reading, Writing and Maths.

BRSA School Fete – Saturday 2nd July

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this year’s summer fete on Saturday 2nd July from 12 until 3.30 p.m. Please would parents ensure that their children are able to attend, especially if they are performing that afternoon. This will include Mrs Reading’s recorder players and band, the Country Dance Group and Class 4’s Brass Band (Y5 and Y6).

Induction Day - Tuesday 5th July

On Tuesday morning July 5th, pupils will spend the morning in their new classes, and we will welcome our new entrants. Y6 pupils should come to school as usual that morning, unless they are attending a Secondary School Induction Day.

‘Wind in the Willows’ – Visiting Theatre Production - Tuesday 5th July

There will be a production of ‘Wind in the Willows’ on the afternoon of 5th July. We would like to request a contribution of £5 per child towards the cost. Parents are most welcome to attend.

Open Evening – Thursday 7th July

The school will be open for all parents, relatives and friends from 3.10 p.m. until 7.30 p.m. From 7 p.m. refreshments will be served in the school hall when Governors, staff and parents are welcome to meet together and celebrate the wonderful achievements of our talented and hard-working school community during this academic year.

Peripatetic Strings Tuition

There are 4 available places for pupils wanting to begin to learn to play the violin. If you want your child to have lessons next year, please let me know. There is a charge for peripatetic tuition, which next year will be £300 per annum.

Bikeability 11th – 14th July

Later in the term Y5 pupils will have the opportunity to take part in Bikeability Training and this will help them learn about how to cycle safely on roads. The children who have opted to take this course will need bicycles in working order and cycling helmets please.

Brass Concert – Thursday 14th July

On Thursday July 14th at 2.30 p.m. pupils in Y5 and Y6 will give a brass concert to parents. All are welcome.

Sports Day - Friday 15th July

Sports Day will take place, weather permitting, on Friday 15th July, with a reserve date of Monday 18th July, in case of really bad weather. Races will start at 9.15 a.m. and the event should finish by 11.30 a.m. Parents and friends are very welcome to come and watch. Could all participants please try to bring House colours to wear i.e. Columbus – Green, Cook – Yellow, Magellan – Blue, Scott – Red. Children also need something to sit on, like a small towel, and a drink. We aim for everyone to be in at least one race and encourage team events and races, so that children can work together for their House.

Adventure Trail

Please note, for safety reasons, **no** children are allowed to play on the adventure trail at the end of the school day. This includes pre-school children.

Fitness Class – Wednesday evenings 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

An exercise class – Circuits 20/20/20 Style – now takes place on Wednesday evenings in the school hall. More information can be found on: www.pangaatraining.com

Bucks County Show – Thursday 1st September 2016 - Free Tickets

I have 25 free tickets for children to attend the Bucks County Show on Thursday 1st September. If you are planning to go and would like tickets to allow free entry for your child/children, please let me know.

Dates for Next Year

I attach the next two years term dates for your information, but here is the link in case you would find this more helpful.

[School-term-dates-2017_2018](#)

[School-term-dates-2016_2017](#)

At this point, it is much too early to write my last ever letter to parents, so I will write again later in the term to give details of Leavers’ Assembly, the arrangements for the start of next term and to say a proper goodbye.

Yours sincerely

R T Rochefort
Headteacher

‘Wind in the Willows’ Visiting Theatre Production - Tuesday 5th July

I enclose a voluntary donation of £4 per child towards the cost of the ‘Wind in the Willows’ Performance. Cheques should be made payable to Bledlow Ridge School fund please.

Name/s of child/ren _____