



# Heswall Primary School

'Better Never Stops'

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Dear Parents

22.2.19

I hope you have all been enjoying the half-term and the lovely sunny February weather! We are half way through the academic year already and we have lots planned for a busy and exciting second half of the year.

## Outstandingly Happy Schools

During the new term, the school will be working with Paul Field (ex-Headteacher) from a company called the 'Art of Brilliance'. This company specialises in training and development that will help keep the entire school community positive and motivated. Our staff will receive training on this and one class (Year Five) will be trained to be Happiness Champions that will help to promote positivity and happiness across the school. If you want to find out more, check out their website: <https://www.artofbrilliance.co.uk/training/brilliant-schools>. We are doing this because it fits perfectly with our school ethos and because we value the priceless mental health of our staff, children and their families. After completion of the programme, we hope to be assessed as reaching the 'Outstandingly Happy School' status. We believe that Heswall Primary is a place 'Where happy children achieve excellent things'.

## The Little Princess Trust

Tilly, one of our Key Stage 2 pupils, recently faced the scissors and had her long locks cut short to become the latest Heswall pupil to donate her hair to The Little Princess Trust. This amazing charity collects long hair (ponytails that measure longer than 30cm) and turns it into wigs (free of charge) for children and young adults up to the age of 24 who have lost their own hair due to cancer treatment and other illnesses. Well done Tilly on this selfless deed.

## Toddler Group

Our Tea, Toast and Toddler group will be restarting soon. If you are looking for somewhere to take your little one on a Friday morning then come to Heswall Primary between 9.00-10.35am. Let your friends know about it so they can come and see our lovely school, have a cup of tea and a chat whilst the children play. More details will follow.

## Coast to Country

Heswall Primary has joined forces with 18 other local primary schools in the Deeside area. Together, we will be learning all about the Wirral as part of the Coast to Country project. We will be teaching children to appreciate, protect, raise awareness of, be responsible for and work together to improve Wirral. We will be working with many charities and awareness groups and we will be aiming to significantly reduce the plastic use in Wirral.

## Head lice

Please can all parents keep checking their children's hair? We are still receiving regular reports from families that constantly having to treat their children for head lice and eggs. We will not eradicate head lice from school unless everyone checks regularly.

## Priorities Update

As already mentioned, we are now already half way through the school year and we are making good progress towards the school's main development priorities. The staff have significantly raised the standards in Writing through the introduction of Talk for Writing. The main changes involved strategically altering the school timetable so that we could have more time for writing in KS1 whilst keeping the focussed phonics sessions. In KS2, new whole class guided reading and spelling sessions were introduced and are having a positive impact. We have continued to develop how we teach mathematics through our involvement with the St Helens Teaching Alliance and their specialist maths teachers. We are aiming to increase the depth of the children's learning and targeting a 'mastery' of skills. We have tried to make all learning that takes place here at Heswall have a clear purpose and we want to see a transfer of skills between subjects e.g. great writing skills being used in History and Geography etc.

## Sats Meeting

Parents of children in Year 6 are invited to join us at 5.30pm on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February to learn about the mandatory national testing procedures. Mrs Courtenay will advise you on the content of the tests, what the outcomes are used for and how you can help prepare your child for the Sats. A separate letter has been sent out regarding this meeting.

## Authorising Holidays

A reminder that a leave of absence can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If a holiday is taken without authorisation then you run the risk of receiving an Educational Penalty Notice which is currently £60 per child per adult.

These fines are not paid to the school and the school receives no funds from fines paid to the council. A reminder that the school target for each child is to achieve at least a 96% attendance. Heswall Primary School has a legal and moral duty to promote good attendance for our children. You can find more details on the 'Attendance' Tab on the school website.

### World Book Day

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March is World Book Day. As always, we will be encouraging the children (and the staff) to dress up as a character from a book to help promote a love of reading. We will have an exciting day and once again we have a travelling theatre visiting Heswall Primary. This year we will be watching 'A Little Princess' performed by M&M theatrical productions in our school hall. The book, originally by Frances Hodgson-Burnett (1905), has strong themes of inclusion, friendship, understanding, anti-bullying and compliments our own ethos. There will be no charge to our families for this event.

### The Building

For the majority of the last three years, I have been working hard to ensure that the children at Heswall Primary get the very best. I am pleased to announce that the persistence has paid off and this summer, Wirral Borough Council will be spending substantial funds improving facilities here. We will be having an extra classroom built next to the existing Y6 class and there will be some significant alterations to the internal layout within Key Stage 2. Due to the very large numbers of children at Heswall Primary, it has been decided to remove the open plan layout in Key Stage 2. There will be four separate classrooms, 2 small teaching rooms, 1 IT suite and a spacious shared area. Key Stage 2 will look brand new and will be finished for September 2019. There will be some minor disruption to classes whilst certain areas are being renovated but we will use all available areas of the school to make sure that learning is not interfered with. More details will follow as and when they become available but the children of this school deserve the best and we are determined to deliver it for the children and their families. Key Stage One will keep its open plan layout as there is one less class in this area and the classes are capped at 30 children.

We have always cherished our open plan areas, knowing that it made us very different to other schools. It has been a big part of our identity for over 40 years and our children have always been used to working with lots of other children around them. The working atmosphere has always been and still is very effective however the National Curriculum has changed, the number of children on roll means we are oversubscribed and in order to offer a high quality education going forwards, the governors of the school believe the time is right for individual classrooms in Key Stage 2 after seeing the designs produced by the architects at Wirral Borough Council. The ethos and the values of the school will remain exactly the same and we will continue supporting our children to be the best they can be.

There is a small cardboard model in the school office that can be viewed to give you an idea of what the school will look like after the summer. No work will begin on site before the Easter holidays. We will involve the children wherever we can with the building works and aim to let them watch and will get the builders to explain what they are doing. We will maximise all possible opportunities to take advantage of the works in the children's art, design, literacy and maths work. If you have any concerns about the impact this will have on the learning then please contact the office and we can discuss it thoroughly.

### Volunteers

Now the evenings are staying lighter for longer I am hoping to create a team of volunteers who may be able to help me tidy up the grounds. The school does have a gardener who covers the main aspects of upkeep but we often need help cutting back trees and bushes, clearing areas of soil that travels down the banks in the rain, helping to paint and maintain some of our fences and gates. If you feel you can offer any time at all, please let the school office know. It will be very much appreciated and it will encourage the children to continue to respect the grounds.

### Growth Mindset Workshop

Hopefully you will have heard your children saying that, 'Better Never Stops'. This is because we continually try to instil a growth mindset into our school environment. We believe that if we want the children to adapt a growth mindset then it is essential that parents understand the approach too. I will be giving the presentation myself at 6pm-7.15pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March. Hopefully, with a substantial number of parents, we can keep promoting the positive attitudes to create resilient and successful children. Please email the office (email address at the top of the page) if you would like to attend this presentation.

### School Opening

School will reopen for the new half term on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February at 8:50am.

Best Wishes,



Mr J Lawrenson  
Headteacher

