

# Headteacher's Newsletter No.6

14/11/13

## Harvest Challenge/Save The Children

We will have a visitor from "Save The Children" in for our assembly on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 9.45 to receive a cheque and tell us about how the money raised by the school will be used. If any parents would like to join us, they are welcome - sorry we couldn't schedule it earlier in the day after drop off.

## Philosophy

Before half term, three classes were able to benefit from philosophy sessions with Peter Worley, founder of "The Philosophy Shop" which specialises in philosophy for primary school children. He has been running philosophy in several schools in London over the last fifteen years with very positive results.

The children certainly enjoyed the sessions and all teaching staff were able to observe them. Philosophy has tremendous potential for developing higher level thinking skills, good quality speaking and listening and deep questioning and because of this and what we observed, we have decided to go ahead with regular philosophy sessions for all children for one or two half terms during the year. For this half term, years 2 and 5 will each have one hour sessions on Monday mornings.

We will evaluate the impact of philosophy on our children and continue with it in the future as long as we see its benefits for them.

## Chess



Another well-evidenced way of developing children's thinking and learning is playing chess. Research has been carried out into the academic benefits to young children of learning to play chess and the results have shown significant gains. In fact, some countries have incorporated chess into their compulsory curriculums.

Because of these benefits we will be introducing chess beginning with year 3 (30-45 minute session) and year 4 (1 hour session) each week. As well as teaching the game to beginners, we will give those who can play already opportunities to develop and improve through playing games with staff and classmates and through working at chess puzzles.

## Football

It was requested from school council that we look into the possibility of running a school football team. I am pleased to say that we will begin be doing this over the remainder of this term.

During Wednesday at lunchtimes (weather permitting), any children in years 5 and 6 who are interested are invited to join football practice sessions on the field. We have recently had a new pitch marked out and have ordered a set of goalposts which will be set up as soon as possible. I have spoken to the person who runs the football competitions for Bexley Primary schools and he has kindly allowed us to affiliate to the schools' sports association (even though this usually happens before the start of the year in September) and enter some of the competitions which haven't yet started. We will now be taking part in a competition at "Goals" Bexleyheath after school on 3<sup>rd</sup> December and in a cup knockout after Christmas. If there is enough interest I would like to also run a girls team (although the school first team will be open to boys *and* girls). Could we ask that if families have any spare junior size shin-pads that could donated to the school, please hand them in at the office.



I hope to initiate a netball team in due course and in the summer, cricket and rounders teams.

## Nigel Cox - Social Work Student

As part of his studies, Nigel will be based here at Eastcote School every Tuesday until March. He is able to provide support for children and families in a similar capacity to Ms LaRoche, who was our Parent Support Adviser last term.

This may include housing issues, accessing further education and finding information concerning children's activities. Please feel free to chat to Nigel, either at the gate on Tuesday mornings or if you'd prefer, make an appointment via the office during the week to see me.

All contact will be in the strictest confidence.

## Houses

I invited suggestions for names for our four houses and the children have been very inventive and come up with lots of possibilities. I will ask school council to narrow this down to four or five that the school can vote upon.

## Remembrance Day

We were glad to welcome Rev Kim from St Mary's church on Monday who led separate KS1 and KS2 collective worship on the theme of remembrance. At 11 o'clock the school held two minutes silence.



## Adverse Weather



As we are nearing the snowy season, you may like to make an advance note of how you find out whether the school has to close. Notice of the school being closed will be via the Schools Opencheck website. The status of the school can be accessed on either [www.bexley.gov.uk](http://www.bexley.gov.uk), or if you do not have internet access, by phoning 020 8408 7508 and entering the school DfE number 3032003.

The decision to close the school is made by Mr Ball with the agreement of the Governing Body, on the basis of a risk assessment of the site and the availability of staff able to travel to school.

Please do not telephone the school as there may be no one there to answer the phone. Opencheck will be updated as soon as a decision is made so is the most efficient way of finding out if the school is open.

## Living With a Labrador

For dog lovers who may have wondered what my Labrador looks like, I took this picture of Thor Halloween evening!

