

26 February 2016

Dear parents and carers,

Looking into the future for schools you may have read or heard, I am sure, that this government expects all local authority schools to become academies by 2020. With the number of schools converting to or being taken over by academies soon more children will be in academies than in non-academy schools.

In recent weeks some of you may have heard that many primary schools in Greenwich and Lewisham are now thinking about if, how or when to convert to academy status or to become or to join what is known as a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

Our closest neighbours are mostly in Bromley or Greenwich. Already all Bromley Primary Schools are academies. A number of nearby Greenwich Primary Schools are now consulting their parents and staff and the LA is supporting their move to academy status. You can find out more by googling for example "Greenwich primary school academy consultation". There are a number of FAQs published by schools undergoing consultation and you may wish to look at these to start to find out more.

Recently a number of schools in Lewisham have started to explore the options available. The new Executive Director of CYP in Lewisham, Sara Williams is encouraging schools to be well informed and to look for good practice across London. The Mayor of Lewisham has appointed an Education Commission led by Christine Gilbert, former Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, to help develop a longer-term

vision for education in the borough. This reports in April.

In all three Brindishe Schools we have never before had need to consider becoming an academy or MAT but we think the time has come for us to start our fact-finding and our governors are keen that we are properly informed in the event that we decide we need to move forward. As a formal federation of three ofsted-outstanding schools under one governing body we are in a very good position to be able to consider our options – we don't want to be on the last bus going.

What is most important to us as a governing body is that we make any decisions on the basis of '*what is best for children and their learning*' and that, whatever our schools do, they do it together. We will of course keep our staff fully informed in school and all families posted through this newsletter.

My best wishes to all families,

Dame Vicki Paterson
Executive Head
Brindishe Schools

This week at Brindishe Manor...

Dining hall roof repairs

Replacement gutters and roof repairs to the dining hall and Nursery building were completed over half term. We are very pleased with the new roof windows in the dining hall. There is a lot more light coming in now and we are very glad that the roof and guttering repairs will enable the walls to dry out so that internal redecorating can take place during the summer.

Staffing news

Today Emily Da Silva leaves us to begin maternity leave, followed by Lucy Balcombe next Friday. We wish them all the very best over the coming weeks.

Mr Johnson in Aquamarine is joining the team at Brindishe Green next week, and will begin a PGCE with Greenwich University later this year. We wish him success with his future career.

We welcome teaching assistants Alexis Jagger and Amy Snaith to our team. They join Year 3 and Reception respectively.

As we told you before half term some further changes in support staff for classes, groups of children and individual children will take place over the next few weeks.

Class teachers will keep you informed about these via their weekly class newsletters.

Visits this week

Year 1 had a very successful visit to the Horniman on Tuesday and enjoyed a workshop all about toys old and new.

Year 6 visited 'Hazard House' in Lee on Thursday, and explored, amongst other things, how to keep safe on the streets and online in preparation for their transition to secondary school.

Tournament: very well done to the Year 5 and 6 children who demonstrated fantastic team work at the Lewisham football tournament at Prendergast Ladywell School on Thursday.

Visiting teacher from Zambia

As part of the Connecting Classrooms project we welcomed Beatrice Musole to Brindishe Schools this week. Beatrice is a teacher from our partner school, Kabitaka, in Solwezi, Zambia. Beatrice has enjoyed meeting our children in their classrooms

and has led assemblies challenging children's perceptions about Africa and looking at the similarities between Kabitaka and Brindishe Schools. We thank her for her contributions this week and wish her a successful journey homeward this weekend.

World Book Day – celebrations on Friday 4th March

Katie Clapton would like you all to know that we are celebrating this event with a **Book Breakfast**, organised by the PSFA. Central Hall will be open from 8.30am to enjoy a drink and something to eat. You can then visit your child's class to share a story with them. Children are invited to dress up as their favourite book character. If your child would like to do this please bring a donation on the day – we suggest £1 - and we will pass the money raised to the children's charity UNICEF.

If parents and carers would like to read a story with a group or class of children, please speak to your child's class teacher to organise this. We would welcome stories in English or in families' home languages.

Dates for your diary

29 Feb – 11 March Parent/teacher Mid-term Review meetings

29 Feb - 11 March Fairtrade fortnight

2 March Pearl Class to 'Lewisham Live' dance festival at Catford Broadway.

3 March World Book Day

4 March PSFA 'Book Breakfast' and 'Dress as a book character' day

7 March Y6 to Imperial War Museum

9 March KS2 Choir to 'Lewisham Live' at Catford Broadway – letters home today

18-22 April Why Not Walk? week

Safeguarding

Part of safeguarding at school includes

being aware of children's allergies and dietary requirements. Please keep us informed about any allergies your child has and, if your child has been prescribed an EpiPen or any other allergy medication by their doctor, please make sure we have an in-date supply of this at school in case of an emergency. All medication held at school must be accompanied by a health care plan – we can arrange for our school nurse to draw this up with you. Please note that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to make a note of medication expiry dates and to provide us with new medication when it is due.

And finally...

Parent Meetings – book online through Parent Portal

Mid-term review meetings are scheduled for the fortnight beginning 29 February (next Monday).

Final online booking using your Parent Portal login has been extended until midnight on Sunday 28 Feb.

If you do not have an email address and therefore cannot access Parent Portal, please speak to your child's class teacher or the school office asap and they will arrange a time with you.

We look forward to meeting with you all over the next few weeks.

With best wishes,

Gerlinde Achenbach
Headteacher

PSFA (Parents, Staff, Friends Association) News

WORLD BOOK DAY 'BOOK BREAKFAST'

Friday 4th March 8.30- 9.15

The PSFA will be hosting a World Book Day 'Book Breakfast' in Central Hall next Friday 4th March from 8.30 to 9.15am.

There will be pastries, juice and fruit available, and younger children are welcome. Parents and carers will then have the opportunity to go with their child to their classroom to enjoy a book together. This event is free and everyone is welcome. There will also be a sale of second hand books so you may wish to bring a few coins!