

Brookfield Primary School

Governors' newsletter Spring term 2011



Welcome to the governors' newsletter for the Spring term. The Governing Body has met twice this term to discuss the performance of the school and to agree ways in which standards can be raised and performance improved. This term our various committees have also been specifically looking at the provision of maths and science teaching at the school and how the changes to Early Years provision are going, setting the budget for the next financial year, thinking about how the cuts will affect the school and preparing for the changes ahead. We hope you will find some interesting and useful news and information on those and other topics in this newsletter.

Raising Standards

The Curriculum Committee is concerned with the teaching and curriculum at Brookfield and the progress of the pupils. The committee gets regular reports from the deputy head on attainment and progress, on the performance of various groups of pupils, on the school's performance in national assessments and Brookfield's progress towards its School Improvement Plan targets for the year. The committee discusses new opportunities and regulations as they arise, and keeps many of the school's relevant statutory and voluntary policies under review. Focussed discussions on particular areas this term included a really complete and helpful report from Rob on the strategies and methods of maths teaching at Brookfield.

This term governors again met the Headteacher and Melanie (Science Coordinator) to discuss science plans. Melanie reported on her successful application for Brookfield to become part of the Wellcome Trust Primary School Science Network. The Wellcome Trust will work with Brookfield to enhance science teaching and children's' aspirations over the next year. The first thing is to chose a theme for us to link into, and we provisionally agreed that Science and the Olympics would be a topical and interesting way of engaging children in science. Science was also prioritised at a recent staff meeting and the school is working hard on its science planning. In particular we will be using some wonderful resources for class practicals from the Hamilton Trust. Early next term we will hold a science open evening for parents, where we hope to engage with the many parents who have offered to help with science at Brookfield.

On March 17th, Brookfield launched *Fronter*, a secure website where children can log in to their class pages to share, discuss and celebrate their work with friends and parents. *Fronter* allows parents to access relevant information, such as the latest newsletter and curriculum presentation. With photos and videos on the class pages, parents and children can watch class assemblies, trips and activities from home. Polls and forums are used to engage children with the topics being covered in class, and to stimulate discussion outside of school hours. The governors would like to thank Ben for his hard work in preparing the launch and parents are encouraged to visit the Brookfield School website, itself due for a re-launch in the near future, and follow the *Fronter* link to see how your child's class has started to use this managed learning environment.

The school's finances

The Finance Committee have been focusing on next year's school budget. As you know Camden is faced with a large reduction in its funding this year and is cutting some services. However we now have details of the money which Camden will provide the school and actual funding is broadly the same as last year and so we are happy that we are able to provide the same level of service and range of activities which children and parents at Brookfield expect. In spite of this positive news, the expectation remains that funding for the school in future years may fall. We are continuing to look carefully at our costs and future financial commitments. Camden has also announced changes to the availability of free nursery provision and the method for calculating some of our funding. Both of these will have financial implications for the school. We will participate actively in the Camden led consultation over the coming months. Parents and carers are also encouraged to respond to the consultation on nursery provision which runs to May 13th and can be accessed via this link:

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/education/childcare/children-s-centres/>

The school building and environment

The Premises Committee meets twice a term to discuss the school building and environment. The internal redecoration of the whole school is now complete. It was finished during the half term holiday and the governors have sent special thanks to Derek for ensuring the work was finished well ahead of schedule. We expect an external refurbishment of the school to be carried out by Camden Council over the summer holidays. As part of this work the roof will be checked over and the windows replaced. Camden has carried out a feasibility study concerning the suitability of the school to have PV Solar Panels fitted. With the summer works being carried out there will be scaffolding on the building and roof which could be used if panels were installed cutting the cost of any installation. However the cost of any such installation would be substantial and the school would have to rely on outside funding sources if

the project were to go ahead – as ever we would welcome any help from parents in accessing funds from outside bodies.

Personnel and wellbeing

The Personnel, Salaries and Wellbeing committee has responsibility to monitor aspects of pupil wellbeing such as safeguarding, bullying, exclusions and behaviour. It is equally concerned with the wellbeing of staff. This is the time of year when the Headteacher starts planning the staffing structure for the next school year and it is important that careful attention is paid to the most effective deployment of staff at a time of financial stringency. We are also looking at ways to secure the continued delivery of after school club provision in 2012 when it is expected that the funding for Camden's play service will be withdrawn. One other service which contributes to the wellbeing of a small number of children and their families is the therapy service offered at the school by the Tavistock clinic. This service has been operating since 2005 and the school has agreed to fund the service next year at the same level as previously. The service has however had other external funding withdrawn and although the service will continue to be offered for the time being the school would welcome any ideas to assist with future funding.

Finally

The governors want to congratulate Ian, Amanda, Amanda and Gregor for their seamless transition to the PTA committee and to thank them for organising several splendid events this term. That hard work remains important in contributing both to fundraising and to the community spirit of the school. We would like to extend particular thanks and congratulations to Mark Unwin and all those involved in organising the Art Exhibition at the end of last term and the Spring Sing this term – both were hugely inspiring events. Similarly we congratulate Alison Turner and Michelle Nelis for organising the important and exceptional Disability Awareness Day and Mark and his staff for organising the recent grandparents' day. To all the children and staff and to all the parents, carers and members of the community who volunteer their time and talent, the governors would like to say many thanks to all of you.

Best wishes

Governing Body
Brookfield Primary School

PS If you have any comments or suggestions governors can be contacted by e-mail at govs@brookfield.camden.sch.uk or drop us a note.