



11th October 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

As usual, lots of positive stories to tell about Foxton Primary School moving forward.

This week the children have been enjoying scarecrow construction linked to their topics: Class 1 Fred the Farmer, The Queen from Class 2, Voldemort and Nagini from Class 3, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth from Class 4. Our choir, supported by Mrs Armitage, are joining with Foxton Singers in Saturdays' celebrations in church.

Our bi-annual questionnaire to parents prompted the governing body to hold an information meeting about the work of the school – we offered two dates. We divided the sessions into themes: Governing Body roles responsibilities and its structure; Behaviour management; Finance which included a section from the current Chair of Friends who support with fundraising.

As you will know from various publications and the media, funding for schools is in short supply! Many schools are needing to find different ways of working in order to make ends meet. There are various strategies that we have already put in place which include reducing the leadership costs and paying for teacher assistant hours through a different funding route. We will need to consider reducing our expenditure as we go forward, for example costs for cover of teacher's Planning Preparation and Assessment time and specific services such as YMCA counselling. Certainly school trips or extra-curricular activities such as the Panto or the Life Bus cannot be subsidised by the school budget so Friends' fundraising becomes more important. Of those parents who were able to come to the meeting, many said that it was both useful and informative. Indeed we have had offers of help since that meeting for Friends and the governing body. For your interest, we will be posting a version of the powerpoint presentation used at the meetings on to the school website.

Last month Geoff Barnes retired from our Governing Body having served the school in that role for 40 years. Clearly with him goes lots of historical knowledge of the school and village but we hope that he enjoys his retirement! We offer our thanks for his long service.

We are now at a stage when we are looking at governor recruitment so if you have an interest in that role please contact either David Chilton at dchilton@foxton.cambs.sch.uk or me via office@foxton.cambs.sch.uk . Please don't let 40 years of service put you off, the more usual term of office is 4 years with the option to resign at any point! We are most interested in those that have expertise in finance, marketing, personnel or the school curriculum.

The governors have a constant cycle of policy review and all current policies are posted on the school website. One of the policies reviewed each Autumn is the Attendance Policy. We are required to work within the Department of Education and Cambridgeshire expectations and the key points are as follows:

- Parents need to contact the school each day that your child is absent by 9:30am.
- Headteachers, only, can authorise absence.
- If you wish to apply for authorised absence, (not for illness) then you need to complete a form from the office at least 4 weeks before the absence.
- A headteacher is not able to authorise holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- A penalty notice may be issued from County if there are a more than 3 consecutive days of unauthorised absence.
- A penalty notice is currently £60 per child, per parent.
- 90% attendance is deemed to be Persistent Absence.
- 94% attendance is deemed to be average attendance .
- If you are unsure of any details please check the policy on the school website.

Please note that I have been instructed by County to follow agreed procedures rigorously and the first letter to indicate a concern will be sent as soon as attendance falls below 94%. This includes the use of template letters from the local authority and are part of the policy published on the school website. The process which we are required to use is formal and the tone of the letters is unpleasant because it makes reference to potential prosecution. Whilst bringing your child to school is your responsibility, we



acknowledge that there may be times when circumstances are difficult. We may be able to assist you to access support, if necessary, so please talk to us at the earliest opportunity. Please be assured if children come to school and they are unwell we will contact you.

Much more positively here are some invitations:

Harvest Festival Wednesday 16th October 9.30am in church – please send in donations of tins or packets of food for Jimmy's Night Shelter and HomeStart. Children will be asked to carry their contributions in to church.

Thursday 17th October 5.30pm - Maths information evening

Wednesday 6th November 5.00pm - Phonics session for Class 1 parents

Wednesday 13th November 9.00am to 9.30am - Share A Class for all

Friday 15th November - Fancy Dress FUN RUN/WALK in aid of Children In Need

Wednesday 27th November 5.30pm - Reading café for Class 3 parents

Christmas service will tell the Christmas story with contributions from both Key Stages. It is expected that C2 will create the Nativity tableau – Wednesday 18th December 9.30am in church.

In September we held our first Fun Run in aid of Cancer Research and raised £360 plus another £85 for St Johns Ambulance, who we had booked just in case of need. Thankfully all went well, with no casualties. Thank you to participants and helpers both before and on the day. Our school council are now planning a Fun Run/Walk for Children In Need – the children want to make it a fancy dress Fun Run so we hope the day will be dry.

On Thursday 17th October, we will be running a mathematics information evening for parents. Our maths leader, Mr Atkinson, will outline the school's approach to teaching the subject and how this may be different from the way in which we learned maths when we were at school. Class teachers will suggest ways in which parents can help at home and will also provide an opportunity to get 'hands on' and explore the types of problems that children work on in each class.

Best wishes

Mrs Carole Davies

Keep up to date with all events on the school website <http://www.foxtonprimary.co.uk>