



# Hardwick Community Primary School Newsletter

9th February 2009

Dear Parents,

A happy hello from the Hardwick winter wonderland. We hope your children have enjoyed their opportunity to have fun in the snow and that our school closures weren't too disruptive last week. Thank you all so much for being so understanding as we all grappled with the weather last week, and it's not over yet! In future we will start using the newsletter email list as another way of informing parents about school closures. If you would be interested in email communication in future then please sign up for the enhanced email newsletter. In addition to this we have signed up to a new parent bulletin service called parent line (of which more later). This service will provide you with a phone number to call to receive recorded messages from the school. This will not only be used for notification of school closures but also details of school trip delays etc and other school events. We would also like to remind parents that in the event of a school closure we communicate this via all local radio stations and via the BBC and county council education websites. We try to make this decision as quickly as possible once we have a clear picture of the school situation. Many of last weeks decisions were difficult ones and Fridays particularly so.

Our decision has to be based on whether we will be able to get enough staff into the school to ensure pupil:teacher ratios mean we can look after your children safely. We also have to bear in mind whether conditions during the day look as if they will worsen. As conditions are so unpredictable, and the forecasts by nature cannot be completely accurate, decisions about school closure can very rarely be taken the day before and can only be made once the morning arrives and we can ascertain local conditions and conditions around the various areas in the county where staff live as these can vary widely. This helps us to see how many teachers could be at school for the start of the school day. We also use local and national forecasts, traffic information from the police via Radio Cambridgeshire. We also have to make the decision quickly enough to inform everyone as soon as possible, so working parents have as much time possible to make other arrangements. Unlike some other counties and councils Cambridgeshire delegate this decision entirely to headteachers. We end up having to make a decision that affects the whole day based only on the current conditions and forecasting.

Andy Matthews & Ruth French (Co-Headteachers)

## Reception news

The children have been very excited by the snow and have produced some lovely recounts and snow pictures during the time they spent in school last week. Thank you for sending them in with all the appropriate clothing. If they do have wellies, gloves, scarves etc then please make sure they have them in school everyday. Their wellies can be left in school. Thank you to those parents who signed up for times to come and help in the classroom. We have some spare times so if you would like to come in and help please sign up. Our new topic focuses on growing and changing and we will be planting and gardening in our new outdoor area very soon. If any of you have expertise in this area that you could share with us then please let us know. Finally, this week is book week and we have spoken to the children about which book/poem character they would like to come dressed up as on Thursday, they have got some great ideas! If you have any questions please come and see one of us.

## Year 1/2 news

We have now come to the end of our topic on Kids TV and Books. The kids have been enjoying learning about a number of different authors, books and characters such as Horrid Henry and Pingu. Thank you to all of you who filled in and returned our questionnaire, it was very interesting learning all about your favourite TV shows and books when you were younger. It brought back many forgotten memories for the adults in school. After half term we will be beginning our new topic on food, farming and flowers which will include a visit to the botanical gardens later in the term.

## Year 3/4 news

We have been very busy this term on our winter topic and the recent weather has really fitted in well! The children have designed their own ski resort taking on different roles and working well as a team. We have also started practising the play and the children are working very hard. We will be sending a letter out this week with ideas for costumes.

Half Term homework – All children should have a book review sheet to complete on a book that they should read over the next 2 weeks. They can either choose a book from school or it can be one of their home books. They will also have a maths activity set by their maths teacher.

## Year 5/6 news

As you know this term we are combining science and geography in our environmental topic 'Living in a Material World.' We are also reading 'Stig of the Dump' by Clive King. If you happen to have a copy of this book at home it would be great if you can read and enjoy it with your child. We will be making a display of 'Stig's den' so please also talk to your child about what Stig collected and if you have any (clean) useful items we could use for the display please send them in! After half term we would like each Year 5/6 pupil to bring in a large empty cereal box. We intend to recycle these to make our topic book covers. Our Victorian topic books should be available for you to see during parent consultation week along with pupils' learning journals. PE kit – next half term pupils need indoor kit for Fridays circuit training related to our Health and Fitness PSHE work and outdoor kit for hockey on Tuesday and Wednesday. Children will need football boots as they will be on the field.

Diary date: SATs week –May 11<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>

Please ensure you do not book any holiday during SATs week.

## Parent Line

We have just set up an account with a special telephone service developed in consultation with the National Confederation of PTAs and the National Association of Head Teachers using a company called Parent Hotline. This provides a telephone line on which we can place a recorded message, to keep you up-to-date with emergency school closures. The service can be called from any location and from any phone and the service can receive 100s of calls simultaneously.

Calls are charged at 5p per minute from BT landlines and will vary on mobiles depending on contracts. It is not a premium number.

### To Listen to an announcement:

1. Call the Hotline on **08447 70 75 76**
2. Enter our unique school ID which is **47546**
3. The message will then be played.

We will endeavour to leave a message at around 7.30 am if we need to close the school due to more severe weather at any time this week. Likewise, if the weather worsens significantly during the day and you wonder if we are going to shut, call the hotline rather than the school for the most up-to-date news. Do still continue to listen to BBC Radio Cambridgeshire as well, but we're hoping this new hotline will work well, and actually give you the information you need quicker, as there is always quite a delay between our phoning the radio station and the school being mentioned!

Of course in the future we will also be able to use this service to give out other information such as when school trips are due back, or to let parents know everyone has arrived at Hilltop etc. In the meantime we hope you will find it useful. We only found out about the service on Thursday, and the company have worked very quickly to get us set up ready for another week of unsettled weather.

## Book week 9<sup>th</sup> - 13th February

A reminder that our book week is this week and our focus is on poetry. On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> we have Michaela Morgan, an author and poet visiting our school for the day. She will give a performance to the school of some of her poems and will provide workshops across the year groups throughout the day. After school there is an opportunity to meet her as she will be at our book fair in the school hall, selling and signing some of her books. We would also like to remind parents and children that on **Thursday** the children are allowed to come to school dressed as one of their favourite book or poem characters. We don't want this to prove a headache for parents so if you're short of time or inspiration they could always bring in a prop that their character might use. The book fair will run from Monday 9<sup>th</sup> Feb - Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb at 3.15 - 3.45, in the hall.

## PTA news

For full information and details of school PTA events and information about how the money we raise is spent please visit the PTA's new website at

**[www.hardwickpta.co.uk](http://www.hardwickpta.co.uk)**

**Also see letter attached.**

## Governors news

At this term's full governing body meeting we welcomed Fiona Brown-Roche, and said farewell and thank you to Gwen Teall whose term as a Local Authority Governor comes to an end shortly. Our business this term included approving reports from the various committees of the governing body, discussing school trips planned for the year and receiving from the Headteachers updates on school events, staff training and new government initiatives. We currently have vacancies for new Governors, so please look out for information about the role and how to apply to join us (it will come to you either electronically or by letter next week). If you'd like to talk to one of the Governors before applying, please do contact the school and one of us will get in touch.

## Get the enhanced E-Newsletter

If you would like the e-newsletter emailed to you please email [hardwickprimary@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hardwickprimary@hotmail.co.uk). This will be an enhanced newsletter containing colour pictures of curriculum experiences and events.

## School Breakfast club

Following our request in the last newsletter regarding the need to set up a school breakfast club we had only 6 positive responses. It will clearly not be cost effective to those parents to set this club up, so we will not be pursuing this in the near future. We will however look again at the matter should parental interest increase.

## Diary Dates for the rest of this term

### February

9th -13th — Book week

12th—Dressing up day for book week

23rd—26th — Opportunity to look at learning Journals and Parent consultations

(opportunity to look at learning journals has been moved to during consultation week due to staff courses)

### Half term 16th to 20th February

### March

25th 5/6 Rugby tournament at CVC

### End of term 3rd April

**More dates will be added during the term.**

## Walking Bus

We've wanted to extend this to after school as well, and increase the number of mornings we run this but no one seems interested still, so we may well have to stop it, and hopefully try and re-launch it later in the year. We really wanted to help those of you who work and would find it easier to drop your child off at a walking bus stop about 8.30, than drive your child into school on the way to work. However, our hard-working volunteers are only bringing their own children and one other at the moment, so it's not exactly cutting down on car journeys!