

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we are now half way through the academic year the Governing Body wanted to take this opportunity to tell you about the impact that new initiatives are having on your child's education and what plans the school has for the future of Brinsley Primary and Nursery School.

2015/2016 IN BRIEF

Last year the percentage of children who passed the year 1 phonic screen test improved by 21%. Strategies put in place last year are being built upon this year.

Progress over key stage 2 was above national with exceptional progress in maths.

| Progress over Key stage 2 (Years 3-6) | Progress Score Brinsley |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Reading | +1.8 |
| Writing | +1.9 |
| Maths | +4.4 |

The percentage of progress made by children that were working at and above the national expectation for reading, writing and maths combined, was +8% compared to national figures (0%).

This year the main focus is on improving the achievements of children in key stage 1.

2016/2017

Reading – This year the school has invested additional money and time into further developing the reading skills of all pupils. The school has created a bank of guided reading resources which link into the children's book band reading levels. Staff have received training on guided reading with a particular emphasis on inference, an important aspect of developing a child's reading skills and ability to understand what they are reading. This work was shared successfully with parents at the 'Reading Workshop' on Monday 6th February.

Writing – Staff have undergone training on the effective use of grammar in writing as well as increasing the opportunities for children to write in a cross curricular way with the introduction of the new Cornerstones topic based curriculum. Following training the school is now looking at different ways of presenting children's work through the use of IT and our interactive board in the playground.

Maths - This year the staff have been focusing on deepening your child's understanding of maths through 'reasoning' and 'problem solving'.

Sports Grant - The school has used the sports grant to improve the health and wellbeing of the children by employing a specialist sports coach for one and a half days a week as well as a dinner time club. Brinsley children have been involved in many more sporting activities over the year from a swimming gala to indoor rowing. The interactive board in the playground supports the children's knowledge of their overall health and wellbeing through specific videos that play at identified times of the day. The School now has 'Sports Ambassadors' that organise their own events during 'Golden Time'. The school is currently on its way to achieving a sports gold award.

Behaviour - The Governors endorsed a new behaviour policy in September and alongside the promotion of the new school motto and values there has been a significant decrease in the number of behaviour incidents in the school.

I.T. – Over the past year the school has used its budget to improve the schools WIFI infrastructure as well as a new server. The Governors have also worked alongside the school to secure 64 new laptops which will be introduced into classes in the next few weeks. The INSET day on the 10th February was used to train staff on new computer software to improve on the existing curriculum provision for all children.

Improving the school grounds – As well as improving the Foundation playground with new surfacing there has also been the introduction of curriculum themed play sheds. As a school we are well aware of the need to improve the playground surface, our focus this year has been the Foundation play area, but we are endeavouring to look at this improvement when the budget allows. There are plans to improve the outdoor space on the school field with the introduction of more teaching spaces. The grant for this will be verified shortly. The school council has been involved in making decisions relating to these areas.

Improving the indoor space – Over the past year the indoor corridors have been improved with the introduction of bookcases along the old building corridor as well as a change in layout to create two new spaces to work with small groups of children. Mrs Haywood has recently secured funds to create a sensory room in an unused part of the FS2 classroom. This will be used for children with social and emotional needs.

Special Needs – Children with additional needs are now better supported with additional teaching assistants employed this year. Identified children are now discussed with parents in a termly ‘structured conversation’ and support programmes are put in place for children who need additional help.

Curriculum – In September the school introduced the new Cornerstones Curriculum. The children have reacted positively to these new topics and have shown increased participation in their learning.

OUR ROLE

Brinsley Governing Body is made up of a variety of people from different backgrounds, all with the same vision of improving and developing the school to ensure your child has the education and early start they deserve.

All of the Governors have full time jobs, whether that be out at work or at home looking after our children and volunteer significant amounts of what little spare time we do have to this essential role in supporting the school.

The Governing Body has gone through significant changes in the last two years and most of our members are relatively new. The majority of us do not have an education background and the learning curve is steep. However, we attend appropriate training courses to allow us to perform our roles. These roles include challenging and questioning decisions made by the Head; approving budgets; ensuring that allocated money is spent in an appropriate way, for example on special needs issues; ensuring performance targets are met and, if they aren't, insisting on explanations and ensuring the appropriate steps are put in place. Our role does not however extend to the day-to-day running of the school, or for example assessing a teachers teaching ability.

To safeguard that we have a full understanding of how the school is improving, Governors attend regular monitoring meetings in which senior leaders scrutinise children's books and moderate teaching across classes ensuring that policies, such as the marking policy, are being adhered to by all teachers.

During the Governor Day in December we had the chance to meet with parents/carers to create a new Home, School Agreement with the help of the School Council. We also monitored yours and your children's views through the questionnaire handed out at the Autumn Term parents evening and a happiness survey on a selection of children. Both questionnaires reflected a positive image of the school. The main issue from the parent questionnaire was the amount of homework which was immediately addressed by reducing the amount of topic homework for every half term.

At present the Governing Body is working with the school and the local authority to facilitate single age classes from September 2017. Due to increasing pupil numbers over the last few years this will be the first time single age classes will be throughout the school in recent history and we are working to identify the most appropriate way to ensure that there is sufficient teaching space.

Hopefully we have shown how we love our school and strive to generate a secure, safe environment in which you can be confident that your child will reach his or her full potential.

If you feel you can help in any way, for instance coming in to read with the children, helping with preparing resources or joining our Governing Body then please let your child's teacher or the school office know.

We are also placing a suggestions box outside the office. Please let us have your comments, positive or negative, so we continue to be in a school that we are all be proud of.

Kind regards,

Lorraine Berry, on behalf of the Governing Body of Brinsley Primary and Nursery School