

26 March 2010

Pre-Prep End of Term Letter: Lent 2010

Dear Parents and Children

This has been a quiet term for dramatic productions; but it has allowed us to focus on the curriculum. It has been a good opportunity to really focus on the basic skills as well as curriculum enrichment. We are particularly pleased with the children's cursive handwriting. We have introduced this from the Early Years, though our youngest practise in soapflakes and sand rather than with a pencil. For those children who need more support we have a workshop to boost the children's skills and confidence. This term our particular curriculum focus has been history. In the Reception class the children have benefitted from a very successful topic on the 'olden days' which culminated in a dressing up day. The display was superb and the letters sent to the children from their grandparents were very special and will be treasured for years to come. The Year 1 classes went further back in time and feasted like Romans while the Year 2 classes found out about some famous Victorians.

You may have heard about Ceria (Cherry), our orang-utan in Borneo, which Mrs Chishick one of our supply teachers has adopted on behalf of Pre-Prep. There are photographs and details in our library and a fact-sheet is available for the children to borrow. One of our Golden Rules is to care for our environment and Ceria's environment is an example of one which is under threat.

Our Reception class has enjoyed a train trip and visit from the fire-service. Next term however promises to be even busier and teachers are currently planning visits and productions. There will be a slight change in 2WR; Mrs Wells will teach right through Tuesdays which will involve her directly in our staff meetings. We intend using our Arts Week to come together as a whole Pre-Prep from Nursery to Year 2 on a single theme, 'Dreaming of India'. We have some initial plans which include Indian cookery and Bollywood style dancing! If you have any special interest in 'things' Indian we would be very grateful of help in setting up enrichment workshops for the children in the week following the summer half term. Please do come and chat through any ideas with me.

I am of course biased, but I do think we have a very special Pre-Prep; all the staff work very hard to create a really positive environment. This was very apparent to me on my return from inspecting another school. It is easy to be wrapped up in our own environment so it is really beneficial to get out and compare our practice. We have a great group of staff who support us and Mrs Aylott and Mrs Tearle were no exceptions. Mrs Aylott left us this term to join her husband in Farnham. She was a very enthusiastic and creative teacher and leaves us more technologically advanced than she found us. Mrs Tearle left this term to move to North Devon and previously worked alongside me for a number of years in Reception. Mrs Tearle had a very special manner with the children, she was particularly nurturing and caring, she could develop a special bond with children especially those requiring a little extra support and attention. I know there are a number of children who owe their progress to the kind attentions of Mrs Tearle. As a team player, she always supported the best interests of Pre-Prep and provided specialist skills such as first aid and had a less sensitive nose for the really messy jobs! We wish them both well for the future.

I would like to repeat my warning that we may have to withdraw from the Early Years Education Entitlement (EYEE) for our three and four year-old children as from September 2010. I have spent many hours in consultation with East Sussex and we have hosted an event for the independent

sector to meet with the County. I remain keen to keep the entitlement for our parents; however the conditions set are very difficult for small, quality settings like us. We have many well-qualified staff involved in our Early Years and wonderful resources available to our children, so to offer 15 hours completely free, with the restrictions attached, may not be viable. It is therefore very likely that there will be a whole-scale withdrawal from the scheme by independent schools and some smaller nurseries will be forced to close.

Thank you to Year 1 for their assembly for parents about 'Opposites' this week. The children sang and spoke about celebrating and enjoying our differences. They investigated loud and quiet, night and day, love and hate (that was food, not people) as well as big and small. All the children learned poems and songs and played a percussion instrument.

The children have responded well to the 'magic curtains' that have appeared at the entrances to Pre-Prep and which remind them of our Golden Rules. For the most part, the children are a credit to their parents and teachers. However, there are still some areas for improvement particularly at the end of the day. The sports department is particularly concerned that some of our Pre-Prep children are not closely supervised while their older siblings are at swimming clubs. Pre-Prep children should be with an adult at all times while on the school premises, thank you.

On behalf of all the Pre-Prep staff, I wish to thank our 'Friends' for their help in persuading the Easter Bunny to make his annual visit. The children do enjoy this event. Our thoughts as always are with those in our community who are suffering in any way. We hope and wish everyone a peaceful Easter holiday and look forward to some warmer weather next term.

Yours sincerely

Tessa Richardson

Head of Pre Prep