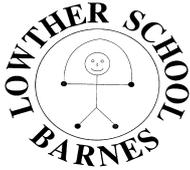


12th May 2017

ISSUE 16



LOWTHER SCHOOL FAMILY NEWSLETTER

It's been a really super couple of weeks—I hope your children are enjoying this term as much as I am. Whenever I've walked around the school this last two weeks I've seen such positive attitudes and so much fantastic learning going on. I'm certain the next two weeks of term will be jam-packed with superb opportunities for the children to explore, read, investigate and challenge themselves. There's lots to catch up on in this week's newsletter so I hope you find it useful.

Staffing news

The big news is that the very wonderful Mrs Webster has announced her retirement at the end of this school year. Carol has been at Lowther for 22 years and I know she will have taught many of your children. Carol has been inspirational to work with and has set exemplary standards in leading our Foundation Stage. I've not known Lowther without her! We will of course be giving her an appropriate send off! I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing her a very happy retirement.

A couple of weeks back we also said good bye and good luck to Mr Daniels. The children gave Tom a great send off! Tom worked in so many different parts of the school, particularly inspiring children in the performing arts. Tom was loved by the children and was a great colleague to work with. Tom was commuting a long way to Lowther, and so has opted for a career change and a more local job, working for Dexters estate agents in their head office. We know he'll do his new job fantastically.

We've also made some great appointments. We have appointed a new teacher for next year – Abbie Mason. She's currently teaching at St James in Twickenham and so we're delighted to have recruited another fantastic teacher for the team.

We've appointed Gemma Foster-James to the team—Gemma is a great addition to our KS1 support team. We've completed our recruitment of teachers for next year and so Mr Bracken and I are now finalising where each teacher will be based. We're very excited about the team of teachers we'll have here at Lowther next year. We'll update parents and children with all the details during June.

SMSA role available

From June, we will have a vacancy for a SMSA role to work at lunchtimes at the school. This is an important job, supervising the children's play and lunchtime. The job is for 2 hours a day from 11.30am until 1.30pm. If you're interested then please do enquire at the office.

Club money

We reinvest the monies paid by parents for our extensive after school club provision to purchase new equipment for the school. I have just recently used the basketball club money to purchase a brand new kit (pictures coming soon!)

Y6 SATS Busters!

A massive well done to all of Y6 this week as they put in huge amounts of effort to complete their SATS assessments. I thought it would be helpful for parents to know exactly what we do at Lowther regarding "SATS" and also have a look at (and maybe even try!) some actual SATS questions from this year's papers. I've taught in Y6 a long time and am always very happy to talk to parents about anything to do with SATS and what we do at Lowther to ensure it's a really positive experience for the children. Here's a sample of some of the questions:

Spelling

Bruise, monarch, crumb, disobeyed, sympathetic, percussion

Grammar

Circle the relative pronoun in the sentence *The mountain, which could be seen in the distance, had snow on top of it.*

Which punctuation mark should be used in the place indicated by the * *Josh was excellent at languages* he spoke French and Spanish*

Comma Hyphen Full stop Semi-colon

Circle the two words that are antonyms below

What looked like a worthless collection of rusty metal turned out to include ancient coins and valuable jewelry.

Maths — Arithmetic

$2242 \div 59$

418×46

$5/8 \div 2$

$15\% \times 1000$

$1/4 + 1/5 + 1/1$

Maths—Reasoning

A Koala sleeps for 18 hours a day. What percentage of its life does it spend asleep?

Amina post three letters. The postage costs the same for each letter. She pays with a £20 note. Her change is £14.96. What is the cost of posting one letter?

Adam says 0.25 is smaller than 2/5. Explain why he is correct.

On a map 1cm represents 20cm. The distance between two cities is 250km. On a map what is the distance between the two cities?

Write in the missing numbers

___ 1 15/8 2 1/4 ___

I hope you found the questions interesting and helpful. Our approach to these parts of school life are completely child centred and focused on children doing their best and working towards achieving their targets and goals. Teachers assess pupils throughout the year based on their work in class—this is called teacher assessment. Tests help feed additional information in too, supporting teachers to make accurate assessments. In Year 6 these tests are known as the SATS—this is a week long series of tests in the core curriculum. Children work really hard towards these as they help indicate their attainment and progress academically. They are however just a small part of their life at Lowther and do not show their social, physical or moral development. A key part of delivering any assessments is ensuring children are confident, relaxed and focused. Knowing that they are expected to try their best and give it a go are important aspects too. I believe we manage this at Lowther very well. Well done to all the children in Y6—superb stuff!

IMPORTANT — PLEASE READ

Changes to the morning routine for the Whole School

Timekeeping is such a vital life skill, we believe that it is essential that children understand the value and importance of good punctuality. We also want to ensure we maximise the children's learning time at school. Timekeeping by families across the school is currently not good enough. As a result we are introducing a new routine for the start of our school day. We think you'll really like it, and most of all, so will the children. Please do give us feedback once it's up and running so we know how it works for families.

So what are the changes?

The biggest change is that children can go straight in to their classroom from 8.45am (not before) if they would like to. If they prefer to stay outside (supervised at all times by their parent) until 8.55am they are also welcome to. If children go into class parents may leave them with us at that point.

Once inside

Once children have decided to come in they will be expected to put their coats up etc. as normal and then go straight to their classroom. As is currently the case, parents should not accompany their children into the classroom. Please do not leave children unsupervised in the playground. Children should not be in any communal areas or a classroom that is not their own.

Each classroom will have an adult supervising it and there will still be teachers and other adults out on duty in the playground as normal.

The bell

The bell will be rung at 8.55am as normal so that all children are in their classroom and working by 9am. Children do not need to line up at 8.55am when they hear the bell, they can just go straight to their classroom.

At 9am another different bell will be rung—this signifies the “official” start of school. Any children not in their classroom when this bell is rung will be deemed late and will be marked in the register accordingly.

Other details

Mr Bracken and Mr Tuffney (or another senior teacher) will be on duty each morning at the gates to help support this new routine. There will be a bonus play time reward for all children with 100% attendance and 100% punctuality each week on Friday afternoons.

This new routine will start on Monday 15th May. We hope you like the changes we've made. We believe that having an open start to the school day will make the start of the day easier for children and families. We also believe that it will be much clearer for all families when school has started and what constitutes being late.

Do let us know what you think once the changes have started. Let's go for it and get everyone in to school on time and working hard at 9am.

Here's a summary of what the mornings at Lowther will look like from Monday 15th May 2017

8.45am Children arrive at school

Children can stay out in the playground or go straight in to their classroom

8.55am The school bell is rung — children go straight to their classroom (no need to line up)

9am The second bell is rung — the school day starts. Any children arriving after this bell or not in class at this point will be deemed late.

Sainsbury's vouchers

The challenge is on! We're counting them up in their thousands and look forward to sending them in. We're planning to get lots more sports equipment with the vouchers. Thank you all for collecting them on our behalf.

Screen your Story

A huge well done to our Screen your Story winners. One of which was Maya Mensah-Gibbs (who I accidentally missed off the last newsletter. Well done on some superb writing Maya! Congratulations on your win!

After School routines

Now that the weather has started getting nicer (fingers crossed!) I thought it would be helpful to remind all families of a few of our after school routines. As well as the information above, please also remember

- No scooting or cycling on school grounds before or after school
- ALL children must be fully supervised by adults before and after school
- School STARTS at 9am
- For safety reasons please don't use the new swing before or after school

Secondary school update from chair of governors Sharon McNab

Our Y6 children are now nearly all placed in local secondary schools. We are continuing to meet and liaise with the local authority and our closest secondaries to ensure all our families have good options for secondary schooling both now and in the future. Mr Tuffney met with the head of school place planning last week to look at options for the future, including the Mortlake Brewery site. We'll keep you updated with any other developments.

Changes to the playground

The PTA have ordered some absolutely fantastic new climbing frame equipment with the hard-earned funds in the PTA pot. It's going to be awesome! It'll be fitted in the May half term ready for the last half term of the year. Pictures and more details to follow soon.

Calling all runners!

After the success of the Daily Mile recently, a few Lowther parents are proposing to establish a small exercise / running group to meet before the start of school day on one morning a week throughout this Summer term. Sounds a lot of fun. Check out the PTA Facebook page or talk to Sam or Ella Allpass (Nell in Y2's parents) for more details. Happy running!