



Brookfields
Specialist SEN School

Sage Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG31 6SW

12th February 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

Headteacher's Report

Spring Term – February 2016



Once again I am delighted to report that Brookfields has received some wonderful news. We have been awarded the Investors in People GOLD Award (please see our website for detailed feedback).

Pauline, our Investors in People Practitioner, visited Brookfields for four days in January 2016. She interviewed a wide cross section of staff and governors against a total of 140 evidence indicators. The report is fantastic reading and a clear indication of how the school is moving forward, the impact of recent decisions and a real reflection of the totally committed, enthusiastic, hard-working staff. I was incredibly proud to read it! The report reaffirms that, as a school, we work together incredibly well, care about each other and strive to improve everything we can. Of course we have areas to strengthen. However, we were already aware of these and have plans to address them in the coming year.

The award ties in with other training that has been delivered this term to a range of staff. Catherine Bernie, Deputy Headteacher and Sarah Strudley, Assistant Headteacher, have been trained to deliver 'Mental Health First Aid', a two day informative, practical and thought provoking course that examines how we can help both staff and pupils who may experience aspects of mental health. By making more people aware of mental health we hope to recognise and react to signs and symptoms more quickly in school.

'Teenage Mental Health' was again a central theme at the SWALSS (the association for leaders in special education) conference I attended in Torquay in late January. Professor Tanya Byron spoke brilliantly about the development of the adolescent brain and the impact of mental health. During the two day conference other topics included Leadership Management, Ofsted Requirements, Safeguarding and Therapeutic Interventions.

Also in January we held a 'Wear it Wild' day to support the World Wildlife Fund. Pupils and staff arrived in school dressed as a wide variety of animals ranging from crocodiles to mice, flamingos to bears. Activities throughout the day were designed around animals and their habitats, concentrating on the tragic circumstances of some animals becoming endangered or even extinct.

As you are aware we have in school both a Primary Council and a Secondary Council. They meet regularly with Mrs Strudley to discuss relevant matters of concern. Minutes of these meetings are distributed to the governors and the Senior Leadership Team. We can then consider the content to see how we can improve the school or help in any way. However, we also have a group that meets under the 'Unicef UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award'. Evidence of these meetings can be seen around the school as individual classes have adopted one of the 'Articles' and created their own rules and codes of conduct to work towards achieving it. For example, Article 12 reads, 'Every child has the right to a say in all matters affecting them and have their views taken seriously.' By having both the School Council and the Right Respecting Schools Group here at Brookfields we are creating an open forum for discussion. Our pupils are being listened to and encouraged to think about children from across the world.

Finally, at the beginning of term I wrote to tell you of my decision to retire at the end of this academic year. It was a very difficult decision as Brookfields has been part of my life for 22 years! The governors are currently advertising for a new Headteacher. The interviews are scheduled for Tuesday 22nd March and Wednesday 23rd March 2016. You will be aware that 22nd March 2016 was identified in the yearly calendar as the next Parents Evening. We will need to cancel this so apologies for any inconvenience caused. The new date for the next Parents Evening will now be **Tuesday 19th April 2016**, please make a note and include the new date in your diary.

Half term is now upon us – have a good holiday. Thank you for your continued support, advice and your wonderful children!

School re-opens on Monday 22nd February 2016.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Headland'.

Mrs J Headland
Headteacher