

Dear Families and Friends,

Half Term update – Autumn 2018

What a beautiful autumn we have been having! The warm autumn days have been most welcome.

The excitement on the first day of this term is a fading memory but it was lovely welcoming the pupils back to school after the summer break and hearing all their news. We were joined by fifteen new pupils and their families at the start of the academic year, all of whom have settled in. In addition to welcoming new pupils, we have welcomed eight new members of staff to the school, all of whom are contributing to life at Brookfields School.

Before the pupils returned to the school, we had our staff INSET Days. In addition to mandatory training, such as Safeguarding, staff also focused on training to support the School Development Plan priorities for the coming year, such as the wellbeing of pupils and staff. We will be working with Dan Collinson from 'Positive Psychology' throughout the year. The work has already started and a number of staff are being trained as 'Wellbeing Champions'. In addition to this, staff also looked at early intervention and support for pupils.

This half term, many pupils have been involved in community events such as the Equinox Community Art Project 2018. More than 500 people were involved in creating the many elements of the project, which were on display until the end of September, on Pangbourne Meadows. 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the signing of the WW1 Armistice. To mark the occasion, Purley on Thames Parish Council have sponsored a number of community events. One such event will be a display of poppies in Purley Barn on 3rd and 4th November, which pupils and staff have contributed to by making poppies.

Our Initial Teacher Training initiative, Berkshire Teaching Alliance (BTA), continues to grow and develop. This year we have two trainees who we are training to be teachers of the future. There are nine BTA trainees based in mainstream schools and three based in special schools.

Our partnership with the other special schools in Berkshire has continued to grow and develop. BASS (Berkshire Alliance of Special Schools) has developed a shared vision of how, through partnership working and support, we can collectively change the outcomes for the pupils in our schools and support their families. Staff from all schools have already started working together in a number of different areas. Some of you will have attended our 'What's Next Evening' where we provide information for students and their families about what options they might explore when transitioning from school. This year, Brookfields and Addington will be holding a joint event. The event will be hosted at Addington School on 15th November from 7.00pm – 8.30pm.

It was lovely to see so many family members join our first Coffee Morning of this academic year, which raised money for the MacMillan Cancer Support Charity. We are working in partnership with West Berkshire Parent Carer Forum, as we want to be able to support our parents in being able to have a voice in how services for children and young people with additional needs are shaped and delivered locally. Please do come along to these events to meet other parents but also to pick up useful information. We look forward to welcoming you to our future coffee mornings on the first Wednesday of each month!

Many of you will know that we do a lot of fund raising at the school so that we can purchase much needed equipment for the pupils as well as gain grants to fund projects at the school. Charlotte Wilshire is our Fund Raiser and has done an amazing job in securing grants and bids for a number of projects. We would like to thank everyone who has kindly donated monies to the school through either sponsorship, donations or grants.

Below is a list of the grants that Charlotte has been able to secure in 2018 and what they have been used for:-

Source	Amount raised/secured	What it paid for
First Growth	£20,000	Pangbourne House
Skipton Building Society	£1,755	Adaptive Trike
Clothworker's Foundation	£15,000	Minibus
Boparan Charitable Trust	£10,000	KS2 Playground
Children in Need	£18,018	Holiday club
Covea	£2,500	Minibus top-up
The Hedley Foundation	£1,755	Adaptive trike
Englefield Trust	£2,000	Minibus top-up
Island Bohemian Bowls Club	£1,800	Adaptive trike
Cardy Beaver Foundation	£500	Family Fun Time
West Berks Community Education	£1,964	Parent Education
Zurich Community Trust	£1,850	Pangbourne House
Vodafone/Island Bohemian	£700	Adaptive trike

Many of you will have come along to the great whole school family events that our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) have put on, such as the Family Barbeque, the Christmas Bazaar or the Quiz Nights. The PTA work hard to raise money by holding family events as well as applying for grants from charities and charitable organisations. The money raised supports the pupils directly by buying them equipment, resources or by subsidising residential trips etc. Lorraine White (Specialist Teaching Assistant) has been a member of the PTA for many years as well as being the Chair. At the last PTA AGM, Lorraine chose not to stand as chair for the PTA. I am sure you will join me in saying a huge thank you to Lorraine for the amazing work that she has done for the PTA both as Chair for the last two years and as a member of the committee for many years. Lorraine's commitment and dedication to the work of the PTA has ensured that thousands of pounds have been raised to support the pupils in the school. We are incredibly grateful for all her support.

It was lovely to welcome so many family members to our Harvest Festival. Kimberley Legg, our Lead Teacher for Complex Needs, led a fantastic Sensory Harvest Assembly in the afternoon! Thank you for all the kind and generous donations to our Harvest Festival Assemblies. Your donations have been distributed to people and families in Reading by ReadFood.

Here are some dates for your diaries:

Wednesday 7th November 2018 - Coffee Morning 9.30am – 11.00am with West Berkshire Parent Carer Forum and a talk from the Therapists based at Brookfields School – ALL WELCOME
Monday 12th November 2018 - Shakespeare Schools Festival at The Corn Exchange in Newbury
Thursday 15th November 2018 ('What's Next') 'Opportunities Evening' at Addington School in Woodley
Friday 16th November 2018 - Children in Need Day - non-school uniform for £1 'Pyjama Day'
Saturday 1st December 2018 - PTA Christmas Bazaar 12.00pm – 3.00pm – ALL WELCOME
Thursday 20th December 2018 - last day of term, pupils finish at 1.00pm

I hope you all have a good and safe half term break and we look forward to seeing all the pupils back on **Tuesday 30th October 2018.**

Kind regards,



Brandon Mills
Head Teacher