



## Headteacher's Newsletter – May 2017

Dear Parent and Carers,

First of all, you will all be aware that Ofsted visited us last week for a full two day inspection. Thank you to everybody who completed the Ofsted Parent and Carers questionnaire and returned it in good time to be included in the findings. We really appreciated your positive responses and support for the school. The new report will be published in two weeks and I will ensure that you all have a link when the report arrives.

We are not allowed to say what the outcome of inspection report is until it is published, but I can say it was a very challenging and rigorous experience in which the whole school, staff and pupils demonstrated the best of what we do here at Mill Water. I am so pleased that our inspector recognised the progress that has been made across the school and this will be outlined in our published report.

There will always be things to improve on in any school, and I look forward to sharing our new identified priorities with you shortly. Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to get us to this point; we will now concentrate on what we need to do next to ensure that your children get the very best standards of care and education at Mill Water School.

### Parent and Carer training opportunities

I wrote in the last newsletter updating you on the fantastic work done by Maria and the PTFA team to secure us funding from Santander for parent training opportunities. We have planned actions already, but we wish to provide training and support activities that really do meet family need. For this we need your help. Please could you return the training questionnaire that came to you this week as soon as possible, we would like to plan, prepare and deliver activities as soon as we can. If you did not receive a copy, please contact the school and we will arrange to send one home to you – thanks for your support on this.

### More good news from the PTFA..

I'm really pleased to say that the PTFA funding application to Co-Op to support the Orchard Project has been successful. We'll receive more details later this month but basically the proceeds from our area (for the next 6 months) of carrier bags sales, profits of reusable bags and a percentage of member spending on own brand products will be split between Mill Water PTFA and two other charities. The PTFA will be in touch with more details and how we can best promote ourselves over the next few weeks and maximize our fundraising. Co-Op and Tesco are funding different parts of the Sensory Orchard. Look out in Tesco Sidmouth and Seaton branches where you can vote to support our school.

PTFA have certainly been very busy - The recent PTFA Table Top Sale raised £248. Our PTFA have provided waterproof clothing for children to enjoy messy play activities and have also spent £2066 on resources for Early Years and £1090 on the Orchard project. Thank you all so much for the work you do to support us, it is very much appreciated by us all.



## Communication

We are always considering ways of enhancing communication between home and school. The PTFA have set up a Facebook page to publicise all of their valuable events which do so much to support the work of the school. Please search 'Mill Water School PTFA' and follow for events information.

## Bat Week

Tom Neusinger, our Outdoor Learning Co-ordinator is getting us involved in the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project (DGHBP), protecting and raising awareness of this bat species and learning all about these fascinating creatures. Mill Water is only a few miles from the largest maternity roost in Europe and the school was built with bat conservation in mind. We will be having a whole week of curriculum focus and exciting activities from the 8<sup>th</sup> May, including a visit to our local caves – look out for more information coming out very shortly.

## Budleigh Salterton Food & Drink Festival 2017

Before the end of term the 6th form, assisted by Class 10, worked very hard packing 750 goodie bags for the festival. Our meeting room was turned into a production line. It was thought that these bags would last the weekend. However, with the beautiful weather and the Easter holiday visitors, they were all gone by lunchtime on Saturday. Thank you to all the pupils, parents, PTFA, staff and governors who turned out on Sunday 9th April to cheer on our school choir as we performed for the public. Amongst other songs the festival goers were treated to lively renditions of John Denver's 'Country Roads' and the Rend Collective's 'My Lighthouse'. We rounded off with some spectacular, athletic, full body air guitar playing for our show stopping 'Final Countdown'. It was animated, entertaining and fun. Looking forward to our next performance. Well done to all involved.



## **Safeguarding news – Sarah Pickering – Designated Senior Leader**

We have signed up to be part of 'Speak up Keep safe' project run by the NSPCC, which is in the process of being updated for special schools. This will include training, workshops and online resources to help promote personal safety for our pupils and their parent/carers. When the new programmes are finalised I look forward to sharing them with you.

I am also in discussion with the NSPCC about hosting a parent workshop about Online safety for our pupils (see below) so look out in the next newsletter for a date. The latest thinking from experts is not to reduce our pupils' exposure to technology but to enhance their "digital resilience" to enable them to manage technology as safely as possible. The newly formed online safety team consisting of: Andre Crooks (technical), Simon Winward (curriculum), Julie Cornwell (governor) and myself (safeguarding lead) will continue to keep up to date with current best and safest practice for our pupils.

### **O2 and NSPCC FREE online safety workshops for parents**

O2 and the NSPCC have joined forces on a mission to help all children and their families in the UK stay safe online. Together, we're offering useful tools, support and guidance to help parents and carers have conversations with their children about their online lives. The hour-long workshop will help parents and carers understand their child's online world and build confidence to have those important conversations that can help keep children safe online.

l[www.nspcc.org.uk/schools](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/schools)

### **More great fundraising news:**

Earlier this year we applied to the Gibbons Family Trust, one of two Trusts set up by David and Vera Gibbons, who are based in Budleigh Salterton, for a contribution towards our Calvert Trust Residential. We were very fortunate to be awarded the sum of £5,000.00 towards the cost and this will go a long way to enabling us to take another group of pupils in the new academic year. The Gibbons Family Trust awards grants to children and young people up to the age of 25 living in Devon and / or the Isle of Thanet in Kent. The Trust Deed states that those in East Devon are to be given preference. They also do not usually make such large grants and we are therefore very grateful that they have been very generous to the school. Many thanks to Gail Evans for her efforts on this.

### **iBounce – Exeter:**

Just for info: iBounce Exeter run an additional needs session from 5pm to 6pm every Thursday. Carers get in for free. Booking advised as it is very popular. iBounce Exeter is located at 33 Marsh Green Road, Marsh Barton, EX2 8PN. Phone: 01392 537333

Very best wishes

Clive

# *Dates for your diary:*

**Bat week**

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

**Freshwater Residential**

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June**

**Mill Water Summer Fair**

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June ... 2pm – 4.30pm**

**Temple Methodist Church in Budleigh Salterton**

Come along for an afternoon of fun and games, craft stalls and refreshments. Climb aboard a fire engine, sit in a police car and bounce around on the bouncy castle. Come and visit Lucy, our school therapy dog. Please can we have donations of new pocket money toys for our children's tombola. Please send in any items into school clearly labeled PTFA Summer Fair. Thank you! We would also appreciate some volunteers to help for an hour on the stalls. If you are interested phone Lyndsey on 01404 850831.

**'STEAM AND TEAS'**

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July ... 2.00 – 5.00pm**

**Overton and East Budleigh Railway**

**'The Wizard of Oz'**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> and Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July**

**School Production - more details to follow.**