

The BuGle

Sept 16

Dear Parents, Carers, and Friends,

Welcome to all the new families starting at Burrough Green this year. We aim to support you as best we can to make the most of your child's schooling with us. If you have any questions we will be pleased to help. Appointments to talk to teachers can be made via the office.

We have reached the end of September: the end of our youngest pupils' first month at school. If they stay on at school until 18, which will be the case for most, that's only another 164 months until they take their A-Level (or equivalent) exams. It doesn't seem so much does it? However, life has (thankfully for most of us) always been a celebration of moving on from one stage to the next, even if this comes with mixed feelings for the loss of what came before. Personally, I have never stopped looking forward to what comes next, because I can think of nothing worse than a life without direction, even if the direction is not immediately clear.

What has been clear was the very positive response you made to the Parents as Partners Mighty Maths Week recently. Thank you to everyone who attended. We appreciate the effort you made to come in record numbers and apologise to others who couldn't due to other commitments. We have tried to run after hours workshops in the past, but these have not been very well attended. The fact that 50% of all families were able to attend at least one session represents a far greater reach than we could expect from other forms of information sharing. We also wanted to do something real: real children and real learning, rather than powerpoints and hand outs, which probably helps to explain the popularity of this approach. It was also good to see how many of you managed more than one visit.

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We also know that many people are worried about maths: don't be. The sessions were aimed at being informative and enjoyable. It was not a test for you or us. We wanted you to come away with a better insight into current calculation methods for primary aged children, and to demonstrate the methods in our calculation policy, copies of which were provided during the week, or sent home. Hopefully this gave you all a positive experience of your child's life at school and will help you to support them constructively.

Some vital statistics

There were 82 parent visits during the week (up from 54 in 2014 and 45 for the inaugural event in 2013).

54 different people came (up from 37 in 2014 and 29 in 2013), representing 41 different families (up from 30 in 2014 and 25 in 2013).

This represents 50% of all families (up from 46% in 2014 and 43% in 2013).

31 separate evaluations were completed (compared with 19 in both 2014 and 2013).

We did not run the event in 2015.

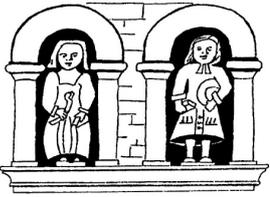
Here are the responses.

Did you find the session useful?

100% Yes, with 29% extremely or very useful. 'Good to see the children taught at their own level.' 'This will help us at home to help with homework, or reinforce lessons at school.' 'The class was really helpful in understanding how maths is taught. The teacher made it very simple to understand.' 'It was useful to see how the expanded and compact methods for addition relate to each other.' 'A fantastic concept.' 'Brilliant, insightful, thanks.' 'I liked how the bus was used to help with counting, making it fun and relevant.'

Many people also mentioned how useful it was just to see how the class operates, the positive

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atmosphere for learning in the classrooms, the range of different activities and levels of learning catered for.

What, if any, useful information will you take away from the session?

'Helping your children with maths leaflet.' *'The calculation sheets were good.'* *'How to talk to my child about using numbers.'* *'How the various methods of addition are used according to the child's level of understanding.'* *'Anything can be used to teach numbers with a bit of imagination.'* *'Good ideas on activities we can do at home to help with maths skills.'* *'How to use the numberline for addition.'*

Many people also mentioned how practical and interactive the learning was and the many different techniques used as children progressed in their learning. Both using objects to represent numbers and using appropriate language to talk about operations (for example the language of 'groups' rather than 'times') was clearly a help when it came to modelling what to do. Some of you also reflected on how this helped you to understand your child's performance and what they might find difficult in the class context.

Do you think it will help you support your child/ren at home?

100% Yes. 'Definitely.' *'Absolutely.'* *'Things around the home can be used to enhance learning.'* *'It will help a massive amount when doing homework.'* *'It helped me to see how things can be used in their environment to count and get an understanding of the basic concepts.'* *'I have a better feel for the level of working, speed expected and problem-solving approaches considered. Some very innovative ideas cropped up, which illustrated how a fresh look at something can be useful; my having done things the same way for many years.'*

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Are there any questions you would like to ask? (If yes please give your name)

There were 5 responses to this question, one of which was personal relating to their own child's particular needs. Other questions included:

'How can I know what the key lessons/exercises were so I can reinforce them at home?'

I suggest you look at the calculation policy and the Maths Curriculum document on the website <http://www.burroughgreen.cambs.sch.uk/attachments/article/119/Mathematics%20curriculum%20for%20website.pdf> as a starting point. Concentrate on the calculation content for your child's year group. If this leaves you perplexed please get in touch with the class teacher. The calculation policy can be found in the 'maths zone'.

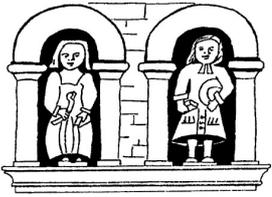
'How do I sign up for Mathletics?'

Each child has been given their own unique login. If you didn't get this please ask your child's class teacher. Follow the link to Mathletics on the school website <http://me.mathletics.com/en/signin/> and use your login details. The children should be familiar with what to do.

'Are there any books etc I can use at home to help?'

Yes, there are loads, mainly aimed at passing tests at the end of Y2, Y6 GCSE etc. However, I would caution the use of such material, because it often lacks a context or purpose for learning, like the 'bus journey' parents saw in Class 1. One of the best things to do for learning number skills is cooking. The weighing, measuring, estimating, use of ratio to scale quantities up or down according to the number you wish to make is

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invaluable: and you get to eat something nice at the end too. That is the main reason for weekly cooking sessions for Classes 1 and 2, as well as the Literacy benefits of reading and interpreting instructions, and the social communication benefits of organising a successful team. You will also learn more about money, angles and measuring by making a tree house than completing exercises in a book. The key advantage you have as parents over us is that you can really take an apprenticeship approach with this, in a way that doesn't work well with classes of around 30 children. If this seems a little daunting and you would like to practice some calculations, then the 'Helping Your Child with Maths' booklet, the Maths Curriculum document, the Written Calculation Policy and Mathletics (links above) is as good a place to start as any.

'How can we support reading?' That's another topic altogether, which I will park for now, until we put on a reading event. However, the website has very useful background information, including a link to interactive reading material on the Oxford Reading Owl site. <http://www.burroughgreen.cambs.sch.uk/index.php/help-at-home/reading> by following this link you will be able to find some advice about how we teach reading at school. If you do not have, or can't remember your login details to the Oxford Reading Owl site please let us know if your child is in Y1 to Y6.

Would the parent who wanted to know more about grammar terminology please identify themselves, so I can help. Please also check out the 'SPAG MAT' on the website on the 'Grammar Glossary' page.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the last Mighty Maths Week still hold true. This was a highly successful

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event as it proved what we believed to be true, in that parents would better understand what we were doing, and the logic behind the calculation policy, if you were able to do it for real in a guided session. You left with a much clearer idea of how to help your children at home and how school approached the teaching of calculation.

The fact that half of all families had at least one parent in attendance shows the importance that you placed on this opportunity and the effectiveness of this approach in sharing information with you.

On reflection, the next time we do this we would like to spread the event over a month, opening the classes to you for just one day each week. We have found that some children find the concentrated change to routine difficult, which is another reason why the request to sit in on other classes will also have to wait for planned events.

Home-School Communication

On that point, I know some of you have raised questions about how this can be improved. We have listened to what you have been saying and the Governors' Community Committee have started to develop a communication strategy, which will see greater use of email and a reduction in paper communication over the next year. This is still something we are working on, but expect to see some developments in this area soon.

Diary Dates

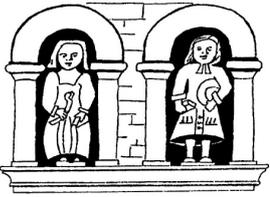
30.9.16 – 9.15am Harvest Festival at the church. Followed by the Macmillan Coffee Morning in the Reading Room at 10am.

12.10.16 – Class 4 Ely Cathedral visit.

21.10.16 – Break up for half term.

31.10.16 – School reopens.

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7 and 9.11.16 – Parent Consultations, 3.45-6.30pm
11.11.16 – 9.15am Remembrance Service at the church.
18.11.16 – ‘Keep the Home Fires Burning’ open afternoon 2-4pm

Frances Dow

Last year you may remember that I invited you to suggest ways in which we could celebrate the life of our friend Frances. Thank you to those that responded. One of the ideas was to adopt a new value that exemplified her life and what she meant to us.

I am delighted to say that following a consultation with staff and Robbie we have agreed that BELIEF will become our 11th value.

Students of the website calendar will also have noticed that we propose to hold a running event on Friday 24th March, entitled ‘Frances’ Fun Friday Frolic.’ We expect this to become an annual spring event along the lines of the ‘mile challenge’ for Sport Relief that Frances and the PTA organised so brilliantly a few years back. Details to follow.

There are other ideas being worked on, but you’ll have to wait for those.

Parking and Access

I have been asked to remind anyone parking along the main road that it is important to take care and to do so responsibly. No parking, or dropping off, is allowed in the zig-zag zone, the bus stop or the access road into the school car park. Children alighting from vehicles should always do so on the side next to the pavement, or Green.

The summer holidays is a significant break in the school year, and on return to school it seems some parents have forgotten the guidance around access to the building. Therefore I would like to

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draw your attention to the **Supervision Map**, which can be found on the safeguarding page on our website. Please keep to these routes, whenever coming onto the school site. Special arrangements are in place for events, such as Mighty Maths Week, but in all other cases this plan should be followed. Therefore we respectfully ask you to leave your children to come into the building by themselves on wet mornings. Also, whilst it is tempting to take the short way out by the hall on open days, please always leave via the office so we can tick you off our register/know you have left the building.

As we celebrate the harvest at the end of this week we think of the value of ‘nurture’ and how much this depends on what others do for us, particularly those who grow and bring food to our tables.

‘Do for other people the same things you want them to do for you. MATTHEW 7:12

‘I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep as the Father knows me... I give my life for the sheep.’ JOHN 10:14-15



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