



BEN RHYDDING PRIMARY SCHOOL
Bolling Road, Ben Rhydding, Ilkley LS29 8QH

T: +44 (0) 1943 431133
E: office@benrhydding.bradford.sch.uk
www.benrhydding.ngfl.ac.uk

Head Teacher: Mr G Hartford

October 2018

Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

A big welcome back from our first half term. I hope that you have all had a great break.

We have had a great start to the school year and I would like to personally thank all of you who came to our school parents evening on 15th October 2018. It's so important that we as a school get an opportunity to be able to meet with you all and discuss your child's successes and progress at Ben Rhydding Primary School.

You will remember in my Autumn term 1 letter that I wrote about '**Be Ready**'. We started school in the first week with an attendance rate of 93.24% and I am pleased to report that we are currently at **98.4% for our attendance** and that is brilliant. We have had **25 late marks** for not getting to school on time and I cannot stress how important it is to ensure that your child is at school on time and ready to learn. Being late can cause a child unnecessary stress and can affect the rest of the school day. We have also had **20 medical** appointments during school time. If your child needs to attend a medical appointment, it should be before or after school unless it is unavoidable.

I also wrote about '**Be Respectful**' and I am pleased to say that we have already awarded a total of **8,715** house points with Ingleborough in the lead and over **600** lunch time raffle tickets to outstanding children in our school. I along with all the staff at school feel proud to walk around the school to see children being so respectful and kind to one another.

We empower our children to be responsible for their own journey in school, ask questions and self-advocate, we ask them to '**Be Responsible**'. Already this term our children are settling in well and have produced some amazing work around school.

- **Reception:** It has been absolutely wonderful watching these small people transition into primary school. The bonding, new friendships and settling in to a brand new environment has been a huge success!
- **Year 1:** I have thoroughly enjoyed reading creative writing of year one class. The 'Wanted Poster' displays are outstanding and I have listen with interest to the children who have told me all about the tales of Grandma Swagg..... she is not the typical stereotype Grandma... that's for sure.
- **Year 2:** What is it with Children and bugs!!! They have been busily exploring 'Sams Garden' for microhabitats. The garden has been truly inspirational and a great investment to the school. I've

had 'great pleasure' in looking at our new school wormery in class.

- **Year 3:** The children went to visit King's Hall to see the very inspirational Victoria Semykina, who illustrated the book 'The Real Boat'. She spent time with the year 3 children showing them how to think differently about their creative writing. I have been very impressed reading some of the fabulous stories on the classroom display and understanding how a character is feeling and why they may have said or done something.
- **Year 4:** It's been a fairly interesting time in Year 4 class discovering the human digestion system. The class followed the journey of a chocolate spread sandwich, starting with it being a delicious snack and eventually coming out of the other end..... and boy oh boy did they love every minute of this scientific experiment. I think it's a given that Lower KS2 children thoroughly enjoyed writing about poo and wee.
- **Year 5:** What an inspirational time Year 5 class have had in Forest School. They have embraced outdoor learning, building confidence and empathy for others and nature. They have reaped the benefits and felt truly empowered as they have learned more about their natural environment. I've heard so much from the students and they are buzzing every Monday morning when it's time to go.
- **Year 6:** What can I say, ROBINWOOD!! Much, much more than a fun school trip away. This diverse and high quality trip has meant that our teachers have created an experience that has enhanced your child's primary school experience in their final year. It has allowed your child with the rest of their class friends to connect with the outdoor world, and the powerful and inspirational lessons that they have experienced together will leave them with memories that will last forever.

We are all very focussed on our 'why' #brpsfocusonyourwhy

Ofsted

You will be aware that Ofsted inspected the school in 2016. As a result of that inspection we were categorised as a school that 'required improvement'. The school has therefore continued to be scrutinised and supported on a termly basis by the Bradford Primary Improvement Partnership (BPIP), largely via the allocation of a School Improvement Partner (SiP). The SiP, working alongside the teaching staff and myself, analyses all areas of the school and school performance and produces robust reports that both support and challenge the school. Over the last 18 months BPIP and the SiP have covered all areas relating to the educational achievement and wellbeing of all our pupils in school.

In October BPIP came into school to complete a rigorous one day review of the school, focussing on strategic change, the development of school led systems, improvements in teaching and learning, outcomes for pupils, pupil assessment and pupil wellbeing and safeguarding. The school with the support of the parents, has worked tirelessly to make continued improvements to work towards a joint goal of making Ben Rhydding Primary School a 'good/outstanding' school. I am pleased to say that I have received the BPIP report and the results are very positive. We are expecting an Official Ofsted inspection in the Spring term and I am looking forward to receiving the official report that will enable us to move on in a great way.

In the meantime, I would like to share some of the comments made by BPIP:

- There has been considerable work undertaken to improve the school site by the leaders. It is now transformed and there is a clear programme of work to continue the upgrading and maintenance of the site and premises. This work has been driven by the Head Teacher and supported by the Governing Body.

- Leaders have an astute awareness of what constitutes a safe, exciting and engaging environment for learning and play outdoors.
- The parents and children were happy to share their positive experiences of Ben Rhydding at the start of the day, with comments like, 'This school is really good now.' The start of the day was orderly and calm, welcoming the children for their day of learning ahead.
- Ben Rhydding is a calm and orderly learning environment. In session the majority of children are now accessing their learning through quality first teaching. There are few specific interventions taking place for low numbers of pupils; rather pupils are taking part in fluid targeted groups identified according to their personal learning journey by the class teacher. A reading and phonics intervention were noted during the review day.
- There is greater consistency of 'teaching' as you move around the school and it is evident that leaders have worked hard to move the team forwards to deliver an age appropriate curriculum.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to adults, caring and respecting each other. This is seen in the playground, the dining hall and in the way that they move around school. Pupils work cooperatively in lessons and support one another in their learning.
- Behaviour for learning is developing as pupils take more responsibility for their own learning. As the level of challenge increases in the teaching the children will become even more engaged and take more responsibility for their own learning
- It is apparent that the senior leaders are intent on building a skills curriculum that is based on children being able to gain a deeper understanding of what they are learning. There is strength in their approach of joining up the curriculum and making links for children between subject areas.
- The school is using their environment effectively to support teaching and learning. There has been significant work done to develop this.
- The teachers and teaching assistants work together as effective teams within their classrooms.
- The staff team in EYFS is very competent and staff have high expectations of pupils. The adults significantly contribute to the children's learning and development. Their interventions enable children to make progress
- The office environment is now fit for purpose.
- In line with the rest of the school the office has been stripped back of clutter and there is every effort being made to move to paperless working, including much of the parent communication.
- Financial management is sharper and the Business Manager works with a notably skilled auditor. The Governing Body are now fully aware of the financial situation of the school. Further work is required to 'demonstrate' the link between school improvement and financial management.

Fundraising

We will be writing to you with up and coming fundraiser events and I know it is causing some of you to wonder 'why do we need to fundraise at all'? It's a valid question and one that's not always universally understood. But as the government cuts more and more school funding, many schools simply do not have enough funds to provide the students with the educational experience that they deserve. These cuts can weaken the schools' capacity to develop the intelligence and creativity of the next generation of workers and entrepreneurs.

At a very basic level we have to look beyond the normal sources of income to meet the deficiencies that exist. Last year we purchased some fantastic PE equipment with our fundraising activities and the PTA also gave us the money to upgrade our school server and telephony system. Our current priority is IT resources for the children. We are in desperate need of new school lap tops and they come at a cost of £16,000.

So for those parents who are thinking 'didn't we fundraise last year, why do we need to do it again'? I would like to explain that fundraising is not about making money. My personal belief is that it is about school improvement and the best opportunity to provide all students with the very best educational

experiences and resources. Just like households, schools have expenses, bills and items that have to be replaced.

Because of the lack of government funding, if we want our school to continue to be 'top of the line', we have to fundraise every year with intentionality. You will see outside of school a fundraising scaler and we would encourage anyone who wishes to help raise funds for our school, to do so. Please join the Ben Rhydding PTA facebook group and help us to achieve the goals we want for our children. You can find the link to the PTA on our school website.

Right, let's get started, we have lots to do!

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Glen Hartford', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr Glen Hartford
Head Teacher