



Dove and Rainbow News

19th December 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the last newsletter of 2019. It has been a very busy, but fun and productive term. Nativities were a great success last week. Thank you for attending and for providing the children with such beautiful costumes. We are very proud of all our children.

It's Party time!

The children all had a wonderful time at their Christmas parties this week. Games, dancing and food - a perfect start to the Christmas holiday. Thank you for providing the food.

Music Concert – Tuesday 17th December

Durham Music Service came into school to perform a Christmas concert for all of the children in school. An entertaining morning and a wonderful Christmas singalong.

Wednesday 18th December

Yesterday was Christmas Dinner and Jumper Day, followed by a Christmas 'at the movies' afternoon, as our behaviour treat. A perfect way to end the term.

Thursday 19th December

- Church Services for the whole school at St. Mary Magdalene
- Choir to sing at a luncheon club at St. Mary Magdalene Parish Hall
- School closes for the Christmas break

Today the whole school visited St. Mary Magdalene Church for an end of term service. At lunchtime, we provided entertainment for the luncheon club at St. Mary Magdalene Parish Hall for those people in our community who live alone.

We have all enjoyed this half term in school. Thank you for your support in all we have done. We would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a very healthy and prosperous New Year.





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School re-opens in the new year on **Monday 6th January 2020.**

With very best wishes,

K. Harrison-Brown

Mrs K. Harrison-Brown
Head Teacher



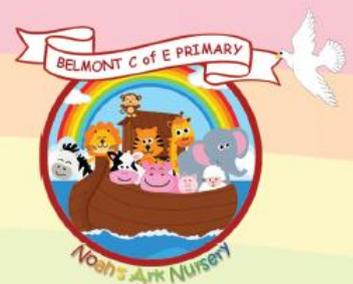


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During Parents' Evenings, Governors were available to speak to parents and carers in order to receive some feedback, about our school. Thank you to all those parents and carers who took the time to respond. This feedback was in response to two key areas: 'What are you most happy with about the school?' and 'What question would you like to ask the Governors?'

Things about the school that you are happy with:

- We are happy with the support our child is getting from the school.
- Fantastic teachers who are passionate about teaching and about the children.
- Kids are always on trips out which is very positive.
- Both our kids are really happy at school and we are happy with their progress.
- Very happy with school since I moved my daughter here. I like that they let the kids be kids and they don't get too much homework.
- The teachers and Headteacher are very approachable. We feel that our child is very happy.
- My children love coming to the school. Teachers and staff are friendly and very helpful, always smiling and ready to chat and help.
- We fully support the behaviour strategies in place, however they can be inconsistent across classes – *thank you for this notice, behaviour is good across the school, as judged by staff, Governors, the Local Authority and the Diocese; however, should you be aware of any inconsistencies in the application of the behaviour strategies, please do let the Headteacher know.*
- We like to attend performances and see our child's work at parents' evenings.
- All OK.
- It's good to have an appointment [for parents' evening] and not have to wait for ages. Lovely comments from my child's teacher and it is nice to see their books.
- My children are making good progress. Good teaching.
- My children look forward to and always want to run into school. Good teachers, etc.
- We are happy with the Belmont family.
- Happy – school is very good at responding to parent queries and concerns.
- Fantastic staff.
- Teachers and assistants are really caring and supportive.
- Teachers are fantastic.
- Teachers are very approachable.
- Good communication with class teachers, always approachable.





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- Excellent greater depth work to push children further.
- Excellent environment. Happy with everything.
- Teachers' feedback is very informative.
- All the staff appear very caring and my children are very happy and safe in school.
- Lovely teachers/TA's.
- Teachers know children well and are really caring. Children are really happy in school.
- Supportive, friendly teaching staff. Concerns are addressed as soon as able.
- After school clubs have lots of choice and good variety.
- Children's books are of such high quality.
- Happy with the support my child is getting.
- Fantastic progression since the start of term. Child is happy, settled and staff genuinely care.
- Teacher is always enthusiastic with the children. This is the first year our child has said they like school.
- My child is very happy in school.
- Community feel of the school.
- Staff seem to really know the children, both academically and personally.
- Happy that my children are happy attending school and are well supported.
- Happy with how my child is going to school and how much she enjoys her day. Happy with how far she is coming on. Happy with the extra-curricular activities the school has to offer.
- Helping to keep my child on track in his education.

Questions for Governors

Firstly, the Governors would like to thank everyone who submitted questions at the most recent Parents' Evening, we find them helpful to gauge the current views of parents and the local community.

Can breakfast club start at 7am for shift workers?

Whilst this is possible, it would raise a number of administrative issues, including: an earlier start for staffing (site staff and Breakfast Club supervisors), there would also be an associated cost increase for parents taking advantage of this. There would also need to be a minimum number of children taking advantage of an earlier start, to ensure that the change is financially viable. The Governors will speak to the Headteacher and relevant staff concerning this and will report back in a future report. In the meantime, it would be





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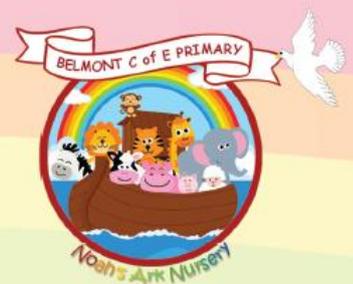
helpful if any parents and carers who would want to take advantage of an earlier start could inform the school of this through Mrs James in the school office.

Could we ask teachers what resources they would like from the PTA?

As Governors, we are immensely grateful for the hard work carried out by the PTA, in order to raise funds for the school. At this point in time, agreements are already in place between the PTA and the school on what the money raised will be spent on. With regard to asking teachers what resources they would like, this is already done, via the Headteacher. The allocation of funds is agreed in discussion between the Chair of the PTA, on behalf of the PTA, and the Headteacher, on behalf of the staff.

There were several questions concerning home/school communication, including:

- Would it be possible to obtain information regarding school events any earlier so we can change shifts around? (This question was asked in one form or another five times)
As a school, we try to give as much notice as possible on events etc. - at least one weeks notice. However, due to the number of times communication has been raised, the Chair of Governors will meet with the Headteacher early in January to agree any improvements. At present, communication is provided through fortnightly Newsletters, email, Parent Mail and Twitter.
- Could communication on key meetings and events be put in printed newsletters, rather than just presented electronically?
As a school, we would like to try and reduce our printed communication for both environmental and financial reasons and would ask that parents and carers check our online communications regularly.
- Could the PTA communicate earlier regarding events, so that we can make arrangements to support them in what they do?
As mentioned earlier, we are grateful for all the work the PTA do to provide extra funding for the school, especially at this point in time when school funding is extremely stretched. We will pass on to the PTA the question. In the meantime, we would encourage any volunteers to get involved and support the PTA in this valuable work.





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- Can the school continue to keep information flowing?
We will endeavour to; if you can think of any improvements we can make to our communications strategies, then please do let us know.

Could we get more outdoor equipment for KS2 and could there be more activities for children from outside companies (for example theatre, sports groups etc)?

All schools are provided funding for sports activities through the Sports Premium fund. You can find out more about our spend of this money on the school website at <https://www.belmontceprimary.co.uk/about-us/sport-premium-2> . Over the past couple of years, this fund has supported many outdoor activities including, but not limited to:

- A Year 5 residential visit to Moor House
- Orienteering in Wharton and Hardwick Park
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Flagship sports events through SSP (School Sports Partnership)
- Durham Dash
- Bikeability
- Affiliation fees for school football teams

With regard to outdoor equipment, we are always looking to improve the resources and facilities we have for pupils within the budget we have available to us. We have commissioned an audit of the outdoor space by Oasis which once carried out should provide us with a plan that we can use to move forward on this issue.

Now that we have a vicar in place, will the school be introducing confirmation classes?

This is not an issue we have discussed before as a Governing Body. That said, Reverend Murray is part of the Governing body and so we will add this item as a discussion point for a future Governing Body (curriculum) meeting.

Marking seems quite extreme, is it all necessary and can children access it?

We are extremely proud of all our staff and the efforts they go to in order to support the learning of the children. Marking is a key part of their role, and staff put a lot of time and effort into ensuring that it is of the highest standard possible. As a result of this, our books have been used as an example of good practice for other schools to emulate. That said,





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Governors also take staff wellbeing very seriously. In the most recent full Governors' meeting, we discussed this issue with the school leadership team, who presented the staff well-being plan, which showed the support and care that is in place.

Can anything be done for those who access the school using the Links entrance, because of the bad weather lately it has become flooded at the gate?

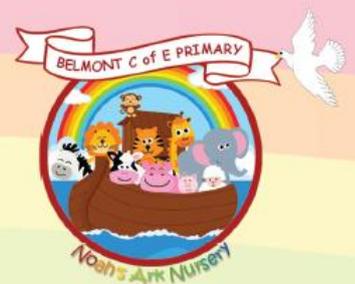
This has been a problem with the extreme rainfall we have had recently. We are aware of this issue and have added it to the list of site issues to be addressed. As mentioned elsewhere though, we do work with a limited budget; the renovation of the Y5 and 6 toilets during the summer, has taken several years of saving to achieve.

Do the Y2 children need to go to the Dove building for lunch, especially during bad weather (it's fine on days when the weather is fine)?

In order to maintain cohesion between the year groups and to support the growing Nursery, we have decided that Y2 pupils will have their lunch together in the Dove building. In the event of bad weather, we always ensure that the children wear their coats. We ask that parents and carers always send their child in to school with suitable clothing for when they are outdoors in poor weather.

Can fayres be held on the weekend, so that we can attend and help out rather than on a week day when we are at work?

Whilst some schools do hold their fayres etc. on a weekend, this is not something we have any plans to do at this time. All fayres take place through the hard work of the PTA and staff, and bearing in mind the comments earlier on staff wellbeing, we would not want to ask them to come in to school on a weekend to enable a fayre to take place. Sorry.





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How does the security at breakfast club work? Children are allowed to mix with their friends on the playground before the gate is monitored/staffed.

As Governors, we take pupil safety very seriously and have spoken to the leadership of the school concerning this.

Breakfast club pupils are allowed onto the playground in order to be with their friends or to get some fresh air during the time when they are in school. At all times, these pupils are supervised by members of staff.

All children are fully aware of the importance of staying on the playground, until the school bell goes and they line up for morning lessons.

Breakfast Club KS1 wear hi-vis jackets

We do ask that parents do not drop their child off in the playground before 8.45a.m. and if your child walks to school themselves, please get them to leave at a time that would see them arrive no earlier than 8.45a.m. when staff are on duty in the playgrounds.

Can children have a homework diary or can we have access to an online portal for homework planning, to support home learning?

Homework is a key part of a pupil's learning. You should receive notice at the start of the year on which day Maths and English homework will be set for your child. Teachers are asked to do all they can to adhere to this schedule, to support parental engagement in home learning. The other element of homework is listening to your child read. We do ask that you do this at least twice a week and preferably more, as research would indicate that developing a child's reading ability enhances their success later on in their schooling.

Finally, the other two comments left by parents stated that they had nothing negative to say about the school.

