

Frieth Governors' News

Developing potential without limitations

Issue 11, March 2015

Spring is on its way...

The days are slowly getting longer and warmer and spring is now on its way. It feels like it has been a short term however the staff and children have again had a busy packed term. The children have been captivated by the pirate theme and the walls are adorned with some amazing displays. Mrs Sparks and Mrs Hollinrake are busy rehearsing for their school production of Treasure Island, with the Y3 & Y4 children, and we look forward to seeing the performance .

Other exciting events have included Viking day for the KS2 children, and a visit to school by the New Mozart Orchestra. An interschool tag –team rugby games and swimming gala were organised by Mrs Hollinrake. Mrs Hughes has ensured that KS1 have been busy with a Perform workshop and we thank her for organizing the book fair. Mrs France has also taken the choir to Young Voices and arranged for all of KS2 to be part of Prom Praise at the Royal Albert Hall, thanks to the trip being funded by the PTA.

We are delighted to have linked with a school in Kenya, thanks to the hard work of Mrs Sparks and the school council, in a small village next to lake Victoria. The children have already received letters from students at St. Charles Kauko School and we very much look forward to strengthening our ties with them and learning from each other.

Thank you, thank you

To all of you who have given your time, your professional expertise and your financial support to the PTA, we are hugely grateful. With your generosity we are able to make the school and its facilities the best that they can be to enable the children to reach their full potential.

We would particularly like to thank the chair Jenni Sharp.

New members.....

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We are delighted to have welcomed Merelina Tebbot to the governing body, whose grandson George is in reception. Merelina has joined the Premises committee bringing expertise from her training as a surveyor and has also taken on the role of Collective Worship governor.

We are also delighted to welcome Catherine Yoxall as a Parent governor who will be able to provide us with their expertise in marketing and links with local businesses.

We also welcome Rev Carol Kimberley, who is standing as an interim governor until the parish appoints a new rector.

Congratulations Mrs Robinson

We would like to congratulate Mrs Hollinrake and her husband, Nigel, on their recent marriage. The children have taken the name adjustment in their stride and have very quickly adapted. We wish them and their families all the best for the future.



IT roundup.....

We are pleased to announce that we have instructed a preferred IT provider for Freith School. Mrs Reid and the IT governor working group have worked hard holding many meetings to secure a cost effective, appropriate and dynamic IT platform to take the school forward over the next 5 years. They are a company which we will be able to work closely with to provide the staff and children with an exciting and interactive technological toolset to further enhance teaching and learning in the classroom.

This has been part of the governors strategic school plan and much thought and planning has gone into it. We have communicated with you, the parents, our hopes and aspirations over the last couple of newsletters and school meetings, however I know that there are still a few questions which some of you have about this project so hopefully they will be answered below.

FAQ's

- 1. Why have we had to replace all the computers? Why couldn't we just upgrade and refurbish what we have?** The PCs in place at the moment are all exhibiting problems and are well beyond their economical and practical life span. They also run on the Microsoft XP platform, which is no longer supported. Each time the computers and staff laptops throw a fault, we get them fixed as best we can, but they are 5 years old and technology has moved on to such an extent that we need a greater processing speed and better hardware. The other key issue is the network infrastructure that is seriously deficient for the classroom environment. The current set-up is unreliable, difficult to maintain and slow which detrimentally effects teaching.
- 2. Why has it cost so much to replace all of the computers?** We are not just replacing the pcs themselves, we need to introduce a complete new managed wireless solution and network for the school that will run efficiently, even when 15 laptops try to log on at the same time. We will also need a new network server and our Interactive Whiteboards and projectors need updating. Whilst it may appear cheaper to buy a laptop from the shops, we need to ensure that all our laptops have the correct processing speeds, can talk to the network efficiently and can run educational software. All of this must be incorporated whilst safeguarding the content and configuration of school computers. Graphics packages in particular can need a far greater processing speed than a normal home laptop in order for the class systems not to run slowly. Also included in the cost are the annual IT costs such as broadband rental, School Information Management Systems and internet management.
- 3. How have you funded the IT upgrade and replacement?** Firstly, it is important for everybody to realise that local or central government provides none of the IT funding. So, we are funding this from a mixture of sources, depending on if it is capital or operational expenditure, including mainly the School Donation Fund (Parent Voluntary Donation Fund) and the PTA.
- 4. Why have the PTA had to help with the funding? Why hasn't it come out of the school budget?** The funding that the school receives from the local education authority covers the essential running of the school, such as teacher's salaries, support services, electricity, water, telephone and heating. Therefore, all funding for other items has to be found elsewhere, with the main sources being the PTA and the School Donation Fund (Parent Voluntary Donation Fund).

5. **Why have we spent so much money when my child only spends 40 minute per week in an ICT lesson?** The main purpose of becoming a mobile IT solution in school is so that we will be able to have access to laptops throughout the day and not have to timetable the suite. At the moment, pupils have a designated IT teaching time, although they do also access the suite at other times during the week to support learning in other subjects. For example, they may use the pcs to research Vikings in history outside of their IT lesson. The teachers would also be able to plan a small group activity online as part of a maths lesson. Once we have a mobile solution, pupils will be able to bring the IT learning into their own classroom and utilise IT as another learning resource in the same way that IT has become part of everyday life outside of the classroom. .
6. **How will this upgrade and new computers benefit my child? What will you be able to do that you can't at the moment?** The existing IT has been hampering teachers' ability to maximise the benefits of IT supported learning because of its speed and unreliability. With the new IT equipment, teachers will be able to efficiently and effectively use the full range of special IT based learning aids and software to support learning of all subjects.
7. **Does this current purchase of IT cover everything the school needs or will we be buying more equipment over the next few years?** The plan is to put together a managed programme of development which will continue to change and adapt to the needs of the curriculum and the advances in technologies available to schools. We will begin with the basic infrastructure of the network, wireless solution and laptops, and then plan the programme for whiteboards and tablets in order to spread the costs.
This is the reason we encourage parents to donate to the School Donation Fund on a regular basis – just £5 a week from families of pupils would fund a very large part of the planned new IT equipment.
8. **How are we future proofing our IT resources? Will we have to spend another £50K again in 5 years time?** Obviously, as technologies develop, schools need to also develop in order to provide pupils with the most up to date IT opportunities possible. Therefore there will always be a need for funding for IT development in school. However, we plan to work closely with our new IT partners to make sure we take ownership of this development and phase it in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.
9. **What will happen to the ICT suite?** Once we have agreed the IT programme, the school will consult with pupils, staff, parents and governors as to the best use of the suite area. Ideas at the moment include creating an open plan library in the suite area and a small designated teaching space for meetings, small group work, instrumental lessons and teachers planning area.
10. **What can we as parents do to help?** The number one requirement is for increased funding. The help that the PTA has given is wonderful and without it we would not be able to progress at all. However, there are many demands upon the PTA to fund many things. What would really help the Governors and the Head to better plan for the provision of the right IT to best help the children across the curriculum is for more parents to donate to the School Donation Fund – remember just £5 a week from families of pupils would fund a very large part of the planned new IT equipment and therefore guarantee that the children always have the very best tools to give them the very best chance at this pivotal time in their education. Please fill out the attached confidential donation forms and don't forget to Gift Aid your donation. Many thanks.

Frieth CE Combined School Donation

Please complete and return this form to the school office in an envelope marked

'Confidential – Donation Account,' Frieth CEC School, Frieth, Henley-on Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 6PR

Name (Please print).....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Phone.....Email.....

☐ Tick this box if you wish your donation to remain anonymous

OPTION 1: STANDING ORDER

Standing Order Instruction: To the Manager:

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.....Post Code

Account name.....Sort Code.....Account Number.....

☐ £10 ☐ £20 ☐ £30 ☐ £50 ☐ £100 Other £.....

Please pay

☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ annually **Until further notice**

Commencing onTo Frieth CE Combined School Donation Account:

HSBC, 46 High Street, Marlow, SL7 1AT

Sort Code 40-32-19

Account No 51483447

Signature..... Date.....

OPTION 2: A SINGLE GIFT

I enclose a cheque for £.....made payable to Frieth CE Combined School Donation Account

GIFT AID DECLARATION

I would like to Gift Aid this donation and all future donations until further notice.

Signature..... Date.....

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1. To qualify for Gift Aid you must pay income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount reclaimed by Frieth CE Combined School
2. You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying Frieth CE Combined School in writing
3. If your circumstances change and you no longer pay enough tax to cover the amount reclaimable by Frieth CE Combined School you must cancel your declaration

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Reference	Date Received	First Payment Date	Issue Letter
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