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Dear Parents / Carers

I am taking this opportunity to write to you because I have been in post as head teacher for 10 weeks and I have had a chance to form some conclusions about the school. Before I move on to those I would like to apologise for the breakdown in the Friday email. I have only just been told this was a weekly event and kept you up to date with what was going on in the school. I have asked for the company, "Parentmail" to come in and sort out the problem next week and I will reinstate the Friday email as soon as possible. I will also set up a head teacher blog so I can let you know how things are going and receive your feedback as well. As at Hellesdon High School I will send out a newsletter on a half termly basis.

So where are we at the moment at Firsides Junior School? We have had the first feedback on data from the summer tests of last year's Y6. It is again a tale of two halves to use the sport analogy. The raw results or attainment is good or in some cases outstanding and stands up to scrutiny anywhere in the county or beyond. Great!

The problem still lies with the progress or achievement of the pupils. This means how far they move from their starting points. I accept that some children come into Year 3 with inflated scores for whatever reason that may be and this judgment has been backed up by an Ofsted Inspector and ex HMI from London who I invited into the school. This would of course make expected progress of two levels while they are at FJS very difficult but, I hasten to add, not impossible. However this cannot and does not explain the resounding "not good" that the school gets for the progress measures. I believe we must look deeper into the everyday life of a child at the school and what they are getting day in and day out in the classroom. We must look more closely at what and how things are being taught and the deployment of all staff in the school so that every child gets the best possible deal

To this end I have recommended to the chair of governors that we need a restructure of the whole school from top to bottom including all staff whether teaching or support. We have a talented pool of teachers and support staff at the school who want the best for the children but at the moment there is insufficient accountability which is necessary in every successful organisation. The quality of teaching needs improving throughout the school so that progress is accelerated in Years 3, 4 and 5 and so the need for intervention in Year 6 becomes far less.

This work will start this week and when it is completed I will contact you with the details. Hopefully, through "Parentmail. I know this might not be easy reading for some of you but I felt, with an impending Ofsted we all need to know the current situation. Firsides Junior School has the capacity to become a "good" school and in time even "outstanding" but we have much to do and we will need your encouragement and support as we progress along this journey.

Yours faithfully

Gerard Batty



### Diary dates

Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Parents Evening
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> November	Parents Evening
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> November	FOF Christmas Fair: 10am – 1pm
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> December	Years 3 & 5 Christmas performance: 1:30pm and 6pm
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	Years 4 & 6 Christmas performance: 1:30pm and 6pm
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas lunch
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> December	Last day of Autumn term – Christmas holiday begins
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Staff professional development day – school closed for pupils
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January	First day of Spring term - school reopens for pupils.

### Charity Fundraising



Thank you to all pupils and parents who brought in cakes for our Children In Need bake sale last week. We raised £175.05 from the bake sale and a further £69.57 from the book sale. A very big thank you to the school council and the members of FOF who organised and ran the events.

### Entering and leaving school

Could we remind all pupils that they are not permitted to use the front door to enter or leave the school. If they have to go to the school office for any reason they should still enter the school from the brown doors in the playground and walk around to the foyer.

Could we also ask that any parents wishing to speak to a teacher should contact the school office and make an appointment. On no account should parents be entering the main school (quads) without an appointment. Teachers are particularly busy first thing in the morning and it can be difficult to see parents at short notice.

### Christmas performances

The children are busy learning the songs for this year's performances. The letter for ticket requests will be sent home in the very near future. As always we are not asking for a monetary contribution for tickets to the performances. However this year we ask that all parents who receive tickets donate a bag of sugar for the Buckingham Sugar Appeal (BEFA). This is a local charity that we have supported for many years. They collect sugar at this time of year and then distribute it in and around Norwich to help provide for those less fortunate than ourselves.



### EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEFA

**BEFA is a locally founded, locally operated charity with roots in the farming community and a strong commitment to the people of Norfolk.** It has a 28 year history of bringing good food to the homeless from the people of Norfolk.

**BEFA's mission is simply to help feed the homeless and those fleeing domestic violence at Christmas.** We work through established shelters, supported accommodation projects etc. and with other experienced agencies, such as the Salvation Army, which have daily contact with the homeless.

**BEFA is a 100% voluntary organization.** There are no paid staff and the administration costs are negligible. So, almost every penny donated goes to purchase food.

- **Local farmers** donate most of the fresh produce – more than 40 pallets of fruit and vegetables. Food Wholesalers and Manufacturers donate foodstuffs at Christmas, and during the course of the year too. The total value of food donated last year was nearly £60,000.
- **Norfolk schoolchildren** donate sugar – nearly 4 tonnes last year! **British Sugar** matches the "Silver Spoon" sugar donated by Norfolk schoolchildren
- **Norfolk families and Schools** make donations of cash, which is used to purchase those necessary food items (like Turkeys and Christmas Puddings) which have not been donated.
- **Local Charities** recognize the importance of our work by sending donations.
- **Local volunteers** donate time, office space, supplies, etc.
- **Local businesses** help with postage, copying, transportation and warehousing.

**BEFA sends only the food that is needed.** Each homeless project is sent a shopping list of the Christmas foods BEFA can provide. They mark the quantities they need, and add a "wish list". We at BEFA work to supply everything.

**BEFA provides food for more than 70,000 meals** at Christmas and over the following 10 days.

### Calling all Year 3 pupils!

Congratulations on completing your first half term at Firside. You are a great year group to work with and it has been a pleasure getting to know you all. We would really like it if you could have a look at home and see if you have any of your exercise books from when you were in Year 2. We are particularly interested in seeing any Maths and Writing books you may have. Please bring them in and give them to your class teacher. We will return the books to you once we have had a look at them.