



## Ravensmead Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr D. Bell, B.Ed (Hons), M.A

# NEWSLETTER

No.1

6<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new children and families who will be starting in Nursery and, of course, the grown up children who are now full time in our Reception. We would particularly like to welcome many families whose children have gone directly into our Reception classes. Ravensmead has a small number of places in the Early Years and Key Stage One, we are however, full in all classes from Year 3 to Year 6. The children have made a very smooth and happy start today and I thank you for your support in this matter.

I am delighted to be able to tell you that Miss Bourne has returned to school as Mrs Coates and Mrs Longstaff as Mrs Jones following their marriages over the summer. I am sure that you would like to join me in giving our congratulations to both.

I thought I would write to you to highlight a number of important areas:

### Paperwork Sent Home

Shortly we will send "Consent Forms" and other paperwork home. We try not to "overdo" it and most documents can also be found on our website which I would encourage you to visit regularly. A small number of additional copies will be placed in the rack to the left inside the school entrance. We will inform you by text that documents have been placed on the web site and to save paper we will regularly direct you to the web site which was highly praised by Ofsted in March.

We will send out some paper copies such as Asthma Care Plan and Emergency Inhaler documents to all families. If your child is asthmatic we would ask that you return the Care Plan and also the Medication Consent Form. Schools have to send these documents out to all parents and we are advised that some children come off the register with new ones receiving a diagnosis. Only if your child is asthmatic should you return this document but it is vital that we have an up to date Asthma Register in school.

Some of the following important issues are very familiar to our families but we have many new families and it is worth revisiting them....

### The Start and Finish of The Day

A reminder that Reception and Key Stage 1 children should enter school at 8.50am and for Key Stage 2 the gate to the playground will be opened by staff at 8.50 and will close at 8.55. **Children will not be supervised before 8.50am.**

Silver Fox Care Club can be contacted on 07813 679706 and will look after your child from 7.30 in the morning up to 6pm in the evening. The doors to the Breakfast Club will open from 8.40am and will close promptly, pupils will go directly to class from here.

Early Years and Key Stage One Classes finish at 3.15pm with Key Stage two at 3.20pm.

## Parking

We are extremely grateful to the Parish Council and the Audley Football Club for allowing the use of their car park. The car park will be open most days but will need to be locked promptly at **9am**. After school it will need to be locked at **3.30pm**. Once again we are grateful to our friends at the Methodist Chapel who agree to allow our parents to drop off and collect from their car park. Parents should not, however, park here for the duration of a school activity, e.g. Class Assembly or Workshop as the Chapel themselves would no longer have available parking for their own functions. Clearly The Football Club and The Chapel accept no responsibility whatsoever for cars using their spaces. **You use these facilities at your own risk. I will write to you shortly to inform you about the “20 is plenty” campaign due to start outside soon.**

As you know, safety is the school priority and, therefore, can I remind you of a number of other measures we take to help avoid accidents at these busy times.

We would ask that....

- Parents avoid dropping off and turning near the school entrance and families should not walk through the main gates (keeping cars and pedestrians apart).
- Parents should not park at the farm entrance. It is regularly used by farm machinery but also that side of the road is a walkway for many families and we have had incidents in the past where cars have almost reversed into children. **If you choose to park or turn there you are placing children and parents at risk.** (Sorry for this, but it needs saying).
- We would ask that you park courteously in the streets at all times, and ensure close supervision and good behaviour of your children around the Chapel, the flats and in the local streets.
- We would ask that parents do not use the Staff Car Park. There is not enough parking space for the staff themselves. Parents dropping off at the Silver Fox Care Club should not enter the Staff Car Park after **8.15am** but rather park on the street and walk their child into the Care Club.

## Uniform

The children look very smart. Please label all items of uniform. Please ensure that PE Kit, Sandwich Boxes and Water Bottles are also all labelled. Please encourage your child to become organised, thinking ahead to when instruments, sandwich boxes or PE kits etc need to be in school. This will help to avoid too much “traffic” at the school’s Reception in the morning.

## Reading and Homework

All research indicates that partnerships between school and families are vital in terms of supporting child development in all areas. Could I ask you to sign your child’s Reading and Homework Diary nightly, commenting and signing the Reading column and monitoring closely your child’s homework to check for content and completion. Parents will be aware that we offer a “surgery” with teachers for a short time after school on a Wednesday and the Reading/Homework Diary is a daily vehicle for communication but if outside these times parents wish to speak to teachers they **must sign in and sign out in the Visitors Book**. For parents who live apart those not residing with their children should send to school stamped addressed envelopes to ensure that we contact you in advance of parents evenings and reports.

## Website

Can I encourage you to regularly visit the school website, [www.ravensmead.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.ravensmead.staffs.sch.uk). There continue to be many changes. I hope that you and your children find it interesting and informative. Although you will receive a hard copy of this first newsletter, future letters will be posted on the website and you will be notified by text. We will also include copies of school presentation materials, educational visit letters etc etc. The website also includes a wide range of statutory information which you can access including, for example, Safeguarding Policies, School Standards e.g. Data Dashboard and Performance Table links. Information about how the school determines expenditure under “Pupil Premium” and “PE and Sports Grant” headings can also be found on the website. Any parental suggestions for inclusion in the website, as usual, would be very welcome.

## The Year Ahead

Ravensmead in common with most schools is operating within tight budgets and difficult decisions have been necessary from Senior Leaders and Governors. For example, we have allowed the Basic Skills and Artsmark Awards to lapse. They are both prestigious awards we have gained over many years but

unfortunately we have felt that although reports were glowing they did not move us forward. The audits for these awards are costly and decisions were therefore made to spend this money elsewhere, largely to employ Teaching Assistants, who Ofsted recognised as a school strength: "Funding is used effectively to provide additional adults to work with pupils to ensure that they meet their end of year expectations". We are however very proud of two audits which continued to take place during the summer, namely our "Dyslexia Friendly Full Status Verification Audit" and our "Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship Audit". These can be found on our Website.

As a Local Authority school we are visited termly by a School Improvement Partner who regularly records very positive reports about our school and once again last year these were reinforced by our super Ofsted Report and excellent Test Results.

We may need to be more creative and explore opportunities to benefit more from sponsorship or donations. We will look at new ways to enrich the curriculum for our children.

It remains my personal belief that currently the way schools are judged by Ofsted and others is flawed. Enabling children to reach their potential in all areas including Test results is a vital part of any schools work. Speaking from a position where our results are consistently very good, where many pupils enter school with quite low levels of development but then the vast majority leave us with scores above National averages and expectations, my view is that the "Standards" weighting is too high. We must continue to view Primary Education as special and exciting, where lifelong attitudes to learning and life can be supported, where keeping children safe, happy and confident are our goals. To be fair to Ofsted they did recognise much of that .....

- **"Pupils' personal development is a high priority for the leaders of Ravensmead and is a strength of the school".**
- **"You have a clear drive and ambition to raise aspirations and increase the confidence of the pupils in your care"**
- **"Pupils are welcoming and courteous and show good manners around school, to adults and to each other"**
- **"The school isn't just there for the children but for the families too". Ofsted March 2017.**

On behalf of the school staff and the Governing Body can I thank you for your support as we embark again on another exciting academic year, always remembering that Primary education should be the most exciting and wondrous of times for young people.

Mr D Bell,  
Headteacher