

Filton Avenue Nursery School & Children's Centre

Newsletter - January 2012

Issue 4

A Message from the Head

A Very Happy New Year to you all!

It's always very exciting at the beginning of the year to take time to reflect on our past experiences and maybe more importantly to consider the possible challenges of the coming year. This may be a time when we have considered making some New Years resolutions. You may have considered taking advice on smoking cessation, or looking at healthier ways of eating. Or maybe you would like a healthier lifestyle for both you and your family. Many of our staff either walk or cycle to work. Is this something you may wish to consider? The health benefits are enormous and children just love to discuss all the wonderful things they see and hear on route. Why not give this a try?



Governor Introduction

I am Jenny Harris and I have been a Community Governor at Filton Avenue for about 18 months. I retired from teaching English in a comprehensive school just over 8 years ago and immediately trained to become a volunteer for Home-Start. Home-Start volunteers are parents with some time to spare to help other parents while their children are small – and I was convinced after years of seeing the problems faced by teenagers and their families that, when there were difficulties, help needed to be given as early as possible in a child's life. I am now a trustee of Home-Start Bristol and was delighted to become a part of the Filton Avenue community when Home-Start received a contract to provide family support for the new 'Downs and Surrounds' Children's Centres – and for Filton Avenue families too. I'm thrilled as an ex-teacher to be involved in the work here, where children are given the best possible start to their education.



Home-Start Bristol

Home-Start Bristol is a registered charity (number 1116207) offering help and friendship to families with at least one child under 5 living in Bristol and South Gloucester-shire. This year we shall be celebrating our Silver Jubilee – 25 years of supporting families in this area! We help families who are facing difficult times, perhaps because of poor health, post-natal depression, disability, family conflicts and break-up, low income or unemployment. Many of our families feel isolated and find it hard to access local amenities and support groups. Some are really struggling because of multiple births or having several children under 5.

We help by matching families with volunteers who are parents themselves and know how hard life can be when children are very young. We train and supervise these volunteers as they visit their families once a week for 2-3 hours to provide support, friendship and practical assistance. Families tell us that this really helps – and volunteers tell us how much they gain from the training and from the relationships they build with families and other volunteers.



There is special funding available at the moment for the support of Filton Avenue families. If you would like the help of a Home-Start volunteer you could start the process of referring yourself by phoning 01179501170 or emailing admin@homestartbristol.co.uk. If you prefer, you could ask your child's Key Person to help by referring you. If you would like to be a volunteer yourself – and about a third of Home-Start volunteers find it a really useful step to further training and employment – you could get in touch with us in the ways described above. Visit our website – www.homestartbristol.org.uk – to find out more.

"We are an aspirational place that is built on love, courage and respect."



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Family Support

Parent's Forum

A Parent's Forum is a group of parents/carers, who meet to share ideas and opinions for the Nursery and Children's Centre. It's a chance to have an input, on the way services are delivered, as well as proposed future activities. At the meetings there will be updates from staff on what has been happening at the centre. Also other relevant issues that arise, around the day to day running of the centre.



We are keen to involve as many parents as we can, in the services that we deliver for families, in the Filton Avenue Area. We intend to meet approximately every six weeks and times and dates will vary to suit all and there will be a crèche available, where possible.

The first of two Parents' Forum meetings will be held on Tuesday, 17th January 2012 at 9:00am and Wednesday, 18th January 2012 at 12:45pm

Parents/Carers and Children are at the core of everything we do. We really value your opinions. All view will be welcomed and respected.

Learning and Teaching

This term we are going to focus on some longer term projects that we need your help with. As part of our 'Healthy Eating' project we are planning to prepare food and cook with the children. We would like to start with fruit smoothies, homemade soups, stir fries and any other delights you can think of! We would also like to cook things that you cook at home so would really appreciate it if you could come into Nursery and help for a session.



Also we are planning to look after the birds in the garden by making bird feeders and bird boxes. Again the children and us need your help, especially making bird boxes. No skills needed either as Pete and other staff will run the groups but need help with supervision to keep wood



working safe. In the spring we hope to hatch chicks and ducklings which is very exciting!

if you are able to come in and help with either of these projects please tell your key person who can tell you more. We really look forward to seeing you.

Dates for your Diary:

- * Friday 10th February - Last day of term
- * Monday 13th to Friday 17th February 2012 - School Holiday (*we shall be running a Holiday Play scheme - please book a place for your child with our school office, thank you*)
- * Monday 20th February - Inset day (*nursery school and Acorns completely closed for staff training*)
- * Tuesday 21st February - School and Centre re-opens

REMINDER: Primary School Admissions

If your child was born between 1 September 2007 and 31st August 2008 she/he may start school this September. If you would like a place for your child and have not made an application, please speak with your key worker as soon as possible. Applications for primary school places need to be made by 15th January. Thank you.