



# Horsmonden Primary School

## Back Lane, Horsmonden, Kent TN12 8NJ

Tel: 01892 722529 Fax: 01892 724134

Email: [headteacher@horsmonden.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@horsmonden.kent.sch.uk)

Website: [www.horsmonden.kent.sch.uk](http://www.horsmonden.kent.sch.uk)

Headmaster:

Mr Malcolm E. Hayes

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009

Dear Parents,

Tuesday morning was very special for **Reception Class** as they made their first school visit down the road to the orchards to see the processes involved in harvesting the crops. The children were so good walking to their location and really positive and responsive once they got there. School trips are what many school memories are made of and watching them walking back with their high visibility jackets and big smiles shows how worthwhile the experience is.

Their trip was timely as **Harvest Festival Day** takes place next Tuesday and you are very welcome to join us when we give thanks for the crops that provide us with our daily needs and show our village that we care. Children are invited to bring in a variety of produce on the Monday or Tuesday, which will be displayed in the hall before all our classes head out into the village and distribute it among our elderly residents on Tuesday afternoon. Last year all junior children decorated a box for the harvest goods distribution, which was really appreciated by the recipients, some of whom have very few visitors and who were truly grateful for the time, care and effort that went into the boxes.

**Junior children:** Next week's homework is to decorate a box for harvest distribution with the decorated box left empty but taken into class by Tuesday morning; harvest goodies should be brought in separately as the boxes are made up after the harvest assembly.

**Infant children:** Infants do not need to make boxes as they will be making cards to go with the gifts in school. Harvest goodies should be brought to school and placed on the display in the hall.

If you happen to have **4 bales of straw lying** around and only want three back, could you let me know. We like to make the display attractive for the assembly. If you are able to help as one of our **bag ladies** (or men) for about an hour after the assembly, please let Sarah or Velsha in the office know. We'll need the goods to be evenly distributed among the decorated boxes in preparation for the afternoon distribution.

Are you free to assist with the **afternoon distribution**? If you are, please let your child's teacher know. The walk round the village is a great opportunity for children to show the very best of the values here in school and year after year they make us proud when we read the cards from residents.

A couple of you have asked if **Gymnastics Club** will be continuing after the mid-term holiday. I'm delighted to inform you that following the highly successful trial, we will be looking to make this a permanent fixture on the school clubs timetable and booking forms will soon be issued. The children currently taking part will have priority on places as they are already working towards their first grading, so if we find that there is a significant level of over-subscription, we'll endeavour to create extra places.

We're also delighted that 27 children are now part of **Running Club**, a number of whom have already taken part in competitions. We're seeing aspiration and motivation developing within the children taking part and even those who find it challenging are feeling positive by the end – many thanks to Donna McCarthy, Tim Veysey-Smith, Nancy Baker and Alison West for their commitment and many congratulations to all the children who competed on Tuesday afternoon.

Accompanying this letter is a **Travel Plan Survey**. It's something that we have to do, but the outcome could bring in a large grant, so please take some time to fill it in and help us out.

Do you find **shoe shopping** for your child a pleasant and relaxing experience? If not, you may be interested in the new service which will be available in school - Two Shoes. Starting soon, Two Shoes will be coming in regularly with their trained shoe fitters to measure feet and offer a range of school-suitable shoes, mainly from the Start-Rite range. These will be available for pre-school children right through to upper juniors and the bonus is that for each pair of shoes sold the school gets 75p and Sport aid gets 25p. Pre-school commission will go to Kindergarten. It's new, it's more environmentally friendly than the trip into town and avoids the experience of trying to make decisions in the chaos of a cramped shoe department. If you think this could be what you're looking for, then come along to see what the shoes and the service are like on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November – we'll remind you nearer the time.

At the end of the school day, there's still occasionally some kerfuffle over the **collection of infant children**. If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, we have to hand them over to you or a responsible adult: we must see the adults we're handing them over to. We cannot hand them over to older siblings or friends, even if you are standing round the corner. Whilst I'm aware that children play out in the street after school, the handover from class is a different matter and we don't ever want to be in the situation where a problem only happened once, because once is too many times.

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From **Zoe Ferguson**: It's that time of the month when I add up all the monies for **school uniform** purchases, and I am still awaiting payment from at least 4 parents. Could you please place your cheques payable to FOHPS in the school office. Secondly, children taking part in the **running club**, that represented the school, were loaned new **t-shirts** with school logo on. I have received one t-shirt back, but I am still awaiting 4 to be returned. Please return to the school office. If anyone has any questions regarding the above, please catch me at school or phone me on 01892 723896.

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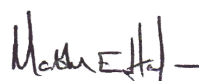
We're delighted that some of our children in upper juniors are continuing to learn **cello** following their free lessons last year. Our cello tutor, Mr Jonathan Chapter, is an absolute whizz at using technology to support their learning and through the use of the website at <http://www.crotchets.info>, the cellists can ensure that they have all the relevant music for practicing.

**Conkers!** It's that time in the year when some elements of the press delight in creating a national debate on the subject, but it's really very straightforward. We adhere to the Queensbury Rules of Combat on the subject and I will attempt to summarise the 768 pages of the 1847 version thus:

- Baking beforehand is considered ungentlemanly conduct and therefore subject to merciless mickey taking from one's opponents. Likewise, soaking in vinegar or other liquids that I'm reliably informed toughens them up gives an unfair advantage, so don't let on!
- Spiked objects are dangerous. If you need a hole made, do it at home or, in emergency, take it to Mr Coleman who will make a hole with his stilettos.
- String should be no more than three nautical yards in length and the knot large enough to avoid the embarrassment of slipping through the hole in the conker.
- Conkers are a free resource. Demanding money with menaces in exchange is therefore purely between parents and their children within the home setting.
- When your conker is smashed by your opponent, the suitable response of "Jolly good show, old chap" shows good sportsmanship – nobody likes a sore loser!
- If a conker catches you on the knuckles, it will hurt!
- Parents who don't want their children to be 'at risk' from conkers should send them with protective face-masks, high visibility boiler suits, rigger gloves and steel toecaps (or don't send them with conkers in the first place).
- Please remember that like everything else in life, it all works well when we simply apply a bit of common sense and don't spoil it by getting silly.

**And finally...** I'm really not trying to teach anybody to suck eggs when I send out a text asking for your child to bring a coat, but each year it's the same and on the first few wet days of the year we have around 50 – 60 children without any protection from the rain. Please remember that in light rain, your children will still be going outside and if they're simply trying to make a fashion statement by not having a coat then we're here to help!

Yours sincerely,



Malcolm E. Hayes  
Headmaster

