



## 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

13<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Dear Parents,

It's days like today when I wish the architect who designed the building had been there on the roof with me at 8.30 sweeping the leaves out of the gully to release 4,000 litres of rainwater into the downpipe. Still, at least it stopped the flow of water coming through the ceiling in the computer suite and I thought my joggers went very well with my suit whilst my trousers dried off! Incredibly, we still had a couple of children without coats this morning and whilst not wishing to patronise anybody, can I please offer the advice that in torrential rain, a coat is well worth wearing!

Thank you so much to all the parents who supported and helped out at the **Reception Class Disco** last Sunday. Disco Dave was on top form, rarely leaving the dance floor, and it was good to see some parents with a clear grasp of every cheesy dance routine strutting their stuff alongside our youngest children. Events like that help build children's confidence and reinforce their sense of belonging in our school – perhaps we'll do it again...

'Tis the season to be jolly!! It is also the season, of course, where the excitement of Christmas shopping can all too easily become a challenge. If you're wanting to extend your daytime shopping on the odd occasion, don't forget you can book your child in to **after-school club**. At this time of year it's worth doing 24 hours in advance if possible, but after-school care is only a phone call away.

Thank you for your response to our requesting asking for 44 more **Morrison's vouchers**. We received more than 100, enabling Gardening Club not only to acquire a wheelbarrow, but all the seeds they need for planting their borders next spring.

The **Children's Quiz**, postponed from before the mid-term holiday, now takes place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November. There are still some places if your junior child would like to take part.

There are also some tickets left for the **Ladies Fashion Show** on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November, where you can save a small fortune on high street brands in an evening guaranteed to be enormous fun. There are no queues at tills, no fractious children and no men to tell you it's too expensive! Please remember, gentlemen: if you're asked for your opinion on any outfits purchased, ensure you actually look at it before giving the stock answer of, "It's fine".

Whilst not wishing to cast negative aspersions on the male of the species, you may have noticed that men sometimes have a less than positive reputation for **listening**, so I thought I'd share some physiological information with you and one or two strategies to help all of us develop the listening capability of our boys in particular. When teaching the other day, I was particularly struck by the gender difference in the listening with our oldest children, so it's worth investing a little to gain much.

Boys retain more of what is said into their right ear than what is said into their left ear, helping to explain why we men never listen when we're driving!! Some schools have even experimented with sitting boys at 45° with their right ear facing the teacher.

A really good way to develop listening skills is through auditory books or Radio 5 live! Anything that makes the link between listening and thinking will develop their ability to retain knowledge through listening. Stories link the spoken word with imagination; this doesn't necessarily mean getting hold of books on CD, one Year 6 boy sat with his right ear facing the TV and closed his eyes whilst listening to a story. Likewise, hearing a sports commentary prompts a link between the visual thinking process and listening, enabling children to retain more and developing that particular skill for future benefit. Have a go, see what happens and please let me know if you spot a difference as time goes by.

I'd also appreciate some specific feedback from those of you who have joined the school since September 2008, which is actually no less than 43% of our pupil population. Each year I send out a handy hints sheet, but it would be good to supplement that with a **Frequently Asked Questions** section. It may well be that there are some procedures that become second nature, such as how you pay for a school dinner, but before you've done it once you don't necessarily know. Could you email through to me the sort of questions you would have liked an answer for to assist me in preparing something for future new parents; please remember, there's no such thing as a stupid question.

Right, it's that time of the newsletter when, with bated breath, we await the wisdom of Paula Veysey-Smith. We may well be waiting for some years to come, but in the meantime here's what she wants to say about the **Christmas Present Fayre**:

*"So here are some ideas thinking especially about those Dads & Lads -*

*"It's all in the packaging - items wrapped in cellophane with labels like "To Dad" or "His secret choccies" etc make an impact. Mugs or Espresso cups & saucers (cheap from pound or kitchen shops) filled with sweets or chocolates always go down well with the boys as well. Another idea, taking us into the garden, mini terracotta pots filled with plastic plant labels for seeds. You can also buy tool kits which split down and wrapped individually with chocolates appeal to the DIY Dad or Brother.*

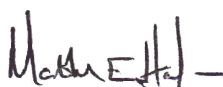
*"The cellophane is now freely available from the box in the entrance hall - there is plenty to go around so please just take what you need. I am also on the hunt for Christmas cards to make gift tags. Each child has the opportunity to wrap 2 gifts and write a gift tag for each - we therefore need 400 tags so get your stock of old cards out and pop them into the box so we have enough to go round.*

*"Now, here's a cheeky request but if you don't ask you don't get ..... the last couple of years we have been donated a stash of good stuff, most notably boxes of confectionery and a whole delivery of Disney goodies. If it is possible for you or your partner to secure donations from workplaces we would very much appreciate it.*

*"That's all for now present pickers - looking forward to a bountiful week of gifts.....!!"*

Many thanks, Paula. Don't forget that you can also join in with the magic of the afternoon by volunteering your services as a number of you have done already, including a number of new faces.

Yours sincerely,



Malcolm E. Hayes  
Headmaster