



An End of Term Message from Viv Hinchcliffe, Head Teacher of Riverside School.

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, Pupils, Governors and Friends of Riverside School,

I am writing this following a day spent at Riverside ASD Centre in Beckenham. As you know, this is Riverside's small provision for primary aged children on the Autistic Spectrum. The Centre is flourishing under the leadership of Scott Jarred. Whenever I spend time at the Centre, there is a sense of calm and focus and children are visibly happy in their work. I took over a prospective parent recently and she commented on how the structure and high expectations seem to complement the freedom of expression and personalisation. Well done to all of the children, staff, families and governors of the school for working so well to bring to fruition such important provision for children on the Autistic Spectrum in Bromley. Please read about the ASD Centre's progress on Riverside School's website (www.riversideschool.org.uk).

It is very rare for me to bring to parents' attention the disappointments that we sometimes face at Riverside School. As a Head Teacher, I much prefer to be buoyant and effervescent. I've learned from many years of headship that when we make colossal strides forward as a school to do the very best for our children and young people, every now and again we face a setback. In the last newsletter, you may remember me writing about the plans to build a second hydrotherapy pool at St. Paul's Cray, to ensure that as the school gets bigger, our children continue to have the same opportunities to swim and have hydrotherapy. Well, I regret to say that despite the Local Authority giving us verbal assurances that the second hydro pool will be fully funded, financial pressure in the LA has meant that if the scheme goes ahead, we will have to contribute a third of the cost of the pool from our delegated budget (£190,000). It is unthinkable that the pool does not go ahead (planning has been approved and the first bricks were due to be laid during the Easter holidays). So, to protect the pool, the school and its Governors have applied for a loan over 3 years to pay our third. I will keep you posted. Lack of LA funds has also put a hold on the plans for our Multi-Games Use area. I will keep you posted.

Turning to much happier things, I want to tell you about last week's science week. This was when our youngsters learned about science in a multi-sensory, fun and interactive way.

Activities included learning about floating and sinking with model boats, making a wormery, sitting in an Astrodome (an impressive darkened tent) whilst looking at stars and planets and staring into space. These are just a few of the things that you can read about on our website. Many thanks to our staff for making such exciting concepts so accessible to our youngsters, and thanks to Debbie Pardey for organising the week.

A great tribute was paid to the musical talents of Riverside School's Choir after their performance in the Bromley Schools' Prom at the Fairfield Hall in February. What a night to be proud of! Well done to everyone in Riverside School Choir.

Earlier this month, our 6th form students entertained us with 2 first-class performances of Riverside's T.V. Burp (yes, honestly!) and Bussy Malone. Many thanks to staff and students for their hard work on these productions, I know parents really appreciate them. (P.S. - I have forgiven the two 6th form rascals for putting my enlarged photo above Fat Sam's Bar!).

On 1 March, we had a resident musician, David Stevens, in school for a week as part of a national project funded by the Arts Council called "Colourscape". David and Claire Tillotson, our Music Therapist, worked with groups of children and young people using 'Soundbeam', a computer generated musical programme that enables pupils to create music by intercepting soundbeams with their arms, legs, and bodies and pressing switches, pressure pads and sensors. A group from Riverside School will be performing with Colourscape at The Glades in Bromley at 2.00 p.m. Saturday 3 April. Claire Tillotson says, if any families would like to go along to the grass area behind the Glades (next to Kentish Way), there is a 'Come and Try It' Colourscape session after the school's performance.

Moving on to staff news, Sandra Taylor and Julie James will be leaving us at the end of term to take up positions in other schools. Sandra and Julie have worked at Riverside and formerly Woodbrook and Rectory Paddock for many years. On behalf of children, parents, staff and governors, I would like to thank them both for the enormous contribution they have made to the lives of past and present children and young people. We wish them every success in their new posts. Charlotte Williams goes on Maternity Leave at Easter and will be replaced by a new teacher, Linda Matthews, in Tigers. We send Charlotte all our best wishes and look forward to seeing her back in due course. Fiona Laurence has been appointed teacher in Zebras class and Cheryl Stockton will teach in Koalas. Finally, we have just appointed a second part-time Music Therapist, Laura Derain.

All that remains is for me to thank pupils, parents, staff, friends and governors for their hard work and support this term. Have an enjoyable Easter holiday and we look forward to seeing everyone next term on 20 April. After School Clubs will resume the week after we come back (week beginning 26th April).

With best wishes,

Dr. Viv Hinchcliffe, Head Teacher
30 March 2010.

