



Hobb Lane
Hedge End, Southampton
Hampshire, SO30 0GG

Telephone: (01489) 782295
E-mail: admin@freegrounds-jun.hants.sch.uk
Website: www.freegrounds-jun.hants.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr Ryan O'Hearn, BA (Hons)

Dear Parents and Carers,

I wanted to write to let you know that we held an assembly with the children today to share an overview of some exciting changes which will be taking place in the new academic year. I deliberately did not talk through the changes in great detail, as it was intended more to prepare them for the fact that there would be some differences from the things that they are used to, so it is not a shock when they come back in September.

As you will know from our current newsletter, following some recent whole staff training, we will be making some changes to our behaviour policy as well as introducing some new learning to help us better understand our brains.

'Brain Fit'

In September, we will be introducing a new weekly session which we are calling 'Brain fit'. This time will be used to teach children about their brains and help them to take greater responsibility for their learning. We looked at a picture of a trifle with a layer of mince, peas and onions (I didn't tell them that this was from a programme called 'Friends' as it would have just made me feel old!). We discussed how someone who had a knowledge of cooking and ingredients would never make such a pudding - they'd understand that it would taste disgusting (Joey aside). In the same way, as we develop a greater understanding of our brains, we are confident that we will be able to make better, more informed decisions about how we learn, manage our emotions, set goals, develop habits and even the way in which we form friendships.

Children will have already learnt various things about their brains: that it is a muscle, that we can develop our brain to break and make habits, that some people's brains work differently than others. However, we explained to the children that we will be spending a lot more time learning about these things as we think it will be extremely helpful for all of us.

Positive Behaviour Policy and rewards

In September, we will also be launching a new behaviour policy. We will be sharing this with you at the start of the academic year, as well as running some coffee mornings and workshops around particular approaches and thinking within the policy. For the children, we explained that this meant there would be some changes to what is already in place - including some of the rewards - but there would also be some exciting additions in the shape of a new Effort Mark as well as greater freedoms and responsibilities which we will be giving to the children.

Please keep a look out for further information around this policy in September.

Outdoor area improvements

Towards the end of the assembly, we then ran the risk of children forgetting everything that had just been said, as we shared some of our most exciting news with them!

For some time, we have been making changes to our curriculum and the ways in which we learn, as well as some of the spaces around our school. When interviewing and conferencing the children around their thoughts, we regularly

hear a similar thing - that they like to learn and be outdoors. Whether this is linked to particular subjects or if it is just having better spaces to be and enjoy their unstructured time at breaks and lunch, this is something that they are passionate about. Whilst we have tried to make some ongoing changes to improve these things, we have not quite been able to do anything on the scale that we have really wanted to... until now!

Following some recent meetings with the School Council as well as during our staff meetings, we have been generating ideas to transform a significant area of our outdoor space. Whilst we are not quite able to manage the swimming pool that some of the children wanted (!), we have arranged for the installation of a significant project to start when we return in September. We deliberately chose this time as we were keen for the children to see the development of this area and the work that it takes to create something like this.

Please see the pictures of the final design below. I really wish I would have recorded the children's faces in assembly as we shared this with them today! It's fair to say that they were extremely excited to see their ideas and plans come to life in these images.

We look forward to sharing these September changes with you in more detail in the new academic year.

Kind regards



Ryan O'Hearn



Freegrounds Junior School



