

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to report that our pupils have started the new school year raring to go, exuding enthusiasm and excitement to learn which is wonderful to see.

It has been a busy Summer break and the school has seen lots of activity, especially in the school building project. Our project manager, Dave, is now working to complete the finishing touches so that we can utilise the new space as soon as possible. You may have seen that tremendous progress has been made in the last week, with the walls now painted and the floor sanded back to bare wood. Of course there are several things yet to be completed, such as the balcony, a stair lift, carpets to be laid and doors to hang. We expect this work to take at least another two weeks whilst materials are still being obtained but hope to have these new spaces usable as soon as possible. I would like to thank both Dave and Mark for their commitment and dedication to constructing the second phase of our building project. Thank you. The children have already begun thinking about how they would like to utilise the new learning spaces. An opening ceremony hosted by Jeremy Hunt MP is planned for late October / November.

As you are aware, we have some changes in staffing at Stepping Stones. May I introduce both Georgina Saralis and Tracey Cringle to the Stepping Stones team. Georgina is an experienced teacher who has had a background in working at Dove House school and also heading up an English department for several years. Georgina will lead the English curriculum for Amy, Dom and Dan as they work towards Entry level and GCSE qualifications, and also for our younger pupils, Jessica and Amie, who will be studying at Key Stage 3. Tracey is a newly qualified teacher, yet joins with bundles of enthusiasm and passion for teaching History. She will teach all pupils the History curriculum at the appropriate levels to match the pupil's needs and capabilities. We wish them both a successful and enjoyable time.

Please find a copy of the Autumn term timetable, which the pupils have access to from their personal computers. The school now maintains several electronic diaries, each one holds specific events, some of which the pupils can view and be subscribed to. This electronic system enables staff and pupils to be presented with a current and up-to-date view of the curriculum timetable. A public School Events diary will shortly be available on the School website showing up and coming events to note in your diaries.

We will be providing you with a topic list shortly, which we hope you will find useful in finding opportunities to develop your child's understanding where reinforcement can be gained through everyday activities. These opportunities can include visiting places, using the local library, access to research information on the Internet, and looking out for relevant television programmes. The most significant of all, is to encourage your son or daughter to share and talk about what they have learnt / are learning.

Some new initiatives for the school and pupils are already underway, including a rewards system to reflect pupils effort, attainment, commitment to achieving realistic homework expectations and such like. We have also discussed a school tuck shop that the pupils will manage and run. The pupils hope to sell healthy food at break-times and lunch.

Last term, the pupils cooked meals twice a week. We are hoping to put a system in place that allows pupils to shop for their food, handle money and working out their change. Parents will need to provide their son or daughter with £10 for purchasing food for the group, possibly twice a month, and we will ensure you receive the change!

As far as outside activities go, you will note that the children will continue to go sailing at Frensham Ponds and participate in Horse-riding in Liphook. The horse riding was well supported by parents last term, and I hope parents are able to support this event over the coming weeks.

I look forward to working with you over the coming term to ensure we provide the very best education for your son or daughter. If you have any concerns you wish to discuss, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

*Jonathan*

### **Dates for your diary**

TERM DATES: These are published on the School website, [www.steppingstones.org.uk](http://www.steppingstones.org.uk) and I hope parents will support the school in adhering to these.

SOCIAL SKILLS: We are fortunate to have Sylvia Dubarry, our Occupational Therapist running a Social Skills session for staff and parents on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2006 starting at 9am. I expect this to be a very informative session and hope everyone can attend. Please do let me know if you cannot.

PARENTS EVENING: 11th October 2006, 4pm. This is a formal opportunity for you to meet with teaching staff and discuss your son or daughter's progress at Stepping Stones.