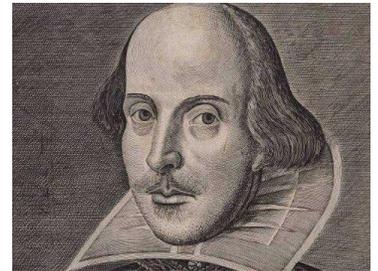




Happy New Year to you all! It's good to be back at Brooklands at the start of 2016 as we start our exciting learning journey for the new term and on into the new year. This term's topics are all outlined in the class newsletters which you should have received by now, however, these are available on the school website to download. There are many exciting events planned for the children of Brooklands this year. Some you may have already seen mentioned on our Facebook or Twitter account. In 2016 we will be celebrating the life and works of William Shakespeare as it is 400 years since his death. There are plans for a Shakespeare pageant later in the summer term and even rumours of our very own Shakespeare production! Many of the famous phrases we use today such as, 'Catch a cold', 'In a pickle' and 'The world's your oyster' originate from Shakespeare, and so we want to commemorate this really important part of our British heritage. As well as these events, it is also 100 years this year since the birth of the famous children's author Roald Dahl. Another important figure in British literary history! As well as these extra events, we also plan to take part in National Story telling week, National Safer Internet day, World Book day and a host of other national events. We will aim to keep you right up to date through the school website, on Facebook and Twitter and of course through the regular class newsletters and the monthly whole school newsletters.



*Ms. Ceri Hathaway*



**Maths:** You will remember from previous newsletters that maths is one of our key priorities in school at the moment. Miss Leivars, our maths lead teacher, is working hard to ensure maths is high profile in school and that parents are aware of how they can help their children to improve their maths. She has recently started up maths homework club again. It's held every Tuesday night after school until 4pm and both parents and children are welcome to attend!

Contact the school office or see Miss Leivars for more information. Also coming up in maths, we have our parent workshops. You have already heard about these from a previous letter. The workshops are on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January and Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January. More details are on the school website.

**Staffing Update:** You will remember that we said goodbye to Mrs Yellop at Christmas. In her place, we welcome Mrs Sharron Moncaster who will be teaching across nursery, reception and Year 1 through the week while the class teachers have their preparation time. Mrs Moncaster will also be responsible for co-ordinating the school council which has been re-launched this week. Additionally, in Year 1, Mrs Harris has been unwell and may not be back in school before she starts her maternity leave. Mrs Cat Birchall will be teaching in Sparrows class until the end of the school year. Mrs Parsons will continue to teach the Magpie class in Year 2.

**SATs preparation for Year 6:** For those of you who have children in Year 6, they will be taking a new style of SATs this year. The government has changed the way that we test children at Year 6 throughout the country. There is a short video on YouTube that explains the difference. The link is on the school website, but is also here: <https://youtu.be/8Fr3IJ8gTE>. We will be holding a parents meeting about SATs later this



year, well before the SAT tests in May. But in the meantime this short link gives you an overview as to what you, as parents can expect.



**Holidays in term time:** There has been a lot of publicity recently in the media about this. Holidays in term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. This is at the discretion of the headteacher. If children are taken out of school during term time, fines may be issued by the Local Authority. More information and all the facts about school attendance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/help-with-getting-your-child-to-go-to-school>. This link is also on the school website in the information section.

**Snow plan:** Just a reminder about our snow plan now that the weather has turned colder. The information on the school website has recently been updated and can be found at: <http://www.brooklands.derbyshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Snow-Plan-and-information-for-parents.pdf>. Should there be heavy snow or any reason why it may not be possible to open the school as usual we will let you know by text, and we will keep our Facebook and Twitter page updated too. It would have to be very severe circumstances to completely close the school and I will always endeavour to open the school unless the risk to staff and pupils is too high.



**From the PTA:** We hope that you and your children have enjoyed the PTA events that we held last year. We would like to thank all parents/carers, children and staff for their continued support in both volunteering their time, generous donation and for making the events an outstanding success.

We are looking forward to another year of events. The support you give to the PTA really helps to make a difference to our children's school experience. We are consulting with staff and children to find the best way to spend the monies raised and are always open to ideas and projects that we can help with in the future. Watch this space! The PTA are holding an "Meet the PTA" coffee morning on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January between 9.15 – 11am in the infant hall, where you will be able to find out more about what we do and how you can help. We are a friendly bunch and we hope to see you there.

Keep an eye out for dates of forthcoming events. Hopefully there will be something to look forward to before Easter! Chocolate and hats come to mind!! – Miss. P. Dunham (Chair of PTA).



**Attendance Update-** As you may be aware, we have recently made some changes as to how we track attendance at school. If your child is absent you will receive a text message from the office staff to remind you to inform us of the reason for the absence. Once you have telephoned or called in to the office, then the office staff change the information on the schools computer system. If you have not let us know by the next day, one of the office staff will give you a call, which is followed by another text to let you know how many days your child has been absent from school.

Lately, we have looked carefully at the children who are classed as "Persistent Absentees" that is to say children who's attendance has fallen below 90%. If we have noticed that your child's attendance is lower than 95% we are sending you a letter. This is for your information at this stage. Some of our parents have been invited to school to talk with Miss O'Neill. It is hoped that these informal discussions will help and give school an opportunity to support you better with this issue. We appreciate that illness cannot be avoided however feel that the importance of attending every day should be highlighted. We know that you will work with us keep your child's attendance high. The table below explains the impact of missing days from school:

# Good attendance means...

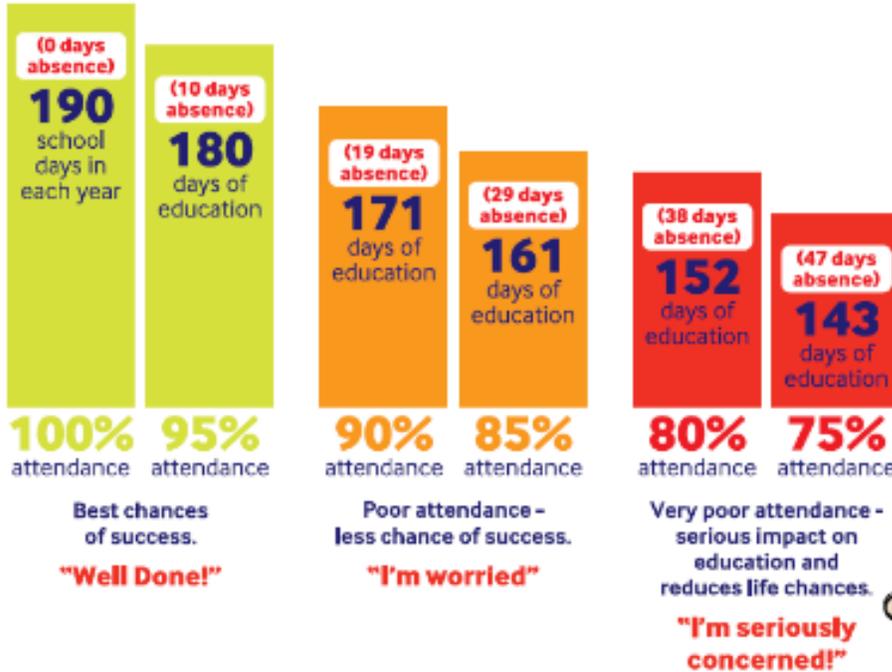


being in school at least 95% of the time or 180 to 190 days

## 175 days not at school!

All this time for shopping, holidays and appointments

365 days in a calendar year



Did you know? A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance a child can achieve is 94.7%

Attendance information will shortly be updated on the school website.