



Dear Parents/Carers,

We have enjoyed another smashing Autumn half term at Longwill, with lots of fabulous visits and experiences taking place. I am sure you will have read all about them in our 'What's On' and do look out for our 'What's Happened' newsletter, which will be with you after the holidays. If you missed these for any reason, then please do check the school website for our 'back copies'! I hope you all enjoy a fun-filled half term break and we look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Tuesday 6th November. Happy half term holidays!

Jason Cook

Attendance

This is so important! We all want our pupils and children to thrive at Longwill and to develop their skills to the very best of their ability. They need to be in school to make this happen! So, attendance is something we take very seriously. Every Wednesday, the school joins together to celebrate the class with the best weekly attendance (you will see photos of the winning class on our website!).



This term, the school's attendance figure stood at **93%**. I was very pleased with this figure as it is better than the national average for all special schools and shows a huge improvement upon last year's figure of 90.7%. Thank you parents and carers – you are doing a fantastic job!

Visit from an international Deaf footballer

The staff and children were very excited to welcome Jamie Clarke to school a few weeks ago. His inspirational 'journey' from playing football as a youngster with his father and grandfather to representing his country was a highlight of the week for many. After listening to his story and asking many questions, pupils went on to enjoy a football 'masterclass' with him.



Conversion to Co-operative Trust

I am pleased to report that the Birmingham Special Schools Trust will 'go live' on 1st November. There are so many positives that will come from working together with other schools – children will benefit from shared opportunities (in fact four school councillors enjoyed a Learners Launch at Calthorpe School last week) and the school can make financial savings through bulk ordering between the eight schools! With lots of schools ordering together we can drive down prices and that leaves us more money to spend on the pupils. As a Trust, we will be able to provide more professional development opportunities for our staff – and this will help to ensure our school remains as fantastic as it already is! The other benefit of this model is that Longwill School will be able to keep its own identity and continue to run itself as an excellent regional provision for Deaf sign bilingual children. Staff, pupils and Governors will remain very much 'in control of our own destiny' and that is very important for us. I will keep you informed of where we go from here next week.

Sainsbury's charity of the year

We were pleased to receive a very generous donation from Sainsbury's last week. Two representatives presented us with a cheque for £2,569.97, which we will use to fund an exciting outdoor project over the coming year.



Music Lessons for six classes

This year six classes are enjoying specialist music lessons each week. We have two teachers from the music service working alongside our staff, teaching singing and percussion. The children are loving the sessions. As a school for the deaf, we want our pupils to be able to develop spoken language skills as well as their signing skills and music is a fun way in which to do this.



Y1 Buttercups 'Foundations for Literacy' Project

This year, our Buttercups are involved in an exciting new initiative, which is looking into how we can best teach reading to Deaf children. We are working with Birmingham University on a year-long reading project, which has been devised solely for Deaf children. I am very excited about this and will share our findings with you over the coming months. Miss Firstbrook and her class have made a brilliant start and are all working very hard indeed!

Curriculum Targets

At the start of term you will have all received your child's curriculum targets. These are devised half termly by their teacher (and BSL tutor/speech therapist) and directly support the longer term targets which are set out at your child's annual review of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Also, teachers set these targets to help pupils progress their learning skills within the curriculum. I hope you have found it helpful to know their focus and have been able to support your child at home. Please do let teachers know how you feel your child has progressed over recent weeks. Also, do please look out for their next set of targets!

Longwill School for Deaf Children, Bell Hill, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1LD

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Radio Aids Project in Y5

As a sign bilingual school, we work hard to support pupils' spoken and signed languages. Our classrooms are already excellent listening environments as the walls are all acoustically treated and class sizes are, as you know, very small. However, we want to be sure we are providing pupils with the 'ultimate' listening opportunities and so we are trialling a radio link loop system in the two Y5 classes. Again, we will share our findings with parents at the end of the year and, if it is successful, we will be campaigning to extend this provision.

Parents: please help us...

Does your child wear their hearing aids or processors all weekend, after school and holidays? If your child is to benefit fully from these super hearing technologies, then it is absolutely crucial that they wear them for as much of their waking hours as possible. Please encourage the best possible use with your child... the more they wear them the more likely it is that they can develop their listening and spoken language skills. This, in turn, makes it easier for them to learn to read and write in English.



Website Update

Last year, we were successful in receiving a Safeguarding Innovation Award, which has enabled us to improve our information to parents on the website. Now we can provide much more information in BSL! Currently, we are creating parent information on the UNICEF 'Rights Respecting' articles, which will be really useful to parents and readily available in spoken English and BSL. Please do look out on the website for this information. We hope to upload many more bilingual resources over the coming months.



Sign language classes

Your children are all excellent communicators! That is why we provide free sign language classes for all parents and family members. We all need to improve our signing so that we can keep up with the children! These sessions are run by Mrs Kumar and Mr Reid, who are both Deaf and very experienced in teaching sign language to adults and children alike. Our Home School Liaison, Mrs Manku, is also available during these sessions and can support parents on a range of other matters as well.

Please do come along on a Wednesday morning (10:15-12:15).

The signing class takes place in our school hall. There is a chance to have a chat with other parents over a coffee mid-morning as well! If improving your signing skills is a priority for you, then please make this a regular priority commitment.



Created on www.british-sign.co.uk

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Parents Consultation Morning

This will take place on **Wednesday 7th November (10am-12:30pm)** and we will be presenting information on our school as a 'Rights Respecting' School. Please do come along to hear about this important work and then spend time in your child's class enjoying an activity with them and talking to their teacher about your child's progress.



Diary dates for parents

Half Term: Monday 29 October – Friday 2 November

Monday 5 November	INSET Day (closed to pupils)
Wednesday 7 November	Parents' Morning 10am-12:30pm Parents & Carers welcome
Friday 9 November	Remembrance Service 1:30pm Parents & Carers welcome
Friday 16 November	Children in Need day
Monday 19-Friday 23 November	Friendship Week: 'Respect'
Friday 23 November	Show and Tell Assembly for Friendship Week
Thursday 13 December	Christmas Workshop
Tuesday 18 December	Christmas Dinner tbc
Wednesday 19 December	Christmas Show I Iam Parents & Carers welcome
Wednesday 19 December	Gymnastic/Dance Festival 1:30pm tbc
Thursday 20 December	Deaf Panto in school
Friday 21 December	Christmas Party
Friday 21 December	Last day before Christmas holidays

Spring Term 2019

Term Starts: Monday 7 January 2019

Half Term: Monday 18 February 2019 – Friday 22 February 2019

Term Ends: Friday 12 April 2019

Summer Term 2019

Term Starts: Monday 29 April 2019

Half Term: Monday 27 May 2019 – Friday 31 May 2019

Term Ends: Monday 22 July 2019

INSET/TRAINING DAYS

Monday 3 September 2018

Monday 5 November 2018

Monday 28 January 2019

Monday 3 June 2019

Monday 22 July 2019



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