



**Compass**  
Leading the way to Extended Schools in Berkhamsted,  
Northchurch, Little Gaddesden and Potten End



Dear Parents/Carers,

June 2009

Welcome to the Summer 09 edition of the Compass newsletter.

We have had a few **changes** to Compass in the past few months. Due to family commitments, Susan Lyus has stepped down as ESCo and I have taken the role on full time. Susan is now Extended Schools Administrator for Compass. Jan, our Parent Support Worker, has been out and about talking to a few of you and offering help and support, signposting to agencies who may be able to offer more concrete help and advice. We have more changes on the way with Bobby Cadwallader, Head Teacher of Greenway, retiring in July and Katharine Weston taking over as Head and therefore Hub Head of Compass in September.

**Extended Schools** is all about delivering a range of services and support to students and their families which will impact on children's education and enable them to achieve their full potential. The core offer relates to Childcare, Varied Menu of Activities, Parental Support, Swift and Easy Access to More Specialist Services and Community Access. We are so lucky in Berkhamsted that we have excellent schools and facilities for all of our children. That does not mean we sit back, but we continue to strive to make things even better. We have six Extended Schools Coordinators in Dacorum and we all work very closely together to help deliver these services across the area. We have worked collaboratively on some projects for the Summer holidays so watch out for Sport extra coming in to our towns with their extreme sports offer and Dacorum Youth Productions offering a four week drama project in Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Kings Langley. Hopefully around the town there will be something for everyone over the holidays.

#### Childcare

We have a number of childcare providers who open up their facilities around 8am so that working parents have the option to drop their children off before schools open. Some schools are able to provide this provision on the school site. It is really important that parents respond to the surveys we send out as the results indicate whether there is enough provision in the Town for parents who need this facility.

#### Varied Activities

All of our schools offer extra activities beyond the school curriculum. These activities widen our children's knowledge and enjoyment attending school. Compass has been working on providing more **activities in the holidays** and signposting to the other opportunities available. During the Easter break and the May Half Term, we ran various activity camps at different schools for young and older children which were very successful. However, we did offer 3 free activities in Half Term to celebrate Family Learning Week (First Aid, Sign Language and Myths and Masks art session) which sadly had to be cancelled due to lack of interest.

Please watch out for our letter that comes out before each school holiday highlighting the events that are going on during the break and book early so that we hopefully avoid having to cancel, disappointing those that have booked, as we need minimum numbers to run various activities.

We would be grateful for any feedback you have regarding holiday activities in order that we can develop what is actually wanted by the parents of this area.

Please watch out for information shortly coming out about the Summer Holiday activities going on in and around Berkhamsted including a brochure about the activities that will be on offer.

We ran an event at the end of April to celebrate **Feeling Good Week** which was actually in February but had to be postponed due to the severe weather conditions (remember all that snow?!!!!) The theme of the evening was 'feeling good' and we invited various people from the health and beauty industry to have a table to offer their services. We also had taster sessions of Tai Chi, Circus Skills, Egyptian Dancing and Drumming. We have plans to develop this evening into a family event to be run on a regular basis each Half Term so watch out for further information.

Ashlyns, Bridgewater, Greenway, Little Gaddesden, Potten End, St Mary's, Thomas  
Coram, Thomas More, Swing Gate, Victoria and Westfield

### Parent Support

Jan, our Parent Support Worker, has been doing a fantastic job offering parental support. We have also run a few courses for parents for different stages of parental care. **123 Magic** is a course for parents of children between the ages of 4-12. This offers advice and guidance on how to manage children's behaviour more effectively. This was so popular we had enough parents to run two courses.

We also ran a course called **Living With Teens** and are currently running one called **Dealing with your Teenager's Anger**. Additional to these courses we have run **2 workshops**, one relating to building confidence in your children and the other about transition, how to help your child with the transfer from First to Middle school.

We have tried again this year to offer a course for single parents called **Parents Apart**, run by Relate, but did not get enough interest. If you are in this position and would be interested in attending a course designed to assist you as a single parent, please contact us.

We are developing a project with **Relate** to provide family/ parent counselling and will give more information in the Autumn term.

Feedback from these courses is paramount to us being able to deliver what parents want. We are currently in discussion about what courses to run for the next academic year. Again we need your input, so that we deliver what the parents of Berkhamsted want. Please contact Jan (see below) if you have any particular requirements.

### Swift and Easy Access to Specialist Services

We have been helping parents to access outside agencies who can offer specialist help either for themselves or their children. The emotional well being of families in this area is high on Dacorum's agenda and has been highlighted in their Children and Young People's Plan. To this end we are working with **Counselling in Schools Service** to provide counselling services in all First and Primary schools and Art therapy in Middle schools to compliment the counselling services already in place at Bridgewater and Thomas Coram. We have also funded **extra hours for the school counsellor at Ashlyns** and provided a **Drama therapist** there as well. As stated earlier, we are working with **Relate** to provide family/parental counselling and anticipate that children and parents in our consortium will have all round access to specialist emotional support.

### Community Access

All of our schools open up their doors for community use. Just ask at your school and you will find yoga classes, swimming lessons, language classes, music rehearsals, badminton, to name but a few activities that go on in our schools in the evenings weekends and during the holidays.

In order to continue to improve the service that we offer we do need to hear from parents and students alike about what they would like to see available. Whether that is different parenting classes, different opportunities to learn either for themselves or for their children. It is really important that you return the questionnaires that we send out, as only by consultation can we make the changes that you would like to see. We are aware, however, that with consultations there is a danger of 'overload' and we believe several schools have recently sent their own out. We will therefore not send ours until next term but we would urge you to please give it your attention in order that we can satisfy demand.

Finally, may I remind you of our website (address below) which is a wealth of information for parents and has details of all the activities on offer. Please refer to it regularly.

Yours sincerely,

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