



**Godalming
Confederation
of Schools**



STAFF & GOVERNORS NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2009
For all Staff and Governors working in Confederation schools or settings



Dear Colleagues

Welcome to our December Newsletter, where we can look back at what we've all done this term and look ahead to 2010 – yes 2010! We do hope that you have a good Christmas break and look forward to working with you next year. Hopefully we will be able to see some of you (we'll probably have cameras in hand) at the Confederation INSET day on Friday 12 February.

With best wishes from Sue and the Confederation team

Sue Dasey

Director, Godalming Confederation of Schools

www.godalmingconfederation.org.uk

Update on Home School Link Workers (HSLWs) in the Confederation
Good news!

You will recall that one of our main action plan areas is to support our more vulnerable children and families so that all children and young people can learn, achieve and do well at school. Many families are finding that the extra layer of support coming from HSLWs, working from schools and/or making home visits, bridges a gap in helping them deal with issues that otherwise would fall between a number of services and people. Every Confederation school now has access to a dedicated HSLW and everyone is wondering how they managed beforehand! Next year they will be running parent groups as well.

We have now appointed another Home School Link Worker, Rachel Jones, who works for 2 days a week at Broadwater, succeeding Nick Owen, and for half a day a week each at Busbridge Junior, Busbridge Infants and at St Mary's Infant School, Shackleford. Rachel, like her other HSLW colleagues, will help parents and carers coping with challenging children, giving individual parenting guidance and support, with advice on how to develop and maintain positive discipline. She will listen and offer support on problems and issues using counselling skills and give the child with difficulties a forum to talk about concerns in a confidential and non-judgmental environment. She will help families/the child/the school access grants and information. She will make home visits to support families and children.



Rachel's appointment means that there are now 7 HSLWs working across the 16 confederation schools and now 3 Children's Centres: **Dani Cole** and **Debbie Loveland** at Loseley Fields, **Sue Hannah** at St Edmunds, **Lea Newbery** at Rodborough, **Sarah Dutton** at Green Oak, Moss Lane, Milford and Witley, **Karen Sutton** at Broadwater (Year 7), St James Elstead, Godalming Junior, Farncombe Infants and **Rachel Jones** at Broadwater, Busbridge Junior, Busbridge Infants and St Mary's Infants, Shackleford. Dani Cole is our Lead HSLW and all are funded or partially funded by the Confederation.

If you have concerns about children and their families or if they come to you asking for help, please don't forget that your school now has this resource and will have set procedures in place for accessing it. If you are not sure, SENCOs and colleagues working in the school office will know what these are.

HSLWs work closely with SENCOs, Children's Centre workers and many local agencies such as CAMHS and the PCT, to provide a joined up approach to working with our children and families in our Confederation area. More on this next term.

New Children's Centre Manager Appointed at St James Elstead!

Mrs Debbie Dent joined St James at the beginning of term. St James has a Phase 3 Children's Centre based in school and designation is expected next year.

Debbie has recently set up an ADHD support group for parents and carers.

Meeting reports

Confederation SENCOS met on 14 October to share information and good practice and talk with Anne Henderson and Mandy Hill from the STEPS team about ways of tackling poor behaviour and speech and language problems.

Confederation Admin Officers met on 15 October to share good practice and reflect on how by working together more closely, schools can save money and do things better. They are looking for example at getting better prices for printer toners and paper.

Confederation Link Governors met on 3 December to review Confederation progress and help plan next year's work as well as understanding more fully the HSLW role.

Cyberbullying

As part of Anti-Bullying Week, the confederation ran an anti-cyberbullying course for parents and carers of Year 4, 5 and 6 children, on a wild and wet night in November. Unfortunately numbers attending were very low.

We hope to run a similar course for secondary schools in the New Year and we will invite school staff to that too. Cyberbullying is a growing area which causes much harm and parents and schools are working together to stamp it out wherever it exists.

As we go to press the Government is announcing its 'Green Cross Code' for Internet safety. More to follow.

Shared CPD opportunities

Individual schools now automatically invite colleagues in Confederation schools when they run specific training courses. This shares the cost and in many cases reduces it when there are more attendees. We are in the process of arranging a more strategic approach to providing those courses which we need termly, such as Safeguarding and First Aid training.

ELKLAN training for TAs

Ten Confederation TAs have been taking part in the 10 week long ELKLAN speech and language course run at Green Oak School by Belinda Griffin.

They were pleased to be able to access the course locally and they complete it on 2 December with full accreditation. From then onwards, they will be working in schools and disseminating good practice.

Confederation Literacy Coordinators have been observing each other's teaching cross phase as part of our drive to make cross phase transition as successful and enjoyable as possible. More to report on this next time. In February 2010, Literacy Coordinators and others will be going to Epsom Racecourse to be inspired by Michael Rosen, ex Children's Laureate, on Primary Writing

Our latest listing of local Christmas Holiday Activities is now to be found on the Confederation website:

www.godalmingconfederation.org.uk. A hard copy has recently been distributed through pupils to parents and carers. Several schools are already advertising what they are doing, particularly on extended services, on the site. IS YOURS? As always, we love to hear from you with ideas for future projects and any thoughts about how to speed up and improve collaborative working

More Good News coming up!

The Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy (ESDS)

The Confederation is receiving money next April to fund genuinely disadvantaged children and young people to attend a much wider selection of clubs and activities during term time and the school holidays. There are some nationally set criteria but we can also set our own locally determined criteria too. We are still at the preliminary stage at working things out at the moment, but there will be more to say next term.

Confederation INSET Day -12 February 2010

Working Together to Make a Difference

Seven schools will host a morning session when subject leaders or teachers with a particular subject interest can come together and bring examples of good practice.

- SENCOS, HSLWs and some Children's Centre colleagues will view Loseley Field's River Centre and also meet with Anne Davies from Jigsaw4u for bereavement training.
- TAs will have dedicated sessions on Supporting Struggling Writers and Managing Behaviour in the Playground led by Mandy Hill and Anne Henderson. Kim Finlayson will also talk about the TA network.
- There will be teacher workshops on the Creative Curriculum, MfL, Art, Maths and Science. The literacy workshop is the Michael Rosen conference mentioned above.
- There will be a discussion on Learning Platforms with some potential providers, following discussion earlier this term.

Colleagues will return to their parent schools for lunch and to feed back on the morning.