Dear Parents

PARENTS’ NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 6
JANUARY 2008

INTRODUCTION

A belated ‘Happy New Year’ to all students, parents and friends of the school. I do hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year with family and friends. As we entered 2008, students returned on 3 January and were straight into lessons. Year 11 students continued their mock examinations and also there were the January GCSE examinations in Mathematics and Science for most of Year 11 and some of Year 10. The Year 11 AS Level Mathematicians also took papers. This examination season ran very effectively and I would like to thank everyone involved. On 2 January we held our Teacher Training Day on the forthcoming National Curriculum Developments. It was a very useful day enabling staff to reflect on these developments and plan for the future.

In addition to the news on the Government’s GCSE league tables and the West Swindon Transport Consultation, this newsletter shows yet again a wide range of impressive success across all aspects of school life. Last week we had three teams in the last sixteen National Cup Competitions – ie Year 9 Basketball, Year 11 Basketball and Year 11 Football. The Year 8 Basketball team has reached the final of the Swindon Area Cup. These are impressive achievements and we would like to wish the squads, and their coaches, the best of luck. An update on their progress will be in the next newsletter.

STOP PRESS - SWINDON TRANSPORT CONSULTATION DECISION

As our Swindon families will be aware, the consultation process that took place before Christmas was to be followed by a decision made by the Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Cabinet at its meeting this month. On behalf of the school, I would like to thank all parents and families who responded to the consultation on either a SBC questionnaire (if they were eligible), or via the SBC consultation website. Please refer to the section at the end of this newsletter for full details of the Cabinet’s decision, press article and Bradon Forest’s plans for the way forward.

2007 GCSE ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTAINMENT TABLES

The annual Government GCSE tables were published earlier this month. As you will know from previous newsletters, Bradon Forest’s 2007 results were excellent. The school’s success featured in both the Swindon Advertiser and the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald in September. We also received very positive coverage on GWR, Brunel FM and BBC Wiltshire Radio.

We were absolutely delighted with our 2007 GCSE examination results. The record levels of the last three years were maintained and exceeded in a number of areas!

Under the Government’s new league table standard measure of 5+ A* - C including English and Mathematics, Bradon Forest’s score of 58% was the highest in the Swindon area and one of the highest in Wiltshire and the surrounding area. Our GCSE 5+ A* - C performance measure was 66% with well over half the 223 students gaining 8 or more A* - C – the majority gaining 10/11. This year the number of A*/A passes was at a new record of 24% (2006: 21%) and the Average Points Score per Pupil was 413 (2006: 414, 2005: 412) maintaining the high standards across the board at Bradon Forest over the last few years.
Our highest attaining students this year included three who obtained 12 straight A*s – plus a full A/S level in Maths! One of these achieved one of the top five marks nationally in DT – Food Technology and another achieved one of the top ten marks nationally in Business and Communication Studies.

The following tables show the results and performance of all secondary schools within a 10 mile radius of Bradon Forest. They demonstrate that we can be justly proud of our performance when compared to schools locally, regionally and nationally.

Table 1: 2007 Secondary Schools in a 10 Mile radius from Bradon Forest

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<th>Note 1</th>
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<td>England</td>
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<td>Wiltshire Average</td>
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<td>Gloucestershire Average</td>
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<td>Bradon Forest Wilts</td>
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<td>Greendown Swindon</td>
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<td>Nova Hreod Swindon</td>
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<td>Wootton Bassett Wilts</td>
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<td>Swindon Academy* Swindon</td>
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<td>Commonweal Swindon</td>
<td>222</td>
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<td>Kingsdown Swindon</td>
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<td>St Joseph’s Swindon</td>
<td>217</td>
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<td>Churchfields Swindon</td>
<td>222</td>
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<td>Ridgeway Swindon</td>
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<td>Dorcan Swindon</td>
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<td>Highworth Warneford Swindon</td>
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<td>Cirencester Kingshill Glos</td>
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<td>Cirencester Deer Park Glos</td>
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Note 1: Average point score (APS) Two schools with similar percentages of students achieving either of the two 5+ A* - C thresholds may have different average point scores.

- The average total point score (APS) provides a fuller picture of the achievements of students of all abilities.
- The average total point score is calculated by dividing
  (i) the total number of points achieved by each students at the end of Key Stage 4 (ie 58 for an A*, 52 – A, 46 – B, 40 – C, 34 – D, 28 – E 22 – F 16 - G) by the number of students on roll at the end of Key Stage 4.
- The average point score includes all of each student's GCSE (and equivalent) qualifications.

Note 2: KS3 – KS4 CVA and KS2 – KS4 CVA Each student's CVA score is based on a comparison between their best eight results at GCSE (and equivalent) and the typical performance of students with similar characteristics and similar results at Key Stage 2 for Key Stage 2 to 4 CVA and at Key Stage 3 for Key Stage 3 to 4 CVA scores. If the student's GCSE (and equivalent) results are better than the average achieved by their peers, the CVA will be positive; if they do less well, it will be negative. All the individual student scores, positive and negative, are added together and an average produced for the school. That average is then adjusted to account for the amount of students in the year group to give the school level CVA score.

The CVA score is then presented as a number based around 1000. This indicates the value the school has added on average for its students, given what is known about the circumstances of its student intake.

The two CVA indicators should be used alongside the ‘APS’ to provide a balanced picture.

(NB: All the results/figures in both tables have been obtained from the Government DCSF Performance Tables website)
### TABLE 2:  2003 -2007 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN A 10 MILE RADIUS FROM BRADON FOREST

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<td>Wilts Average</td>
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<td>Swindon Average</td>
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The following link will take you into the DCSF performance tables area enabling you to access detailed results information on Bradon Forest, school locally and all schools in England over the last four years.


The Bradon Forest School website area ‘School Achievements’ (which can be accessed by the button on the front page of our website) is in the process of being updated with the 2007 comparative data.

Although examination performance is important, it is only one element of a good school. The following articles in this newsletter reflect a strength and breadth across the board at Bradon Forest – sporting, cultural and social.

Bradon Forest is fortunate to have an excellent team of professional teachers and support staff who are dedicated to providing high quality teaching, pastoral care and a fantastic range of other activities for our students.

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SENIOR PREFECTS!**

After school on 18 December 2007, Mr Bond, Mr Stiles and Mr Bray had the privilege of taking our Senior Prefects out to the bowling alley, as a treat to say ‘thank you’ for all their hard work over the past two terms. Thank you to Mr Stiles for organising this event which was a lovely evening. Everyone was in high spirits and there was some fantastic bowling. Head Boy Mike Hiscock’s three-strikes-in-a-row ‘turkey’ seemed an appropriate way to begin the festive season. Unfortunately, Head Girl Chelsea Cinquegrani’s ‘discus-style’ bowling couldn’t match Mike’s prowess, but the girls were saved from embarrassment by Lucy ‘dead-pin’ Roze, whose deadly ten-pin accuracy is now legendary. Even Lisa Rutter bowled everyone over … but that was because she let go of the bowling ball on the back swing. You guessed it – it wasn’t pretty. There were far too many gaffes to mention here. Luckily, Mr Stiles was able to uphold the teachers’ reputation. Mr Bond, on the other hand, was not.

The Senior Prefects have done an excellent job of representing the school and supporting staff and students at numerous events so far this year and their efforts really are appreciated. Even when the heavens opened on ‘that’ parents’ evening and our prefects were soaked to the skin, there was no dampening their spirits (nobody will forget those wellies, Sheena!). Their dedication has been noted by staff and parents and this fantastic feedback has reflected that they are an absolute credit to Bradon Forest School.
**MUSIC NEWS**

**Annual Busking for the Prospect Hospice at the West Swindon Centre on 17 and 18 December 2007**

Many thanks to Mr Gibbs, Mr Kirtland and all colleagues and students involved with the ‘busking’ at the West Swindon Centre on Monday 17 and Tuesday 18 December 2007. £330.00 was raised for Prospect Hospice. The playing was excellent and provided a very public promotion of the work at Bradon Forest – one shopper was so impressed with the Bradon Forest orchestra they tried to book Mr Gibbs and the orchestra to play at Tesco’s at Lyneham on Christmas Eve. Although Mr Gibbs was very pleased with the compliment he very understandably turned down the offer! It was a pleasure to send the cheque to the Prospect Hospice - well done to all staff and students involved in this very worthwhile annual event.

**ICT NEWS JANUARY 2008**

The Bradonspace competition has begun!

Students are being asked to build their own Homepage on their e-portfolio in Learning Platform. There are great prizes as Uniservity is sponsoring 2 ipods for the winners of the KS3 and KS4 competition. If your youngsters are bored, tell them to have a go. Full details can be found on the school’s homepage.

http://www.school-portal.co.uk/GroupHomepage.asp?GroupID=70653

As well as being fun, there is an important e-safety message as the students can safely build social network pages on our Learning Platform as they are not open to the general public.

On Thursday 11 January a number of students, who are top users of the Learning Platform, attended BETT at Olympia and were impressive ambassadors of the school as they worked on the Uniservity stand. They displayed their skills in Web2 technology and explained to visiting teachers how the Learning Platform is used at Bradon Forest.

There are photographs on the Learning Platform which can be accessed by clicking the following link:

http://www.school-portal.co.uk/GroupHomepage.asp?GroupID=70653

Did you see the excellent recent PANORAMA programme on e-safety? We have a limited number of the excellent KNOWITALL CD's left in school. The CD is produced by Childnet International and tells you all you need to know about the internet and e-safety. If you want a FREE copy please contact wrightd@bradonforest.wilts.sch.uk

**MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES NEWS**

**Podcasting Project**

New College and Bradon Forest Languages Faculty will be working together this year on a podcasting project. Two classes in Year 10 will be using ipods provided by New College to enhance their speaking and listening skills. New College will also be supplying a state of the art digital video camera to enable students and staff to work on vlogs in French and German classes. Have a look on the French and German Year 10 pages of the Learning Platform over the next few months to see how this project develops. The idea will be for students to see how technology can aid their linguistic capability.
Asset Languages Results

In November, 90 Year 10 students sat Asset Language preliminary French or German reading and listening examinations.

German: 73% passed both skills gaining a level 1 qualification and 19% passed one skill. Alissa Johnson, Stephen Bray, Jordan Richards, Kelly Bowen, Molly Hunter, Sian Griffin and Camilla Rogers gained the top grade in both listening and reading skills.

French: 75% passed both skills gaining a level 1 qualification and 12% passed one skill. Hannah Warren, Emma Wells, Thomas Lentschner, Michael Snowden, Sarah Tindall, Elizabeth Cook, Lauren Cooke, Sophie Grubb, Benjamin Keep and Mark Tyrell gained the top grade in both listening and reading skills.

Congratulations to all students who can now put this qualification on any CV or job application.

YEAR 10 YOUNG ENTERPRISE TEAM

The Year 10 Young Enterprise team running their own business, Ozone, beat off strong competition from Commonweal School at the Christmas Trade Fair at the Nationwide Building Society’s Head Office in Swindon on Thursday 13 December 2007. The team members were (from left to right in the picture below) Josh Grisley, Russell Archer, Ryan Martin, Jacob Roberts, Chris Stiles, Luke Steadman, Leo Mak, Ben Keep and Ed Wilson.

Both teams were selling the same products: Memory Sticks! However, the Bradon Forest team managed to get its marketing right with five different models of memory sticks, of up to 1 gb priced between £4.99 and £7.99, to appeal to different customers whilst Commonweal had only one 2 gb model priced at £15. The team sold out its whole stock to staff at Nationwide, achieving sales of approximately £200 at the event, and were rewarded with not only a free slap up lunch but £100 of vouchers to use in high street shops such as Boots, Woolworths, HMV, Virgin and Argos.

The team has another trade fair to attend before going to the area finals. Bradon Forest has previously won the area finals on both occasions it has entered which has earned the school a place in the county finals. Ozone will have new stock in for the New Year!

YEAR 11 – EXAMINATION PREPARATIONS

The Year 11 mock examination season is now over. The outcomes and implications of these examinations formed part of the discussions between teachers, students and parents at the Year 11 Parent/Subject Teacher Evening on 24 January 2008. The examination entry administration process is now being undertaken. I always feel that the entry process signals the ‘starting pistol’ for the run-up to the actual GCSEs next term.

As part of our Out-of-Hours provision, we run a Revision Skills Day Course for Year 11 students during the February holiday. Mr Thomas (Mathematics) is organising this – please see separate article below. The material from the course is used as part of this term and next term’s Study Skills/Revision Skills element of the Year 11 Personal, Health and Social Education course.

Mr Bond (Head of Key Stage 4) and Mr Stiles (Year 11 Leader) will be compiling a timetable for after school revision sessions/clinics. This will be posted to all parents of Year 11 students for information.

Bradon Forest always offers a comprehensive range of revision sessions during the period that students are on Study Leave. Mrs Britton will be compiling a timetable of these sessions and this will be posted with a covering letter to all parents just after the Easter holiday which is early this year. This information will support the partnership between school, home and students in the lead up to these very important examinations. Year 11 students should make good use of this support and plan their revision programmes carefully. Research has clearly demonstrated that students who systematically and consistently start revision early are much more likely to gain good results – a case of research stating the ‘obvious’, but well worth sharing with students. Leaving revision to the last minute is a recipe for underachievement. Lesson time in the next few months will be extremely valuable for examination preparation and revision. Students have a major responsibility to ensure that this time is used to best effect – both for themselves and other students in their groups. Staff will continue to work hard in true ‘Bradon Forest fashion’ to support the students to give them the best possible opportunity of success.
ADVANCE NOTICE – YEAR 11 REVISION SKILLS DAY

As in previous years, we have invited ‘Learning Performance Seminars’ into school to work with some of our Year 11 students. The event has been provisionally booked for Tuesday 19 February 2008 (during half term). This has always been a well supported event and has been regularly over subscribed. Further details are contained in a letter that has been made available to all Year 11 students from Mr Thomas (Mathematics).

LIFT SHARING

Several parents who have recently moved to Oakhurst/Priory Vale in North Swindon have mentioned to the office that they would welcome the opportunity to share the school run. Obviously we cannot give out names and details without permission so if anybody is interested, please contact Mrs J Scott in the School Office.

EDUCATION SUNDAY

All students, families and friends are very welcome to join the Family Service at St Mary’s Church, Purton on Sunday 3 February.

The service will be held from 10.30 am to 12.00 noon and the focus of prayer and worship will be ‘education’.

Mr Winward (Assistant Headteacher) has worked with the Reverend Jane Haslam, the Vicar of St Mary’s Church Purton, Beth Dent (Purton’s new Church Youth Worker) and a number of students in organising and planning the service for Education Sunday.

VISIT BY DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND EDUCATION, WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (WCC)

Carolyn Godfrey, the new Director of Children and Education for WCC, visited Bradon Forest on Friday 23 November 2007. Carolyn asked if she could visit as she was preparing a report for Sir Al Aynsley-Green, the National Children’s Commissioner, regarding the best practice in Wiltshire for primary/secondary partnership work and high quality transition for Year 6 pupils starting in Year 7. The Childrens’ Commissioner is keen to find out more about young people’s experience and opinions on this very important step in their education. This is an issue and concern that has been raised by the Commissioner through feedback from student focus groups nationally. We were delighted that Bradon Forest was named as one of the best schools in Wiltshire by the Local Authority Advisory team. The visit was made even more interesting in that Carolyn, along with other WCC directors and all of the Council’s cabinet members, was participating in the national ‘11 Million Takeover Day’! This meant that Carolyn was accompanied by a young person for the day shadowing her as the Director. Chris King who is a Year 9 student at Hardenhuish School, Chippenham was Carolyn’s ‘shadow’. Carolyn and Chris met with a range of staff, a number of Year 10 Peer Mentors and a group of Year 7 students representing our partner primary schools in Wiltshire and Swindon. The students were superb ambassadors and Carolyn was very impressed by their mature insights and advice based on their experiences in Year 6 moving into Year 7. A real performance measure of the morning was that Chris thought our school was ‘really good’ and he would love to come here! Thank you to everyone involved. It was a pleasure to have the new Wiltshire Director visit Bradon Forest and we look forward to future visits. I am also pleased to report that Jane Scott, Leader of Wiltshire County Council, is visiting Bradon Forest in early February. Both Carolyn and Jane are very supportive of Bradon Forest and the success we have in serving our traditional community area and applaud the achievements of all of our students irrespective of their postcode.

ART NEWS

During the mornings of the 7, 8 and 9 January, Philippa Holmes and Adrian March-Harry arranged for all Year 7 students to visit Bath Abbey as part of their project on Architecture. All students completed a work book whilst there which will contribute to their practical work. All students were extremely well behaved and the Abbey staff commented on how respectful they had been.

Philippa Holmes received an e-mail from Dawn Fraser, Visitors Officer, Bath Abbey – an extract of which follows:

It has been very nice to meet you these past two days when you have brought students from Bradon Forest School to the Abbey. I would like to convey that the staff and volunteers would like to say THANK YOU for the very good behaviour and respect that has been exhibited by the students whilst they have been in the Abbey. Thank you also for kindly organizing and bringing a cheque on Monday for the amount that we had agreed, this again is very kind and appreciated. I would be very pleased if you could send me a copy of the wonderful workbook you compiled.

Many thanks to all staff and parents who offered their time to help out.
The recent production of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ was edited and directed by Melissa Wyles 11Y. Melissa volunteered to undertake this task after Alice Chalk’s similar venture last year with ‘The Importance of being Ernest’. Melissa directed a cast of Year 8 and Year 9 students in a superb production. The acting was first rate and the production had a number of very imaginative modern touches which further enhanced Shakespeare's script. There were a number of excellent performances and Melissa and all the students involved should be justly proud of their achievement.

In addition to the two evening performances, as part of our primary liaison programme, there was an extra performance after school on the Thursday evening for all of Brook Field School’s Year 6 pupils and staff. Our specialist status funding enabled us to provide a coach to bring the 50+ youngsters and their teachers to a 4.30 pm performance. The Year 6 pupils and teachers thoroughly enjoyed the play which formed part of their current unit of work on Shakespeare. Thank you to Miss Cady, Arts Manager, Mr Waldron, Drama Technician and Miss McCallum for all their support for the two evening performances and for organising and hosting the Brook Field after school visit. A special thank you to Melissa for such a superb job and the opportunity she provided for the next generation of Bradon Forest actors.

BRADON FOREST THEATRE – FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Back by popular demand...**

**Gonzo Moose presents**

**You Don't Need To Know That!**

An ordinary man who minds his own business awakes one morning to find a police inspector at the foot of his bed. Unaware of his crime, he is plunged into a shadowy world full of incompetent policemen, over zealous torturers, bemused judges, senile prison guards and lecherous inmates. You Don't Need the Know That... is the story of one man trying to prove his innocence in impossible circumstances. Will he triumph against petty bureaucracy, corrupt officials, treachery, danger and death? Inspired by Kafka's The Trial, You Don't Need to Know That... is an exhilarating collision of comedy, drama, slapstick and puppetry. Gonzo Moose create a hilarious, ludicrous and disturbingly anarchic world where anything can happen and frequently does.

**Tuesday 5 February 2008 at 7.30 pm**

**Tickets £6 adults, £5 students**

*As part of their sold out world tour!*

---

**Capulets and Montagues**

**Directed by Dominic Waldron**

12, 13 and 14 February 2008 at 7.30pm

**Tickets £4 adults, £3 students**
PRIMARY LIAISON

Our Primary Liaison Programme across all our partner primary schools is extensive. The number of projects such as the visit of Brook Field above and all the other activities across a whole range of subjects are difficult to keep up with. I am very pleased that Miss Cady is developing another new venture which will be the Bradon Forest Primary Liaison Newsletter. Issue 1 will be published after half term with copies going to all pupils in all of our partner primary schools as well as being available on our school website. Mr Wright and I are in the process of developing further the partner primary school areas of our Learning Platform. More information in future newsletters.

REMININDER FROM DECEMBER NEWSLETTER - CLOSURE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

This autumn has been one of the mildest since records began which may be a sign for a hard winter! With this in mind we would like to reiterate our procedures for closing the school in the event of bad weather or other circumstances outside our control.

Our aim is to give students, parents and staff as much notice as possible. Often the weather forecast is not always reliable and bad weather overnight may need a decision on closing the school early in the morning. We will always keep the school open whilst it is safe to do so. However, in access difficulties, power cuts, heating failure or in the case of an overwhelming staff shortage, we may have to take the decision to close.

If we do have to close the school we will use the following means to alert the school community:

- The school website will carry a clear message on the homepage stating that we are closed (www.bradonforest.wilt.sch.uk).
- Local radio stations will be informed and should broadcast details of school closures throughout the day.

If the weather or other circumstances lead you to think that the school is closed please use the website or radio to check whether we are open or not. Please do not ring the school switchboard as this can overwhelm the system when we need to contact staff, bus companies, the media, local authorities, etc. Thank you in advance for your co-operation – hopefully there will be no need to use this system this winter.

PTA NEWS

- Could you spare one hour per term on a Monday evening to join our group, and support your child's school? The PTA needs to appoint a Treasurer and Secretary to enable the committee to continue running. The current secretary and treasurer have held the posts for many years and are moving on, as their own children are leaving school in July. Full support will be given by existing members. If you can help, or would like more information, please contact Donna Hiscock (Chair) on 01793 870967.

- The PTA would like to thank everyone who took part in the Christmas Quiz. £80 was raised and the winner was Jackie Woolford, Cheltenham, who won £15.00. The runners up were Sue Leech, Bradon Forest Office, and Sue Cook, Purton – both won £10.00.

- Support your school the easy way! - www.easyfundraising.org Register with the site and choose to support Bradon Forest School PTA. Then just log in and you can access all your favourite shopping sites, via this website - for each purchase made, a donation is made to the PTA - no additional cost to you - no catch! Register today, and add the site to your favourites.

DECEMBER SUPER 2007 DRAW PRIZE WINNERS

1. Mrs S Wait, Nine Elms 17 £100
2. Mrs N Grinham, Cricklade 32 £50
3. Mrs C Coleman, Purton 192 £20
4. Dr and Mrs B Park, Purton 92 £10

JANUARY 2008 DRAW PRIZE WINNERS

1. Mrs M Looker, Purton 24 £25
2. Mr R Milican, Cricklade 185 £20
3. Mr M Fisher, Grange Park 85 £10
4. Mrs R Butler, Eastleaze 26 £5
DATES OF FUTURE NEWSLETTERS 2007/08

It is important with secondary age students to create a system that maximises the chance of newsletters arriving home to parents. The newsletters for this academic year will be published in the week beginning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue 7</th>
<th>Issue 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 February 2008</td>
<td>09 June 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue 8</td>
<td>Issue 11</td>
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<td>17 March 2008</td>
<td>14 July 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue 9</td>
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<td>28 April 2008</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tutors will ensure that all students receive every issue to take home and will keep copies for those who are absent.

TERM DATES 2007/08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begins</td>
<td>3 January 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ends</td>
<td>15 February 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term 5</th>
<th>Term 6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begins</td>
<td>21 April 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>NB</td>
<td>Public Holiday Monday 5 May 2008 (School Closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>24 May 2008 - 1 June 2008</td>
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Yours sincerely

L M Spiers
Headteacher
SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL TRANSPORT CONSULTATION DECISION

At its meeting on Wednesday 23 January the Swindon Borough Council Cabinet adopted as policy that free transport is to be withdrawn for applicants from West Swindon, starting in September 2009.

To clarify, the bus service will continue and all students who are on roll at Bradon Forest on or before 31 August 2009 are eligible for free transport and will be able to continue to use the service at no charge for the duration of their education at Bradon Forest.

NB This Swindon Borough Council (SBC) decision has no bearing whatsoever on the free bus service for Wiltshire children.

The new SBC policy is that as from 1 September 2009 Swindon applicants may access the service but will have to pay for it. Families who are eligible for assistance will be entitled to free transport.

The SBC decision is that the bus service to Bradon Forest will continue, and has stressed that its decision has nothing to do with restricting choice and admissions, and that it is only about paying to use the service.

Bradon Forest will now be following up these points with SBC with a number of questions and requesting ‘clarification’ and a number of specific details on how they propose to run the service over the next five years and beyond.

The school will also request that the SBC publicises the unit cost for each bus route for parents’ information as soon as possible.

(These costings will have formed part of the detailed research commissioned by, and from which, SBC will have calculated the ‘savings’ that they highlighted as a crucial part of their proposal and resulting decision.)

Swindon Advertiser, Friday 25 January 2008

Free bus travel for pupils to two schools from West Swindon will soon reach the end of the road.

Swindon Council's cabinet has voted to end the free bus travel service for pupils from West Swindon to Ridgeway and Bradon Forest schools from September 2009. However, this will not apply to those legally entitled to free travel.

"It is a case of creating a level playing field for funding of transport to Swindon schools," said Coun Garry Perkins, who is the cabinet member for children's services.

"The figure we spend on this is half a million pounds a year. That has an effect on spending on all schools in Swindon. And considering our budgets are so tight that money could be well used elsewhere in the education department."

Until now the council has chosen to fund travel to school for pupils from West Swindon, attending Bradon Forest School in Purton and Ridgeway in Wroughton. But last July Swindon councillors floated a money-saving plan to end the measure.

The concept went out for public consultation and earlier this week councillors decided to call time on the measure.

"When we went out to public consultation on this issue the outcome was very balanced," said Coun Perkins.

"Which was a real surprise as I expected parents in West Swindon to reply that they wanted to keep their entitlement."

"We aren't removing parents' choice of the schools their children can go to."

They can apply anywhere they want. And the rights of parents in West Swindon wanting to send their kids to Bradon Forest or Ridgeway aren't affected either."

"And we certainly aren't removing bus transport to our schools."

"If pupils need to go from West Swindon to Bradon Forest or Ridgeway, transport will be provided from the school or the relevant commercial service provider."

Coun David Renard, cabinet member for health, housing and social care, said:

"I represent part of North Swindon where parents have, for many years, been exercising their right to choice to send kids outside the area for education."

"And they have been paying for that transport to get their children to school."

"I think it is only right we should be treating all parents and pupils equally."
This article is reproduced from the *Swindon Advertiser, Friday 25 January 2008*, in which Councillor Gary Perkins, SBC Cabinet Member for Education, (Councillor Shaw and Nine Elms) was interviewed on the SBC Cabinet’s decision.

Several of the comments in this article, and on the radio last week, referring to the outcome of the public consultation may have surprised some parents and others locally.

For those who would like to access the detail in the consultation report and the submissions, the documents referred to have been downloaded from the public area of the SBC Cabinet website.

We have made these available on the school website for ease of reference. Please use the following link if you are reading the e-version of this newsletter on the school website.

http://www.school-portal.co.uk/GroupRenderCustomPage.asp?GroupId=76123&ResourceId=612465

or

if you are reading a paper version then please access these via the *In the News* button on front page of the Bradon Forest Website then via the red ‘Swindon Transport Consultation link’.

This page then provides direct links to each of these SBC documents for the 23 January SBC Cabinet (plus links to all the earlier material and press coverage from the consultation).

The SBC Cabinet paper links are:

(i) SBC Transport : Consultation Final Report (The consultation report was produced by an independent consultant ‘Phil Back Associates’ and is based on postal returns of the SBC forms for the parents/carers of Reception to Year 5 children living in West Swindon which was distributed by post to families.

(ii) SBC Transport: annex paper containing copies of all submissions and replies*

(iii) SBC Transport: annex paper containing copies of the submissions by

a. Bradon Forest School
b. Wiltshire County Council

NB *To help with ease of reference the contents of the Annex (ii) which contains the 84 ‘stakeholders’ responses are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submissions 1 – 56</th>
<th>Comments via SBC web survey link:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submissions 57 – 66</td>
<td>Comments via paper forms (stakeholders) including:</td>
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<tr>
<td>57 – **Greendown School 1 (plus No 66)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58 – Lydiard Millicent Parish Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>59 – Association of Special Schools (ASH) – Swindon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>60 – SBC Social Inclusion Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>61 – Purton Parish Council</td>
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<td>62 – Oliver Tomkins Primary School</td>
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<td>63 – Diocese of Bristol</td>
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<td>64 – Community Schools Representative, Swindon Admissions Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 – Red Oaks Primary School, North Swindon</td>
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</tr>
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<td>66 – **Greendown School 2 Headteacher (plus No 57)</td>
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| Submissions 67 – 84 | Comments via paper forms (parents): |

Originally, the education papers on the Swindon Transport consultation included full consideration of the removal of transport provision for St Joseph’s School, The Ridgeway School and Bradon Forest School.

The SBC cabinet decided after representations from St Joseph’s and the Clifton Diocese that their consultation would be conducted to consider transport provision to The Ridgeway (SBC) and Bradon Forest (Wiltshire) only.

Understandably, The Ridgeway School did not approach the defence of their transport position from West Swindon during the consultation with the same vigour as Bradon Forest.

The Ridgeway School has been fortunate to have been allocated some £4,000,000 of capital by SBC to replace their mobiles, build a new two storey block and to expand the schools intake by two forms of entry to take pupils who will come from the new Wichelstow (‘Front Garden’) development.
This outcome was a result of the SBC decision to change their ‘strategic plan’ which was to relocate and rebuild The Commonweal School in the Front Garden to take extra forms of entry from Wichelstow. The Commonweal school will now continue on its present site and will not expand. Previous to the Commonweal idea, a brand new secondary school was planned for the ‘Front Garden’

On two occasions over recent years when Bradon Forest was approached by SBC to take extra forms of entry to help them out of a major strategic planning problem the school did so – but due to our geo-political position no financial help or capital assistance was forthcoming.

Our decisions were based on the educational need of students from our traditional community area and we do not regret these decisions at all. Even without the provision of money, capital or space these extra students obtained excellent results by attending such a good school.

The changes to the original consultation regarding the removal of St Joseph’s from consideration and the position of The Ridgeway goes some way to explain the background as to the reasons for the main political focus on Bradon Forest during the whole transport consultation period.

The unanimous decision by the SBC cabinet unfortunately came as no surprise to us and was the one we have been expecting for some time.

Our mailings, literature and press coverage during the whole consultation process have ensured that the strengths of our school have had a very high public and positive profile throughout.

Unfortunately, the outcome of the Council’s decision may have an effect on the make-up of our future intake from September 2009 ie in that those families who may not be able to afford transport will thus be replaced under the admissions process by those applicants from slightly further afield who can.

Throughout the consultation process, Bradon Forest has made it clear that if we could run a less expensive alternative bus service than the one offered by SBC, then we would do so. As indicated earlier we are requesting urgent clarification and specific details on the pricing and structure of the service proposed by SBC for the ‘paying customers’ from 2009.

Braden Forest has already started the process of beginning to look into the provision of running our own bus service - and the areas/routes that we may need to serve in the future. This will enable the school to make an informed decision, in the best interests of parents and the school, as to whether an alternative transport option should be offered by Bradon Forest.

It is evident that the partnership and service that Bradon Forest has provided for SBC over the years was of little consequence, both during the consultation and when SBC made its final decision.

Advice has indicated that we may have grounds to query, or even challenge, the process and the misleading nature and lack of detail in the SBC consultation. However, the conduct of some officers, elected representatives and others involved in local education certainly underscored their political need for the decision that they required from the outset.

The decision on the removal of free transport provision to Bradon Forest from West Swindon after 45 years has now clarified SBC’s position. This is a departure from their previous requests for Bradon Forest to help out with excess numbers, to try to utilise Bradon Forest’s ‘Swindon children’ results in the league tables and from their request to take Bradon Forest into Swindon LA.

A number of people have commented that the actual detailed content of the SBC Consultation Report including the many individual responses contained in both the report and annex papers, has certainly been an extremely positive reflection of Bradon Forest’s continuing success and high standards. This, along with the recent league table results information, will be particularly helpful as part of the future promotion of the school within our traditional community and wider area.

We will now further develop the required plans to enable Bradon Forest to move forward into the next stage of its development.

We are confident that the school will be even more successful in the future and will continue as a very attractive and positive choice for parents, prospective students and staff in Wiltshire and Swindon.

L M Spiers
Headteacher

25 January 2008