



Hill Mead HERALD

THERE'S A FOCUS ON OUR PARENTS IN THIS ISSUE

It's not where you start, it's where you finish

Parent governor **Ese Ihemadu** has four children, the oldest three are grown up and the youngest is in nursery

“ I became a governor almost 10 years ago. My first son was in year 2 and my second son was in reception or year 1.

I was doing a politics degree at the time. I was always interested in volunteering and it was a good opportunity to see what the school was doing and have a say in what my children were doing. I was not one to stand at the school gate complaining. I like to have a voice.

On a personal level, it has helped me in my career. Because when you're a parent

and not working you don't get the opportunities to meet other people and develop socially and educationally.

When Hill Mead achieved "outstanding" grade, I cried. I even get emotional now. We worked so hard and the world could now see we are a great school. We always knew we were great, but now everyone knew.

But we don't want to be complacent. With all the new changes government is bringing, we need to be a step ahead. We need to keep our integrity and our core values as a school to face those new challenges. And never forget

that every child matters.

Every child goes on school trips and are enriched by theatre trips, and learning to play musical instruments.

The school is inclusive and we care about our students. We don't discriminate and it enriches all children to be in a school like this.

Although the school is in the centre of Brixton, which we know has a reputation, the school is a safe place. Children feel at home and can grow and become successful young adults. It's not where you start, it's where you finish. **”**



At one of the school workshops run by Unicorn Theatre professionals. Below: setting off from Hill Mead to go to the theatre

Follow your dream

Hill Mead Parent Rashell Welch enrolled on a family learning laptop library course at the school's children's centre in 2007. Since then she has become a learning support assistant who works one-to-one with challenging children on a daily basis

She says: "I enrolled on the course to boost my confidence and to support my children to help them excel.

"My whole journey began when I started to know my way around a computer. It also helped me to go on the school website, and with my son we can do blogging together." The course also boosted Rashell's confidence and involvement with the school community.

After the love and passion that she developed for working with children,



Rashell became a volunteer at the school. Hill Mead offered her a job as a teaching assistant and she went on to attain a level 3 diploma in supporting teachers and children in school.

Rashell's eldest son is now 19 and at university and her younger son is in year 5.

She plans to learn new languages to enable her to work with children from different backgrounds, to understand their needs and what makes them tick.

"I have learnt that if you want something in life you have to push forward and follow your dream," she says.

FROM OUR ANNUAL PARENT SURVEY ...

“ All of my boys have attended Hill Mead and I have received a lot of good feedback from their performance outside the school. This means the school is doing a good job. Thank you.

“ I am delighted to have my children in Hill Mead. It feels like home away from home because my children keep improving in all aspects, not only in academics. Lovely teachers.

“ I will always recommend Hill Mead to friends and family. Thank you so much. You are all amazing.

And parents went too ...

Funding from the Walcot foundation enabled Hill Mead to give parents the opportunity to experience the same theatre performances as their children – starting with reception, year 1 and year 2.

More than 20 parents and their children from year 2 went to see Laika at the Unicorn Theatre. It's a play about Laika – the first dog in space – and a mother training to be an astronaut going to Mars.

After the theatre visit, Unicorn professionals ran two workshops in the school for the parents and children. They role-played training at the United States space agency NASA and applying to go to Mars.

Senior teacher Kirsty Binnie said: "There was loads of laughter and it was really fun. It was lovely to see the parents and children doing drama in a very playful way.

"It was nice that the parents were involved at the same time with the book we were working on. There were two dads doing mimicry – miming what each other doing. The child copying dad. Nice to see them working in tandem with the children. Some of the children actually believed they were going on the Mars mission that day.

"At the end of the workshop, they closed their eyes and listened to some eerie music

while a Unicorn professional described the millions of stars in the galaxy, flying past the moon and finally arriving on Mars."

This is what the parents said about it: Mohamed's mum said: "I was very happy that I came we had a lot of fun. So thank you Miss".

Masai's mum said: "We had lots of fun and he thought about what he'd like to do when he got to Mars and the different experiences you can have on Mars and Masai has decided that when he gets to Mars he is going to have one big party.

"What I did with Marcello was very nice. It was a very good experience because we had games for everyone. We met with one hard thing – we had to choose whether we wanted to go or not. I chose maybe not. It was a lot of fun."



Excitement at Christmas

Thirty reception parents went to see *BOING* at the Unicorn Theatre – a play for very young children about the excitement before Christmas and trying to sleep so Santa will come. It was the first time one of the dads had been to the theatre and he is now planning to take the rest of the family to see the show!

These parents will also join in creative workshops at the school.

A POET CAME TO WORK WITH US – HE HAD FUN AND SO DID WE WITH AN ART WORKSHOP ON MASKS



Amy and Ishmael year 5

We had been learning about the poet John Lyons since first year and read *Dancing in the Rain* and *Carnival Dancing*.

John Lyons was born in Trinidad and now lives in the countryside here.

He came to the school twice. The first time, he read the poems to us. The second time we had an art workshop and we made masks. We made a template to draw around it on paper. Then we cut it out and decorated it with tissue paper. When we finished making the masks we performed *Jumbie Jump High, Jumbie Jump Low* from the poem.

We all had the chance to talk to him throughout

the day. He told us he was writing a poem but he didn't know what to call it. He was writing about a cat, I think he should call it *The Mysterious Cat*. It looks so sweet, but next day you see a bird in its mouth.

We worked in pairs to do the masks and used our imagination. Some of them were more like scary demons, others were colourful. Some of us tried to make them more like rainbow masks.

Some of us took our inspiration from a book we read last year, *The Fireworkmaker's Daughter*. We designed and created a mask based on the character the 'fire-fiend'.

John Lyons said it was really fun. It was really nice that he came to talk to us.

