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Headteacher: Mr D Skehan



**Cleves School
Oatlands Avenue
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Half-Termly Headteacher's Update - October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

As we reach the end of our first half-term, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what has been a fantastic start to the academic year. Stepping into the role of Headteacher at Cleves, working alongside our wonderful and dedicated staff, has been an absolute joy. I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome I have received from our whole school community. Chatting to pupils on the playground or parents at drop-off and pick-up has really helped me to feel part of the community and given me a great insight into what makes Cleves so special.

Back in September, I spoke to pupils in assembly about creating a 'ripple effect of kindness' across our school. It has been heartening to see that Cleves value embraced so enthusiastically in daily life. Nowhere was this spirit more evident than during our recent Ofsted inspection, where our children were an absolute credit to you, showcasing everything that makes Cleves pupils achieve, belong and thrive. While our final Ofsted inspection report will be shared towards the end of November, inspectors rightly recognised our broad, balanced curriculum, high achievement and enrichment opportunities like our outdoor learning days.

Our curriculum has well and truly come alive this term. Year 5 enjoyed memorable trips to Hampton Court Palace, Year 4 explored on their Thames river walk, and Year 6 stepped back in time for their Victorian immersion days. We have seen energetic outdoor learning days for Years 3, 5 and 6, friendly competition at the Year 4 mini-Olympics, and engaging class assemblies from some of our Yr 6 classes, one of whom helped us mark World Mental Health Day last week. We also welcomed our new Year 3 pupils with a lovely service at St Mary, Oatlands, and 5T led a wonderful Harvest celebration. Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously to our local food bank collection appeal.

Out on the sports field and in the pool, our pupils have shone brightly! From having an average of 200 children eagerly arriving at school at 8am each Tuesday for their morning run, to pre-season football victories and our boys' football team progressing to the area finals of the Fulham schools tournament (and our girls team just missing out on progressing to the finals), sport continues to be a beacon of high standards at Cleves. Our swimmers took 2nd place overall at the ACS Cobham gala, and Cleves placed 1st overall out of eight teams in Quad Kids athletics – a massive thank you to all of the staff who help to provide opportunities like this for our children.

My sincere thanks also go to our PTA, who have scheduled a whole host of exciting events this academic year, which will bring our community together and raise much-needed funds for projects like future-proofing areas of our school with better and more energy efficient climate control. I was hugely impressed by the team of talented and passionate volunteers who attended the PTA AGM and I know that staff, trustees, pupils, parents and carers all owe them an enormous debt of gratitude for all they continue to do for Cleves.



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There is one area of school life that I think we could all work together to improve. We receive almost daily complaints from a wide variety of neighbours who are negatively impacted by poor and dangerous parking around the school. We rely on the goodwill of our neighbours as a school with such a busy 'out-of-hours' schedule, so we would really appreciate your support in taking care when parking around the school. Also, dropping children off in the middle of the road at the zebra crossing (which is a significant issue at the field gate) endangers your children and other road users. Please make sure to park safely away from the zebra crossings and off the zig-zags. We have asked for increased enforcement patrols to help with this but we need your help too!

Following our parents' consultation evenings this week, I hope you feel fully connected with your child's learning journey. I enjoyed chatting to many of you as you waited for your appointments. Hearing your feedback about how well your children have settled into the year and how enthusiastically many of them are partaking in the wider enrichment offer of the school was really heartening, with many of your children attending clubs five days a week! Looking ahead to the second half of the autumn term, there is so much to look forward to! I am already looking forward to our famous Cleves fireworks night on 1st November, alongside our upcoming open evening for prospective parents, Christmas carol concerts, festive traditions, and many further sporting competitions across all year groups.

Although it's been a term filled with extremely positive news, it was a slightly sad day today as we said goodbye to our wonderful welfare and attendance officer Mrs Jeanette Pyott, who is leaving us after six years to take on a new challenge. She will be greatly missed by staff and pupils alike. We also said a fond farewell this week to 'Mac' McCarthy, who is retiring after 13 years of providing counselling support at Cleves. We wish both departing staff members all the best.

For now, I wish you all a well-deserved extended two-week half-term break. Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing everyone refreshed and ready for another action-packed half-term.

Warmest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diarmuid Skehan".

Diarmuid Skehan

Headteacher

