



Headteacher's Report - February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Hopefully this will be the last half term where I have to include a Covid update. Unfortunately, it has still caused daily disruption since our return, with over 150 pupils absent in recent weeks following a positive test. A number of staff have been affected by Covid as well. Despite the continued high case numbers, we have managed to maintain our full curriculum, lunch clubs and after school clubs continued, inter- school sport competitions still took place and we delivered all our planned interventions and booster lessons to support pupils who need extra help.

Once again, we have tried our hardest to deliver the best possible provision and I would like to thank and congratulate the staff. Once again, our pupils focused, worked hard and produced impressive results in all curriculum subjects. Once again, I would like to thank you for your continued vigilance and support.

In more positive news, case numbers in school have started to come down this week so our risk assessment will change and some measures will be removed. Our protocols have already changed to reflect the government's new guidance but may well change again if there is a further announcement in the near future. I am pleased to say on return staff will no longer be required to wear masks, parents therefore will not need to wear masks at collection time. If you do come into the building or volunteer I would ask that you continue to wear a mask though. I am also pleased to report that year group assemblies will start again along with class assemblies. We will send out a revised list of assembly dates which you are welcome to attend and we have added new dates for those classes who did not get a chance to perform due to the restrictions.

We are very optimistic about the second half of the school year and all our typical activities are planned in. We look forward to more trips, visitors, residential and special events like concerts and productions all returning as we head into summer.

In other news ...

Curriculum

On our return from the Christmas break a number of subject leaders have progressed work within their subjects.

In order to extend more able pupils in science an extension question has been added in every science lesson.

£2,000 worth of new reading material has been introduced to the library and we have updated the recommended reading list. This investment was thanks to the PTA.

On the subject of literacy, new decodable books introduced to year 3 are now being used every week. These books are intended for our less able readers and each week there is a new short book that links in with the sounds taught in class in our Sounds Write phonics sessions.

Currently we are using this phonics approach in the lower school and now plan to train our year 5 team in the methodology.

Year 3 and year 4 have adapted and further improved their Art modules for this term and our Art subject leader is in discussion with local artists about running a number of excellence group projects in the summer term.

Leadership

The process is underway to appoint a lunch provider for September 2022 when our current contract expires. Thank you to all the parents who responded to our questionnaire or joined our recent parent forum. Your views have informed our tender document and school meal requirements. We met our current provider to resolve an issue that came up repeatedly in feedback from both children and parents - which is portion size. We intend to display posters around each serving hatch to remind children they can ask for a larger portion if they want more when they are at the counter.

Attainment and progress

Year leaders have reviewed the impact of their Autumn action plans and produced new plans for the spring term, adjusting provision and creating new groups to support pupils who are not on track. In order to provide these new booster groups and interventions we have recruited additional teaching staff for this year so we can do even more.

With the spring action plans in place, we have checked provision to ensure all pupils who have not made expected progress since entry or pupils who are not working at the age-related level all receive additional support.

New learning targets have been set for every pupil in reading, writing and maths and these have been shared with parents.

Mrs Harrison and Mrs Flaxman provided an introduction to the Sounds Write phonics system we are using in the lower school to our learning support staff. They are now recapping the sounds and blends taught in class with children who are less secure so they get extra weekly practice.

Wellbeing and pastoral support

One of our team, Mrs Beavis, is now offering 4 additional afternoons of counselling and pastoral support thereby increasing our capacity to support pupils . If you think your child would benefit from support please contact our welfare officer Ms Clarke.

Mrs Hamilton, our PSHE leader, has produced two lessons for mental health week drawing pupil's attention to this special week.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding team (Mr Hodges , Mr Smith , Mr Thomas and Ms Clarke) have recently reviewed all CIN (Child in Need) and CP (Child Protection) cases to consider if there is any more we can do for the small number of pupils who fall into these categories.

Although online safety issues are typically out of school hours and carried out at home, we still need to take these issues seriously and try to resolve them. Parents are generally not aware that these problems are taking place so increasingly we uncover these out of school problems first. We have decided to introduce a new initiative and provide a school reporting line. This has been well received by year 6 parents and we will consider extending this to the rest of the school in time .

Mr Thomas has so far provided two safeguarding training sessions for parent volunteers and has now created a screen castify video to run through the content so other parents can easily access our guidance before they volunteer in school.

Building and school environment

To finish on a high and look ahead to more positive times to come, I thought I would share our next grounds project. We are in discussion with the PTA about a new project. We asked the school council what space they would like to develop and improve and they identified the grassed area outside the year 6 block.

The pupil group was invited to find ideas and images, which they used to create a mood board. Three contractors then came in and the school council pupils explained their ideas to each company. The project will create a large new outdoor space that can be used for break times as a social space but also as a large new learning space. We have selected the design below and are now progressing the project which we hope to complete ready for Sept 2022 at the latest but we are aiming for an earlier completion so the space can be used throughout this summer term.





I would like to take the opportunity to thank the PTA for all their hard work and creativity. This substantial project would not be possible without the generous support of the Parents Association.

And finally, may I wish you all an enjoyable half term and thank you once again for your ongoing support. We have a lot to celebrate this half term but even more to look forward to in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,

C. Hodges

Mr C. Hodges
Headteacher