



Headteacher's Update - March/April 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Yet another half term has flown by and since every update of late has started with a COVID comment I thought I would stick with the convention and share some relatively good news. At the time of writing my letter there are only 12 pupils currently out with COVID, compared with over 50 per week before half term. In total there have been 42 pupils who tested positive over this half term compared with 165 in Spring 1. Cases are therefore significantly reduced and we have felt the positive impact of this in these last few weeks.

I am delighted to say life at Cleves finally feels like it has returned to normal with all the exciting, varied and memorable events we enjoyed pre-pandemic. We have been able to take pupils out on trips, invite parents to assemblies, get speakers in to support our curriculum and much more. Just some of the events over recent weeks include –

Internet safety day

We held internet safety workshops for pupils, teachers and parents. After a four-year absence, we invited Teresa Hughes back into school who has worked with us for over 10 years. We always very much welcome Teresa's input and support as an expert in her field.

During the school day, Teresa held special 50 minute workshops for each year group. The focus of these sessions was very much pitched to the age of the children. However the common message of not sharing personal details, you being in control of the device and the importance of sharing concerns was present in all four year groups.

In the evening Teresa presented to around 75 parents, sharing what the children had spoken about earlier in the day and really emphasising key messages around internet safety. This included stating just how difficult their child will find reporting concerns to them as parents and how, as parents, they must be an integral part of their internet life. There were also a number of practical tips given around filtering and monitoring.

It was an excellent day which absolutely compliments our already extensive work across our computing and PSHE curriculum. Teresa was very positive about the work we were undertaking and was also very complimentary of our pupils and their knowledge.

Master classes

With mixing classes now safer as COVID cases decline, we are reinstating our master class programme after an enforced break due to restrictions. We run these sessions across a range of curriculum subjects, offering short projects to children who show a particular aptitude or interest in a given subject.

After Easter we are offering an art project to year 4. This master-course will last over a period of four weeks, with an hour and a half long session occurring once a week. The initial session will be led by a local artist, Charlotte Baker, who specialises in working with colouring pencils to create breath-taking drawings of animals. Children will learn how to capture fur and texture in their animal drawings and how to layer and blend the coloured pencils together. The following three sessions will develop from the first session, inspired by the work of the artist, and will be led by our Arts Coordinator, Miss Robjohn .

Another of our teachers, Miss Childs, accompanied 30 children from Year 5 who visited the Royal Grammar School in Guildford for a Tudor enrichment day. These children were chosen because they demonstrated a keen interest in our Autumn topic, Tudors. The day focused on enriching the children's prior learning and gave them the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on all things Tudor. Many more projects will follow throughout the summer term.

All our subject leaders met their Infant feeder school counterparts at Oatlands and Manby Lodge to share curriculum information and plans. Since virtually all of our pupils now come from these schools, we want to ensure our curriculum offer is well considered and connected, providing a cohesive 7-year journey.

Training for staff

Yet another sign of the improving situation in school is training opportunities are increasing and face to face sessions have resumed.

The leadership team have now completed a sequence of coaching sessions and are going through the accreditation process so that they in turn can coach other staff. One of our LSAs has now completed Numicon maths intervention training and is qualified to now train the rest of our staff in turn. Our support staff have received Lego therapy training which can be used as an intervention to help pupils with social skills.

These opportunities ensure through continued professional development our staff are well equipped to offer Cleves pupils the very best provision and support.

Garden project

Our quiet garden project (in the large area outside the front of the year 6 block) with Valley Projects is developing slowly as we investigate planning requirements to erect a shade sail. We are hoping to start work in the summer holiday.

Well being

Our year 6 pupils have benefited from a Mindfulness course provided by an external practitioner and it is clear that pupils enjoyed the sessions and found them beneficial.

We are offering a Zoom presentation to year 6 parents after Easter so they too can encourage their children to use some of the strategies they have considered in class.

We fully intend to book the sessions again next year.

Sports

Our pupils have taken part in a number of further competitive opportunities between local schools including many which we set up as part of the WWHSP partnership. This has included:

- Year 5/6 Indoor Athletics - Cleves were the winners
- Year 3/4 Indoor Athletics - Cleves were the winners
- Year 4 Mini Olympics - Cleves were the winners
- Year 3 Mini Olympics - Cardinal Newman were the winners
- Year 2 Mini Olympics - Manby Lodge were the winners
- Year 4 Indoor Football - non competitive festival

In total this year so far:

- 373 have represented the school in sport at least once
- 574 have regularly attended one of our extra-curricular clubs

Looking ahead to the summer term, we have a huge number of competitions coming up and we are confident that the vast majority of children will have represented the school by the end of the year. Sports such as athletics and cricket will be added to our already comprehensive list of opportunities provided.

School meals

We welcomed eight potential lunch service providers to site who have all expressed an interest in our catering contract. We wait to see how many submit the tender application documents and then shortlist after Easter. The new contract will begin in September 2022

Staffing

Recruitment in schools has been difficult over recent terms but we have enjoyed a very successful round and I am pleased to report we have appointed 2 new Learning Support Staff – Miss Turner and Mrs Lorincz.

We conducted a round of ECT interviews (Early career teachers - previously known as NQTs) and appointed an excellent candidate ready for September.

We have offered a fixed term contract to an experienced teacher called Mrs Robinson who is returning to the work place after a maternity break. She was previously a senior leader and had a lovely manner with our pupils. She will be offering additional support in year 4 through the summer term.

Sadly though, we say goodbye to a key member of the Cleves team, our School Business Manager Ms Turner, who is moving on to a new challenge. Ms Turner has been with us for 8 years and as a member of the senior management team has been integral in shaping our school and supporting our success. She will be greatly missed but fortunately is still going to be working with us for a day a week over the summer term to ensure a smooth transition and to provide a training programme for our new Business Manager, Mrs Clements .

And finally

Perhaps the most important development of this half term and another positive sign of the times is the long list of trips and events the children have experienced throughout recent weeks.

Year 3 enjoyed Egyptian day and outdoor learning. Year 4 visited Buster Farm, Year 5 had their outdoor learning day and the whole school enjoyed World Book Day to name just a few.

I wish you all a relaxing and healthy Easter break but wanted to finish with a suggestion you may have time to consider .

We have been considering how our school community can help to raise important funds for the appalling events currently taking place in Ukraine. Whilst a mufti day can easily raise more than £1000, we feel it is important that the children actually do or take part in something where they feel that their actions are having a positive and direct contribution.

With the prospect of the two week Easter break ahead of us, we would like to challenge every child at Cleves to do something to raise money that will help support the lives of families affected by the war. Mr Smith will share a letter with further suggestions and details .

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Hodges', written in a cursive style.

Mr C. Hodges
Headteacher