



Headteacher's Update - October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been yet another positive, successful and busy half term, with a great deal to celebrate.

Preparation for the new academic year started during the summer break when the DfE provided new guidance on Covid risk assessments and the steps schools were required to take. This guidance allowed a considerable scaling back of measures. Perhaps most importantly we no longer needed to organise the school into bubbles, stagger school times and play times nor send whole classes home to self-isolate if we had a positive case on site.

In effect, in September, we returned to almost complete normality and staff returned excited by the prospect of the trips, events, visitors and activities we have been desperate to get back to.

We also returned to a new School Development Plan which will soon be available to view on our website. Our key priorities this year include -

1. Continuing to respond to Covid with safety first and wellbeing remaining our overriding priority again for the year
2. Returning to normal whole school provision and managing another round of change
3. Re-establishing all our best practice built up over time but interrupted by Covid

4. Switching to a new data and record keeping system called INSIGHT to create a clear understanding of pupil outcomes and more closely track learning.
5. Data analysis to create a clear understanding of any lost learning due to Covid, which objectives may need longer to present, if prior year's content needs securing, which pupils require catch up and after school boosters.
6. A continued focus on curriculum development building key knowledge content and retrieval strategies across all subjects.
7. To create a new model for maths setting and ensuring best practice for all ability groups
8. Transition to a whole class reading model where age appropriate texts are studied in detail by the whole class. To continue our ability-based reading groups alongside this so pupils can read an ability matched book as well.
9. Introduce the Sounds Write phonics approach for years 3 and 4 in the first instance moving to the upper school in time.
10. Cleves School values reviewed, relaunched and higher profile across the subjects and our teaching

We started the new year a little early with staff returning a day early on Tuesday 31st August in order to allow year 3 pupils back on 1st September. Having no other year groups on site meant our new starters had a calm first day and the chance for an induction. Many of our year 6 mentors volunteered to come in as well to help support and settle the new pupils and as always, they did a great job welcoming our new children.

All our pupils made a fantastic start to the new year and contended with another round of considerable change. The return to normality at school was certainly welcome but of course very different to the regimes of last year so our pupils returned to a positive but different environment. This includes no zones at play time, the entire school out at single break and lunches served in hall.

Our extended curriculum is also underway with both lunchtime sports clubs and after school clubs back as normal. 524 children are attending at least one extracurricular/lunchtime club each week with 196 attending more than one each week.

We continue to focus on our recovery programme to plug any gaps caused by the disruption and home learning periods children have faced over two consecutive academic years. To ensure accelerated progress and catch up we have created a four-tier system –

1. Quality first teaching in class
2. In school interventions
3. After school boosters
4. At home online tutoring through National Tutoring Programme

Early in the term our phase leaders held an assembly to relaunch and remind our pupils about the Cleves learning behaviours. These are obviously used, referred to and reinforced in class every day.

This was followed shortly after by a launch in assembly to our new Cleves Values. Mrs Glennon is leading on this launch and has worked very hard. Staff have been well briefed and we shared a booklet with parents to fully explain the background to the revamped values and how we will use them.

Every subject leader has studied medium term plans for their subject area and identified legitimate links to our new values to ensure they are regularly referred to and linked to learning rather than mentioned in isolation and occasionally.

A new reading framework was released by the DfE towards the end of July and we have picked up on some new best practice ideas that will further develop our approach. One suggestion is that reading materials for the less able, struggling readers should link to phonics teaching in class each week. We have therefore introduced some new reading materials that link in each week with the phonics teaching delivered through Sounds Write.

There has been a significant shift in the expectations and content in RSE (*Relationships and Sex Education*) This subject area now allows us to focus more on a range of relationships including friendships and family relationships. Furthermore, it allows us an important opportunity to explore a range of family models all of which are relevant, equal and present at Cleves. A detailed audit document makes it evident that almost every subject area includes some RSE content.

Our music scheme has changed as well as we have moved away from Music Express to Charanga.

The increased freedoms at school have allowed us to return to taking trips, having visitors on site and hosting special events. In just the first few weeks of term we held our year 3 welcome service at St Mary's Church, held a meet the teacher event after school and every year group hosted a curriculum information evening for parents.

Year 6 held a Victorian day, Year 5 enjoyed Tudor day and Year 4 went on a local river trip as part of their topic, whilst year 3 had a visit from zoo lab looking at minibeasts and a recent trip to Oatlands park. It has been great to return to our typical, full, engaging curriculum offer.

Unfortunately, some disruption has occurred especially over recent weeks and several events were cancelled, but in comparison to last year the impact has been limited and the measures

required are more reasonable. It is a huge relief not to have to send whole bubbles home in the eventuality of a positive case.

I would still like to thank you for your continued patience and support. Several assemblies, a PTA event and most recently our parent consultation meetings all had to be postponed or changed but we must continue to put safety first. We are hopeful that the half term break will restrict the spread of Covid so anticipate returning to reduced measures in school and at this stage we are intending to proceed with all planned events including Christmas productions. I will update you on our return about our risk assessment measures but it will remain important to keep children off if they show any Covid symptoms and seek a PCR test rather than risk the spread of the virus and a rise in case numbers.

All in all, it has been a fantastic half term. I hope you enjoy your half term break and look forward to seeing pupils back on Tuesday 2nd November.

Yours sincerely,

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

Mr C. Hodges
Headteacher