



Headteacher's Update - March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

The year is flying by and after our Easter break we have the summer to look forward to. In every update I suspect I include the phrase - it has been another busy term and once again it is true. Pupils and staff have all been working hard and there is plenty to report.

This term there has been a considerable focus behind the scenes on curriculum design and provision. As I mentioned in my previous update, we strive for continuous school improvement in all areas so have a constant cycle of reviewing and re planning.

We have been assessing the use of our specialist teaching spaces to ensure that our curriculum has returned to pre pandemic standards and the innovative ambitious activity we saw prior to several years of interruption. Listed below are just some of the varied activities pupils have enjoyed -

- Implementation of Seesaw outcomes in Science
- Use of Spark video in topic - uploaded to Seesaw
- Imovie completed in Literacy (with Green screen) - Pickpocket
- Use of Ipads in PE for feedback during Gymnastic routine creation.
- Use of Science Lab - Irreversible reactions
- Science - filming rocket onto Seesaw
- Science - creation of activity on Seesaw which students responded to online.
- Food Tech facilities for Pizza and Jam Tarts

- Art studio for William Morris unit - Lino cutting / Clay tile / Screen Printing
- Use of Intra-year group specialist.
- Use of Kahoot
- MyMaths (for extra reinforcement of understanding)
- Chromebook use - Google earth / Research Topic / Lexia

It is evident from this review that our resources are being used well to offer varied and exciting learning opportunities across a wide range of subject areas.

Our Arts working party has met twice this term and activity is well underway. The group is tasked with considering if our provision in music, art, dance and drama can be improved further and match the high levels of provision in sport that we are renowned for. They are considering what is already in place, how existing provision can be improved and what next? The team are considering the benefits of appointing an art technician or seeking an artist in residence. There is a focus on dance and establishing a stronger emphasis in our PE modules. In a recent pupil survey, drama came out as a topic that our pupils want more opportunities to enjoy. Building in more cross curricula drama activities is therefore another key drive.

Whilst the Arts group have been busy, the IT working party is also underway with the same task of moving our IT curriculum to exceptional.

- Digital Safety and Citizenship units may need reviewing given how technology is moving forward
- Lego is a great tool for teaching coding and further staff training is required
- Use of tools such as Seesaw and Spark more often
- Teaching a knowledge of how things work (networks, internet, wifi etc)
- Focus on research skills more focused on search techniques linking in digital safety

This term we have started a Master class programme for the more and most able. A number of the staff have kindly offered activities. These include: a module to write and perform a short play led by Miss Christian and a number of art activities which will focus on developing a particular skill in each specific year group across the school. Such skills that will be nurtured include drawing with colouring pencils, digital art, graphic design and fashion. Mrs Bachelor offered a Topic Masterclass on Ancient Egypt for year 3 with a focus on independent research in an area not covered during lessons. In addition to Cleves teachers running classes we have a number of external professionals joining us to extend pupils learning.

Of course curriculum improvement has not been our only focus. Ms Clarke continues to offer a day and a half a week at Cleves and leads on mental health and well-being. After the Easter break we intend to offer even more wellbeing interventions for pupils. The summer term can cause some children anxiety as they face another change and a move to a new year group so we have a number of new transition groups planned to help children prepare.

Our PSHE (personal, social, health education) and RSE (relationships and sex education) subject leaders have been released to work together, reviewing resources on Jigsaw, which is a scheme of work and resource bank. Although we already have well planned and well resourced activities there is a wealth of excellent material on Jigsaw that may enhance our curriculum.

Last year we appointed a family support worker, Daphne Sol, who is currently providing a parenting course which runs for 10 weeks. She is also planning to provide talks on a range of subjects in response to a survey completed by parents. These will be one hour sessions on a range of topics requested by parents such as sibling rivalry, separation anxiety and bedtime routines. These will be online sessions run in the evening which parents indicated would be the best format and time.

We have secured two new therapists who are offering children and families support. We have a new speech therapist who specialises in anxiety disorders and is working directly with pupils. We have also secured a therapist who specialises in supporting parents with children who are on the autistic spectrum. All feedback has been excellent.

We have also successfully secured a number of other specialists to increase our Learning Development team including an Educational Psychologist. In addition to these appointments we have explored the possibility of taking on trainee therapists to bolster our provision further. We have two trainee speech therapy students on site a day a week. These steps have really added to our provision at a highly specialist level and puts us in a far stronger position to support children and families.

Another key focus this term has been partnership work with our Infant feeder schools, Oatlands and Manby Lodge. Our three schools curriculum review is well underway with recommendations from each subject team about how we can better align our joint offer.

In conclusion, it is not just the staff that have been busy, I am so impressed with the work and effort of our pupils. They have made great strides this term and I have no doubt they will continue to impress in our final term. I would like to thank them as always for making Spring 2023 such an enjoyable and successful term.

I would like to wish you all an enjoyable and hopefully restful break and look forward to our return.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C Hodges".

Mr C. Hodges
Headteacher