



Headteacher's Update - February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Congratulations

Although the Autumn term is now a dim and distant memory, I would like to start our newsletter by congratulating staff and pupils on the 2022 end of year performances. The last Christmas shows to parents were back in December 2019 so it was lovely but also very important to gather and celebrate Christmas together. The atmosphere was fantastic and I know how much parents really appreciated and enjoyed seeing their children perform. It was the perfect end to 2022. Congratulations to absolutely everyone involved.

What next?

Another dim and distant memory is our Ofsted inspection back in summer 2022 but the very positive outcome has launched a series of activities and further improvements. A great deal of energy, effort and time was spent in anticipation of the inspection which meant we were well prepared and staff were confident in their practice. The very positive outcome has certainly not resulted in any feeling that we can coast and there is no need for further change. If anything we are busier than ever, having been challenged by the inspection team to consider how we move from outstanding to exceptional (not an actual ofsted grade)

This first half of the Spring term has seen us continue this drive with activity in three key areas – curriculum development, extending our SEND offer and supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Curriculum development

We visited a number of schools in the Autumn term to look at their approach to writing and see if we could pick up any new ideas or tips. Our literacy leader, Mrs Arpesella, has drawn together our next steps and is overseeing a series of trials. These are all refinements that build on what we already do rather than anything radical.

Our January INSET day focus was improving science, history and geography lesson slides to ensure the content was clear and concise.

It has been a busy month with a focus on maths as well. We commissioned a consultant to carry out a detailed study of our maths practice. She worked alongside Mr Nelson, who now leads on the subject. Maths was one of the subjects Ofsted looked at in detail (known as a deep dive) and they were very impressed but we still wanted to consider how we could make it even better in our drive to exceptional practice. As a result we intend to build more open ended investigations into maths to allow pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills.

We have an IT working party led by Mr Smith, who has some very exciting proposals to restructure our curriculum and make it more innovative.

We have created a new Arts working party to begin the process of raising our provision and opportunities to match our sports offer. We do a great deal in the Arts already and I suspect more than most schools but we want to do even more in this area.

By the end of the term I am sure to have more to report on these developments.

Our SEND offer

The support we offer children with additional needs is well established and we already benefit from having a number of specialist teachers at Cleves complimented by visiting professionals. Access to local services and support is becoming increasingly difficult though as demand increases and waiting times for assessment and support gets ever longer. More and more children would benefit from expert support or therapeutic interventions.

Mrs Grafton has been working hard to identify local, well qualified specialists to ensure we can continue to access support quickly and offer the very best to Cleves pupils who may have additional needs. We are in conversations with a number of professionals and therapists ,including an Educational Psychologist, a play therapist, an autism specialist and a social communication therapist. By establishing a range of service level

agreements we intend to broaden our Learning Development team and become less reliant on Surrey's strained services.

Wellbeing

Although securing specialist support can be a challenge, we have had one significant success with Daphne Sol joining our team. Many parents may know Daphne who was previously the manager at the Weybridge Children's Centre. I am delighted to say we have secured her services and we can now offer outreach work, courses, workshops and drop ins. You may have seen the questionnaire we sent out last week asking what workshops you might be interested in and over 80 parents have expressed an interest or made a suggestion. We will publicise these events after the half term break.

We have used the PASS attitudinal surveys we do with pupils each year to identify another 30 pupils who will now benefit from pastoral interventions. This includes work around friendship, self-confidence, recognising success or dealing with worries to name just a few themes.

In other news

Here are just some of the other things we have been working on this half term –

Excellence groups

We have now committed a day a week to the planning and delivering excellence groups for our more and most able. A number of staff are offering activities in a range of subjects including art, coding, drama and maths over the next few weeks.

Parents and Community

Unfortunately the holiday club provider we have used for the last five years has now ceased trading and sadly gone into administration. This is a significant concern since we know how important reliable, local childcare is to many working parents. Our business manager, Mrs Clements, has been working hard to replace this provision and after inviting six providers in we have shortlisted two very strong contenders so hope to have this resolved very quickly and provision back in place soon.

Partnership work

We have continued our close partnership with our Infant feeder schools, Oatlands and Manby Lodge. The subject leaders from all three schools met to look at the curriculum journey from reception to year 6 and to make recommendations as part of their discussion.

Site and school grounds

Our new outdoor quiet area and learning space is now finished. This project was predominantly funded by the PTA and has turned a poorly used area which was muddy in the winter and dusty in the summer into a fantastic all year round facility.

I am pleased to report Trustees have agreed that we can proceed with the refurbishment of two year 3 toilet blocks and work will take place over the Easter holiday.

PE/Sport

Sport and extracurricular clubs are as popular and busy as ever with an impressive and wide range on offer. Our spring term lunchtime clubs offered by staff are back up and running again. This term we are offering; PhysiFun, Basketball, Sportshall Athletics, Tag Rugby, Badminton, Football, Yoga and Dodgeball. The take up for these have been excellent and we have 341 pupils attending these each week. We are also offering girl's only clubs in football and tag rugby and these are proving popular. These clubs are in addition to the many extra curricular activities that take place before and after school, run by both our staff and external companies.

We have two staff members (Mr Jerrard and Miss Childs) attending a trampolining course in February which will lead to them being qualified in running sessions. We plan to relaunch this as a club in a summer term as it was extremely popular prior to COVID.

And finally

I am pleased to say yet again that we have had an enjoyable, busy and productive half term. Mr Smith and I finished the week looking at a wide range of work from children in all year groups. It was the perfect end to our half term with truly stunning work in every year group. Whilst our staff and Trustees work hard, our pupils are amazing.

I hope you have an enjoyable half term break

Yours sincerely,



Mr C. Hodges
Headteacher