



## **Headteacher's Update - October 2022**

Dear Parent/Carer,

After half a term back at school with the summer holiday a dim, distant memory there is already plenty to report.

Although it was many weeks ago, I would like to start by recording my thanks to all the staff and our site manager, Mr Forsey, for ensuring the site was ready for the children's return to a new academic year. In addition to having every class deep cleaned over the holiday, a number of rooms were also decorated so the learning environments were all up to their usual high standard.

We also returned to a much improved re-carpeted library which was a large job considering all the stock that had to be removed then returned. A very kind and committed group of parents have volunteered to now reorder the books on the shelves to make the book layout more logical.

I am also pleased to report our new garden quiet area was granted planning permission just as the summer holiday started (required for the shade sail structure) so work took place in the final week of the holiday. Although we knew it would not be possible to finish the work, it seemed sensible to grab the opportunity to get the noisy ground clearing work done whilst the children were not on site. The company will return next week to complete the project so we hope to open it on our return.

We have of course welcomed a lot of new pupils this term. All of our pupils made an excellent start to the new year and from the very first day appeared happy to be back and settled in quickly. Year 3 have made a super start as well and the year 3 staff are working exceptionally hard to share our expectations and learning behaviours.

I have been incredibly impressed with every year group. As Mr Smith and I pop into classrooms, carry out learning walks or observe lessons we see pupils keen to learn, hard at work and achieving impressive outcomes. Even in this short space of time, we can see good progress taking place. There is impressive work going on across the whole school and pupils' pride in their work is immediately evident. We have noted high levels of consistency across the teams and excellent feedback in marking.

The new term saw the introduction of a new school caterer. Our new catering company, Pabullum, has made an impressive start. Informal feedback from both children and parents has been very positive so far and the company intends to send a survey out in the near future to capture early feedback and areas to further improve.

Following our inspection, we are looking forward to the challenge of moving from outstanding to exceptional (exceptional is not a new formal OFSTED grading but it is the term and challenge we have set ourselves)

All subject leaders have been charged with considering – What next? Since our curriculum has a clear and important endorsement from OFSTED we can be confident in our ethos, structure and plans but we want to go further in every subject and look for further improvement and innovation.

With such a secure curriculum already in place, there is an inherent risk in making further changes and we do not want to make change for change's sake. Anything we do needs to not just be different but better. With that in mind our intention is to really focus this year on further reading, research, school visits, training and conferences. This is not a hiatus but a chance to actively seek the very best practice and trial new ideas fully to add real value.

We have started the process with three areas under review –

We have booked a maths consultant to carry out a two-day maths audit, working alongside Mr Nelson who has taken on the maths subject leader post.

Our second area of research is a focus on writing. We are visiting six schools to study the way they plan, structure and deliver their writing modules. Our interest here is to see if we can we accelerate the progress of children who may struggle with writing or do not enjoy the process.

Thirdly, we are visiting some schools to look at their SEND practice. Our focus will be to find new,

high quality, evidenced based interventions that have proven impact.

On the subject of curriculum, our extra curricula offer remains as strong as ever and clubs are already underway. There are a wide range of after school clubs primarily run by external providers, a good range of daily lunchtime clubs run by teachers and many staff are running after school booster lessons for pupils who may need a little more support and practise.

It has been a busy and highly enjoyable half term. Year 3 have enjoyed a great start with their first topic which has included watching chicks hatch live and then seeing or even holding a range of mini beasts that were not mini! Giant snails, giant millipedes and a tarantula were all part of the fascinating creatures brought in by Zoolab. We also held a welcome service in the church for year 3 which was very well attended by parents.

Year 4 have been on a local walk by the river as part of their topic and enjoyed an outdoor learning day on site. Year 5 enjoyed a trip to Hampton Court and Year 6 dressed up for Victorian day.

All year groups have provided a parents information meeting and all were well attended. We'd like to thank the many parents who took the opportunity to congratulate staff on the recent inspection outcome.

It only remains for me to wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable half term and then the countdown to Christmas begins!

Yours sincerely,

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

Mr C. Hodges  
Headteacher