



RW/tb

19<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

### Autumn Term 2022 Newsletter 3

As we come to the end of the Autumn term, it is right that we all stop and draw breath for a minute. We have been so busy. I have been awed everyday to see the wonderful work being produced in classes and the learning that is happening (sometimes incidental) as part of this. The children are so lucky to be taught and supported by such a fantastic and enthusiastic staff team and I know you would support me in thanking each and every one of them.

If this term is anything to go on, I can't wait to see what the Spring and Summer term will bring.

A few updates to share with you all.

### CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCES

It was so lovely to see so many of you last week for our school performances. It was brilliant to be able to have school performances again after so many years without. I was so proud of all our children for their hard work in learning songs, lines, music and Makaton signs. They were absolutely brilliant!

### EYFS PLAYGROUNDS

As part of our EYFS audit which was undertaken by the local authority last year, we have been working hard to improve the outside provision for our youngest children. Holly Class have benefitted from a lovely new outside learning area. This was important for ensuring that we were meeting the expectations of the EYFS framework.

I have a meeting later today with a playground company to discuss how the playground for Acorn Style and Seedling can be updated with a sensory focus.

## **OPAL**

Our playtime and lunchtime redevelopment for the other playgrounds continues at pace and the working party have met several times this half term to plan the rollout of the project. Once it has finished it will be very exciting.

We ask that children bring a spare pair of shoes into school with them (that can ideally stay at school), trainers would be ideal, so that they can play on the school field when it is a bit muddy without the mud coming into the building.

Mr Dwight, Mrs Carr and the working party thank you for all the donations of dressing up clothes, old coats etc that have been made so far as part of this project.

As part of this project, in January, we will be trialling lunch being served in the small hall only. This will then leave the main hall free for giant playground games such as Connect 4 and Jenga.

## **CURRICULUM AUDITS**

This term, we have had audits of our curriculum offers for Maths and Reading. These looked at the progress made since our last Ofsted inspection in 2019, in particular, looking at how we have ensured our curriculum offer is progressive from EYFS up to and including the work on our college site as well as our Phonics programme. I was delighted with the outcome and whilst we still have some work to do, I am confident that we are moving forwards in the right direction. The Spring term will bring curriculum audits for Writing and our Autism bases.

## **PARENT GOVERNOR**

We have a vacancy on our Governing Body for a Parent Governor. More information will be sent out in January about elections but for now, I would like to pass my heartfelt thanks on to Ben Marlow, who has been in post for the past 18 months.

## **NON-PUPIL DAY AND RETURN TO SCHOOL**

A reminder that Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January is a non-pupil day. All children are expected back in school on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January for the start of the Spring term. Whilst I appreciate that we are returning on a Friday, we will be recording attendance in the usual manner on this first day and we will be making the usual phone calls if children are not in. We hope that returning on a Friday will allow us to get the usual start of term wobbles out of the way before hitting the ground running the following Monday.

A reminder that Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March will also be a non-pupil day with the school closed to all children.

## **GOODBYES AND FAREWELLS**

It is the time of year when we say goodbye to staff who are leaving us. We say goodbye to Scott Davis who is moving over to our college site to oversee the

running of our Café project and creating enterprise opportunities for our post-16 learners.

Jade Calvert and Karen Kent leave our LSA team, both having taken jobs in mainstream schools.

We wish them all well for the future.

### **Special Shout Outs**

This was tricky, as all our children surprise us each day with their achievements. However, there are a few children that I would like to send a special shout out to, for massive and life changing personal development.

Ronnie in year 11, for having the determination and resilience to attend an interview for a course at Colchester Institute, Robyn in year 8, for incredible bravery in performing in a school play for the first time ever, Alfie J in year 8 for massive improvements in his emotional regulation, Sammy in class 5 for huge progress in his social skills and Riley in Oak Tree for massive progress in his Speech and Language.

### **AND FINALLY...**

3 months ago I stepped into some enormous footprints with a mixture of nervousness and excitement in equal measure. I thank all of you for your kind words, suggestions and feedback. I hope if you have popped in to see me or spoken to me on the phone, you felt listened to and valued. I hope the feedback your children are giving you is that I listen to them and value them, whether it is in the corridors, during hot chocolate sessions, in assembly, in playgrounds or in lessons. I truly love my job; it is an absolute honour to be the Head of School and I look forward to speaking with many more of you over the coming months.

I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Christmas, holiday and a very Happy 2023.

With warmest regards



Ruth Whitehead  
**Head of School**