



Bennet Canfield, Little Canfield, Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1YE

4<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

## **Re: Summer Term Update**

Amazingly the academic year is drawing to a close. I have to say that this year has been both one of the most challenging yet rewarding years in my 30 years in education. We certainly are on a journey to develop a school that provides the very best of what we can give to our children to inspire and motivate them to 'Learn, Achieve and Enjoy together'. The key themes that I will cover in this final update will include;

- a) Classes and teachers for 2018-19
- b) Reports
- c) Sports Week
- d) School improvement plan updates
- e) Attendance
- f) Parent online survey
- g) End of year arrangements
- h) Looking ahead...

### **a) Classes and teachers for 2018-19**

I am now happy to announce the new class teacher arrangements for next academic year. We say farewell and with many heartfelt thanks to Mrs Chamberlain, Miss Keeble and Miss Platten who are moving on to new challenges and we welcome Miss Chivers, Mrs Payne and Mr Purser to our team. We are aiming to try to keep as much stability in my second year as possible so, with the exception of our new colleagues all will remain the same;

**Reception:** Mrs Sharon Martin with Rowan Class **and** Miss Michelle Chivers with Elder Class.

**Year 1:** Mrs Veronica Clarke-Scholes with Maple Class **and** Mrs Genna Payne with Oak Class.

**Year 2:** Mrs Romy-Georgia McDonald with Chestnut Class **and** Miss Verity Walton with Hazel Class

**Year 3:** Mr Tom Purser with Ash Class **and** Miss Chloe Martin-Smith with Elm Class.

**Year 4:** Ms Anna Wallbank with Beech Class **and** Miss Anna Burnett with Yew Class.

**Year 5:** Mr Adam Hitchin with Lime Class **and** Miss Sam Wotton with Cherry Class.

**Year 6:** Miss Sarah Smith with Birch Class **and** Miss Claire Dennis/Mrs Nicola Russell with Willow Class.

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It is also with great pleasure that I can also announce our new middle leadership team to support Miss Dennis (Curriculum), Mrs Russell (Assessment) and I as senior leaders; Mrs Clarke-Scholes (EYFS and KS1), Mrs McDonald (English), Miss Martin-Smith (Mathematics), Mr Hitchin (Computing), Mrs Martin (EYFS Leading teacher), Miss Smith (Science) and Miss Wotton (P.E. and Sport). Mrs Griffiths continues as our Inclusion leader.

## **b) Reports**

End of year reports for the children are expected to go out on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July, with the exception of Year 6 where we wait for their SATs results which will go out on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July. Beech class reports are also delayed as Mrs Chamberlain recovers from her shoulder operation, however she has informed us that she is recovering well and reports will be completed to go out on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July. The report format is a new one and makes best use of our 'Target Tracker' assessment software. Reports are accompanied by a covering letter to explain them and an informal invite to discuss their report with their class teacher should you wish it.

## **c) Sports Week**

It is with great thanks to Miss Sam Wotton and Mr Jack Sykes for organising so well this years' events, along with all the external companies that came out to run 'Bounce' (Bounce Fit Body), 'Cricket' (HECC), 'Hockey' (Scott Traveller Academy) and 'Dance' (Rascals) along with a big thank you to Herts Young Mariners Base (HYMB) for hosting our Year 6 children for the day. Children also participated in evaluating their performances, research on sport and health as well as looking at healthy food in 'Food Technology' along with a key stage 2 sports quiz. A very well attended Sports Day rounded off the week with congratulations to all and a well done to '**Green**' house for winning the EYFS/Key Stage 1 sports day and to '**Blue**' house for winning the Key Stage 2 sports day. It was also great to see so many of you coming along to and joining into the 'aerobic warm-up' sessions at the start of the school day that worked so well. A big thank you to all the teachers, and indeed children, who were so brave to stand up in front of a 500+ audience to lead the way. The weather also played a big part with the glorious summer sunshine with children certainly learning about the impact of exercise on heart rate, breathing and temperature regulation, along with the need for hydration and taking on water regularly during the day.

I know many of you took photos on the various days and with thanks to those parents who have sent pictures through to the office. It is timely to remind you that from an e-safety perspective I have a duty of care to remind you that the photos you have taken should be for personal use only and should not be shared on social media if there are other children in those pictures. I hope over the next few days to update our website with a variety of pictures from the week to capture the spirit of the event. We will endeavour to check with our records to only include children with parental permission to use their child's photos, however if you are unhappy with any publication please let us know so that the relevant photograph can be removed and deleted from our collection.

## **d) School improvement plan updates**

This year has been very much a year of building foundations. Previously the work to move the school out of the OFSTED Special Measures category has focused, rightly, on key short term aspects to quickly raise the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. This is indeed in itself a short term approach and not sustainable without long and medium term systems and processes to ensure that we are not continually

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re-inventing the 'wheel' each year with teachers reaching burn out. To this end this year we have been successful in:

- a) Reviewing our school aims and ethos
- b) Building a new staffing structure to include key middle managers
- c) Reviewing and successfully implementing a new behaviour policy to ensure behaviour across the school enables teachers to effectively teach and children to learn.
- d) Establishing and developing more reliable and robust formative and summative assessments using Essex Target tracker to identify what children have learnt and where they need to 'close the gap'!
- e) Using 'Target Tracker' to generate a midyear summative attainment summary for parents to take away at the spring parent consultation evening. Target Tracker was also used to produce new end of year parent reports for each child, including separate reports for; i. Year 1 and some Year 2 Phonics Screen check results ii. Year 2 KS1 results and iii. Year 6 KS2 results.
- f) Establishing and developing clear long term plans each term that helps to ensure that the statutory requirements of the 2014 national curriculum are met in a creative and inspiring way that links better to real life learning.
- g) Establishing a more effective performance appraisal system that better links pay and performance against both local and national standards.
- h) Enabling the school to more objectively become self-regulating through new self-evaluation systems that join together the school's view and that of its key stakeholders to better inform school improvement planning
- i) Establishing more robust and visual budget planning systems to carefully plan over a 5-year period to better use finances and to ensure any deficits are managed in a timely manner.
- j) Improving the school website to better communicate to parents and to implement the 'Studybugs' app to make it significantly easier for parents to report absences.

There is still much to do, as we are still putting what I consider some of the 'basics' into place, all be it very high quality ones to ensure our foundations from which we metaphorically build are solid and sustain us into the future for many years to come. Please go to the '**Looking ahead...**' section for some of our next steps.

## **e) Attendance**

Early this term we had to send out about 75 first alert attendance letters to parents and 20 second alert letters. It is part of a school's statutory duties to carefully monitor children's attendance as it is a legal requirement for all children once admitted to the school to attend for the required 190 days each year as part of a child's educational entitlement. We are duty bound to send out alert letters to parents whose children may be on track for falling below the end of year 95% threshold. When we look at attendance during the autumn term 85% is used as the threshold; as a week missed over a term or half term proportionately gives a lower attendance rate at that point in the year. For the same reason we use a 90% threshold when we review attendance in the spring term for attendance over the year to date. The 95% threshold is used at the summer half-term check. Children and families that fall below the thresholds, whether absence is authorised or unauthorised, will automatically receive a generic letter based on the advised local authority model, that is required to use language to support for future possible legal action.

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This first letter is just an alert letter to raise your awareness, no further action will be taken, but can act as a prompt to any vulnerable families who are struggling at home and need further support. A second alert letter will be automatically issued if attendance falls below the second or third threshold, showing that attendance is not improving and still not on track to meet the 95% expectation by the end of the year. The second alert letter also raises your awareness of 'Fixed Penalty Notices' that we can apply to the local authority to consider issuing. Last October Essex reviewed their criteria for issuing these 'Fixed Penalties';

#### **Recent changes to Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices**

The **Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices** has recently been updated and changes came into effect on 1st October 2017. Parents should be aware of the main changes below:

- A penalty notice may be issued if 10 unauthorised absence sessions have occurred during a 10 week period (N.B. Each school day is made up of 2 sessions)
- A penalty notice may be issued if there are 6 or more unauthorised sessions due to a holiday taken during the first two weeks of September (this will apply for holidays taken during September 2018 onwards)

If the above criteria is met then the Head Teacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 per parent/carers, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance with maximum penalties of up to £2,500 or a custodial sentence.

Please do note that these penalty notices are only relevant to **unauthorised absence**. Do please note that it is very highly likely that any requests for term time holiday will come back to you as unauthorised. The children do get 13 weeks holiday a year, plus we try to put most of our INSET days tagged onto the beginning or end of a holiday period. Taking holidays during term time because holidays are cheaper or because of working patterns is not considered as an exceptional reason for a holiday request to be granted.

#### **f) Parent online survey**

Many thanks to all 132 of you who have completed our online survey. The survey closes on Friday 13 July for those who have not had opportunity to share your views. Please go to the 'Home' page on our school website [www.takeley-pri.essex.sch.uk](http://www.takeley-pri.essex.sch.uk) and click on the 'EES for schools' logo. All views are anonymous and not shared with any 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.

#### **g) End of year arrangements**

'Sports-Star' are coming in to our whole school assembly on **Friday 6 July** to promote their summer school provision taking place here at Takeley from 23 July to 17 August. Please visit [www.sports-star.co.uk](http://www.sports-star.co.uk) for further details or to book your place.

We have our 'Moving up' morning on **Wednesday 11 July** from 9:00am to 11:30am for children to have introductory lessons in their new classrooms with their new class teachers.

The Year 6 production; 'Shakespeare Rocks!' is being performed on **Monday 16<sup>th</sup>** and **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> July** at 6pm each evening for our Year 6 parents and family. Tickets and further information will be available soon.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> July** is our last day of term and at 2:30pm we have our final whole school assembly which includes our Year 6 leavers assembly including children's peer nominated awards, a touch of music and a

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final possible tearful farewell with the rest of the school waving them goodbye and wishing them well at the end. Year 6 parents have been invited, with two seats available per child as space is going to be limited that afternoon with all staff and children in attendance. If your child is in Year 6 please do let the office know as soon as possible if you wish to attend and whether you require 1 or 2 seats per child.

The first day back in our new academic year is for the children in Years 1 through to 6; **Wednesday 5 September**. Our Early Years classes have home visits that week before starting part-time on Monday 10 September from doors opening at 8:45am, with registration from 8:50am, to leaving after lunch at 12:45pm. Full-time provision starts from Monday 17 September with the school day finishing at 3:20pm. Our revised and phased induction aiming to help ease them into school life.

## **h) Looking ahead...**

Next year a key theme is to focus on 'Resources'. We desperately need to invest in; i. fiction and non-fiction books to help raise standards in Reading, ii 'manipulatives' to support the fluency and concrete understanding of mathematical concepts in each classroom iii. Science resources to support 'Working Scientifically' iv. Our creaking ICT infrastructure....and the list could go on for each foundation subject too. Not to mention a large investment in improving the Key Stage 2 play space by adding an adventure playground opposite the existing netball/basketball courts at the bottom part of the field.

We are looking to introduce next year 'Class Dojo' an online reward and communication tool for KS1 and 2 teachers to share how well children are doing. A few teachers have been internally trialling this, particularly Miss Wotton and Mr Hitchin this year.

We have also raised the prospect of opening up the Year 6 courtyard for entrance and exit for just Year 6 children at the start and end of each day for a trial period This could be extended to opening up the shared Y3, 4 and 5 courtyard at the end of the day for those children and parents too.

The outcomes from all our self-evaluations and survey results have a high priority in helping to set our school improvement plans for next year and likely beyond. The results of which we will share during the first half of the autumn term.

Finally, on a personal note, it is with great thanks and appreciation to all our parents, children, governors and staff that have supported our growth and development this year. At times it has been a bumpy ride as the changes that I have expected have brought new challenges. Challenges that will make us better and stronger and ensure our community is able to give our children the very best start in life; '**Learning, achieving and enjoying together**' has begun. We are not quite there....yet!

Thank you.

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