



20th March 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

School Update

In my role as Chair of Governors, I meet with Headteacher, Deborah Howard, regularly in addition to our scheduled Full Governing Body and sub-committee meetings.

In our catch up meetings, Deborah shares with me the work that has been going on in school. We recently agreed that we would share these updates with you all. So much goes on in school and our staff work so hard that it would be impossible for me to get all the news into one letter. I will, however, communicate the key messages about what is going on in school.

In this letter I am reporting more than I normally will, so that I can update you about some of the work completed since Christmas. Before I do, though, I would like to tell you the first thing that Deborah always reports to me is how brilliant the children are.

Following on from the Christmas holidays, the key updates to share with you are as follows:

- **The Senior Leadership Team continue to work well together.** The current structure is temporary and the team is made up of Deborah Howard (Headteacher), Helen Woolf (Acting Deputy Head), Laura Flynn (Acting Deputy Head), Donna Wealleans (Assistant Head) and Sue Lamb (School Business Manager). Our most recent independent Quality Assurance Report from the Local Authority stated: 'The team works very effectively together and has a shared vision for excellence. There is very clear drive and ambition for the school.'
- **Staff have worked together to organise the 'workstations' around school carefully.** As you will know, we have bases around school where interventions happen and at present we have two spare classrooms. The staff have worked together and enhanced these bases to ensure all interventions can happen in calm, happy and organised spaces. Staff and children have reported that it is working smoothly and we have already seen the positive impact of the improved spaces on the children's progress.
- **Further progress has been made on the school's visioning exercise.** Earlier in the academic year, staff worked together to agree on ten words that described what they wanted the children to gain from their time at Oswald Road. They then worked on what this would mean for the classroom, the school and the school as part of the community. Deborah has worked with groups of children on developing the vision based on these ten words and she recently brought the work to the Governing Body for review and input from the Governors. The vision will be shared with the school community shortly and you will then start to recognise the themes and aspirations of the vision in all the work carried out at our school.



Inspiration & Success





- **Deborah has spent time in the classroom since Christmas.** She has worked with a Year 5 creative writing group, a Year 6 mental maths group and a Year 6 after school maths group. She has also been involved in team teaching. She always enjoys teaching and she reported to me the wonderful attitude towards learning the children have displayed.
- **The playground development is moving forward.** I was excited to hear that Anna Wilson (Year 3 teacher and Eco Team Lead) has been meeting with Groundwork (the company who have been managing the development of our outdoor space) and the school's student Eco Team to review plans and make any final changes before the works begin.
- **Deborah has led Welfare Meetings with staff across school.** She has invested a significant amount of time into this important work and has enjoyed the process and values the input from her staff. Staff have found the process useful and have appreciated the meetings.
- **A number of Parent Forums have taken place.** I was interested to hear about a School Improvement Plan Parent Forum, SEND (Special Educational Needs/Disability) Parent Forum and RE Parent Forum. We highly value parental input and the Parent Forums are a great way of obtaining this from our community.
- **The Assessment Team continue to meet termly to discuss all the data in school.** Each member brings data on different groups which is shared and discussed within the team and followed up with actions where needed. This procedure was introduced by Deborah when she joined the school and is a vital part of keeping up to date with what our data tells us. Much of this data is scrutinised by Governors at the Teaching and Learning sub-committee. Pupil Progress Meetings also continue to run termly (half termly for Early Years, Year 2 and Year 6). The feedback I have received about these is that the knowledge the teaching staff now have of what the data for their class tells them is excellent and this is then used to ensure progress is maximised across the year. The school's recent Quality Assurance report (commissioned by the Local Authority) reads very positively for the school and highlights the progress we are continuing to make.
- **Alex Hodges has joined us in our new Communications and Marketing Manager role.** We are excited to finally have Alex in place and we will share with you more about this role soon. His immediate priorities include sharing school news more effectively with you all, improving the consistency and effectiveness of our communication and listening to the views of the community and feeding this back for integration into the school's plans.
- **Our Middle Leaders continue to develop.** Our Middle Leaders in school have been working really hard, including working closely with the Senior Leadership Team on joint book scrutinies, joint observations of teaching and team teaching. This approach supports the development of our staff and builds capacity and planning for succession development within our school.
- **Donna Wealleans has led a visioning exercise with her team around pastoral support and Safeguarding.** It was really interesting to hear the team's ideas and the level of commitment that is evident for supporting our children in a variety of ways.





- **Deborah reported to me that the 'Child of the Term' winners had enjoyed the tea party they had had with her.** They enjoyed traditional party games including Pass the Parcel, Musical Chairs and Pin the Tail on the Donkey.
- **'We love Oswald Road' was a great success.** I attended the event and thoroughly enjoyed it. It was amazing to see the range of art and music activity and I thought it was a really special opening event for Oswald Road. What a wonderful day of celebration for our school.
- **Sarah Greenway leads a programme called Reading Recovery at school, which is such a life changing intervention.** The school recognises the importance of reading and works in many ways to support development of reading across school. Sarah has had an open door policy and staff across school have been observing her sessions and having follow up meetings with her, discussing how they can use the Reading Recovery strategies within their own teaching. The school has also committed to teachers across school accessing specialist reading training from staff at Barlow Hall Primary School.
- **Early Years Foundation Stage environment and Learning Journeys have been classed as 'Outstanding' by internal observations.** I was thrilled to hear this excellent news and there will be further communication about this soon.
- **Governors and the Senior Leadership Team have worked on our SEF (Self Evaluation Form).** This was a really interesting day and the Governors who attended reported that they were so impressed hearing all that goes on in our school. The SEF is regularly updated and will be shared with the Local Authority at our next Quality Assurance visit.
- **And finally...World Book Day.** Deborah told me what an effort children and staff made. I heard that everyone looked fantastic and that this was a really special day for our school.

Of course, there is much more happening on a day-to-day basis, but I hope that this gives you a flavour of the range, value and impact of the work on our children's learning and social development going on around school. The teaching and learning focus is still on our two main targets, 'Application of maths' and 'Challenge for all learners, including SEND'. These threads run through staff appraisal targets, the School Improvement Plan, Phase and Subject Leader's plans and this streamlined approach is supporting the focus and aims in these areas.

Despite all that is happening now, we still have a lot of work to do to continue the journey to outstanding in all aspects of school life. We have a committed and energetic team in place who work hard each day to achieve the very best for our children.

I hope you are all enjoying the spring term.

Kind regards

Helen Dobson
Chair of Governors



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