



Asfordby Captain's Close Primary School

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Dear Parents/Carers

Happy New Year! It has been so lovely to welcome you all back and to greet new friends and old who are joining or returning to the Captain's Close family. It genuinely does feel like a big family, and we were overwhelmed by the events at the end of last year where staff children and families really gave 2016/17 a good send off. Thank you for all the letters of appreciation we received. I couldn't ask for a more committed team of professionals to work with and it is especially heartening to see them appreciated.

We are looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Meet and Greets. We have changed the format this year in response to a number of requests in relation to year group clashes. This year, we are inviting mixed year groups in over two days and we will meet in the Hall to go through some of the things that are similar in each class, then the teachers will go to their classrooms and you are welcome to move between them. We hope this allows you time to meet all your children's teachers. EYFS parent events will work slightly differently throughout the year. Miss Giles has worked hard to get as many key dates on the website as we can please be mindful some of these may be subject to change, but we will do our best to keep them consistent.

Although the children have only been in a few days, over the last couple of weeks we have been preparing for an exciting year. We have worked hard to further develop our curriculum linked to real world issues, particularly now we have single year groups. This also means linking events, and opportunities for you to come in to all we do. Our curriculum also ensures it supports all the key expectations of age related standards, which you know are tested at Year 2 and Year 6, but is relevant to all our children and the context of where we are and how we can offer opportunities to widen perspectives on the world.

Our Meet and Greets will outline these key expectations and how they change year on year. It is important we recognise the expectations our children face at each stage in their journey, as each year is different and they have had an extended period of time off. Our first six weeks back is always establishing new expectations, but revisiting and consolidating things we may have forgotten during the break. Key to our success is developing the core skills of Reading-not just deciphering words, but really understanding and considering the meaning and how authors use language to influence readers. This also helps with Writing and we will be further developing our active approaches to Reading and Writing to really develop Vocabulary and Grammar skills, which are essential just not to their achievements here, but as they go out into the world. We, as I'm sure you do, want to make sure they get the very best start in life. This year we have new Patrons of Reading to enthuse us. Steve Barlow and Steve Skidmore will be coming to school later in the month and we can't wait to work with them-I think they have plans for parents too!

In Maths, we are really focusing on fluency in number if children really have a good command of key number facts and understand how numbers work (place value) this enables them to reason and investigate,

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which is such a big part of key expectations, but also allows them to develop key life skills for solving problems. Mr Pearce will be taking part in a trust wide project to develop this with Mrs Chapman.

However, in addition to academic successes, at Captain's Close we are renowned across County and beyond for supporting children's emotional wellbeing. We hold an enhanced Healthy Schools Award. Our staff work tirelessly to ensure our children are well rounded and happy-or supported in times of challenge, as well as crafting learning experiences that develop resilience and strategies to support them in whatever challenges they face. We always put the interests and well-being of our children first-why wouldn't we? We share your wish to enable them to grown into successful and independent adults, where empathy for others and social skills enable them to forge positive relationships.

Essential to all of this is working in partnership with you. Last year saw the success of our Fun and Families sessions and our Champions project with Year 6 and we are looking to extend some of this work across the school this year. The appointment of pupil leaders has started this, but scheduling regular parent events meant you could really understand what was going on in school. Ultimately all we do is based on our professional knowledge of what works, and all the work we do across schools, but also in the interests of the children we teach-why wouldn't it be I hear you say. We want the best for our children. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate what I always say at this time of year, if there is something you don't understand, please come and ask us, or ring if you can't make it in to school. It is essential to your child's wellbeing and development at school that we work together positively and we want to make it work. Ultimately in schools , where there are lots of humans with a myriad of emotions, things may not always run smoothly but we will work to sort it to the best of our ability-or we will look for solutions together.

In an age where we have to work hard to model to children the correct ways to use all the technologies we have, with the dangers of online bullying and text/posts/email communications being misunderstood or harmful to others, I would ask you to remember our staff are humans and if they see hurtful comments on social media this can be damaging to relationships, as well as damaging to our school's reputation, and ultimately to our children. If you are concerned about anything, please come in and discuss it with us as it is essential we model these problem solving skills to our children, and ultimately we want the same things.

The whole community has worked hard to build our school to the successes we now celebrate and this year the building of our new classroom is evidence of the pride and confidence everyone has for our children and our growing community. Our Sports skills have improved-we even beat Frisby last year! Our staff are recognised as key experts across communities-Miss G is furthering her work as a Lead professional for English and we are very lucky to have her. Mrs Chapman's Maths research, and Miss Patel's work with the research groups were observed by dozens last year, and not one to blow my own trumpet normally, I'm finally an author my research work is being published in a book this year. The Royal Shakespeare Company have recognised how special and innovative our school is in selecting us, as one of only 10 schools across the country to work with them as a lead school. There are very exciting and enriching times ahead in addition to the focused work we do to improve our key priorities we're always learning and we're looking forward to sharing this even further with you this year.

So let's get on with it-many thanks,

Julia Hancock

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