

July 2023

Dear Families,

The school year is drawing to an end and so I am writing my annual letter to you all. Although we are all suffering from financial pressures, and school budgets are certainly not exempt, the routine running of the school has returned to normal. This is largely due to the dedication of the staff who work as a team to provide the best for our children, ensure that their individual needs are identified and supported and that each learning step is mastered before the next challenge is introduced.

Over the year there has once again been significant focus on catching up on learning which was lost during previous years when Covid caused particular problems for younger children; social and writing skills being a prime example. The support given at home is a highly valued contribution and I hope that you can continue with this.

I am pleased to report that Mrs Moss is happy with progress of the catch up work. Her view is supported by the end of year results which show encouraging progress. You will be aware that we were able to fund a Group Provision building at the rear of the site for children with specific needs for the start of last autumn term. This has significantly eased pressures on the hall and has proved to be a valuable asset overall.

We have finally been able to fund a much needed staff area (the previous staff room was given up to provide the larger kitchen facilities needed for producing so many lunches) from funding available to schools for this purpose and work is due to start at the beginning of the summer holidays. This should be complete early in the new term.

I am delighted to see that activities such as class visits for parents, sports day, school trips (and particularly the Year 4 Malvern residential trip which provides such a good finale to the time at the school) and PFTA functions such as the Summer Fete are fully operational once again, as they all contribute so much to the school community.

A few staff will move on at the end of term and I want to thank them for their efforts and wish them well for the future. We thank Mrs Gwilliam for her work this year and for many years as parent governor. She is returning to a leadership role in Birmingham. Congratulations and thanks to Mrs Garner who has been promoted to an administration role in another school. Many thanks to Miss Chamberlain who has already returned to us after training for a fixed term contract and we hope to see her again in the future! Finally, huge thanks to Mrs Morgan who has worked at BFS for 17 years and will move into a different role at another school. We thank her for her dedication and long service. We will be welcoming their replacements in September and I am sure that they will quickly make a contribution.

The overall financial position of the school is always under pressure in view of funding limitations and, although a number of other projects are under discussion, we are very conscious that we need to ensure that any expenditure must be assessed against the financial position before orders are placed.

Work towards the formation of the Worcestershire Hills Trust (WHT) is progressing and informal contacts are being made via regular meeting with the partner schools. As I mentioned in a previous letter, the WHT has the particular attraction that it will provide stability for the school and ensure that we can continue with our current tailored approach to the education of our children without introducing problems for families as there will be no changes to the school day and no changes to the school uniform.



I have decided that this organisational change provides an appropriate time to pass the role of Chair of Governors to a (much) younger governor in September but I hope to continue to be a member of the Governing Body for some time yet.

It is clear that this has been another successful year for the school and at the recent Governor's meeting we once again recorded our thanks to Mrs Moss and all her team for their continuing outstanding efforts to support the children.

In conclusion I should like to sincerely thank all those who have done so much during my term of office - Governors, Staff, the PTFA and families – for their great contributions to making Blackwell First School so attractive on so many levels. Good luck to our special Year 4s and their families and all of those moving on.

My best wishes to you all.

Hugh Evans

Chair of Governors

