

Dear Families

In writing my end of year letter to you all, I once again note what a challenging time we are living through and I thank you all for your efforts in support of both your own children and BFS during such a difficult period. I am sure that you will agree that Mrs Moss and her staff have made every effort to keep as close to normal operation as the strict health guidelines will allow and I am pleased that some relaxation of the 'bubble' restrictions has been possible this term.

As a result of their hard work, we have so far been able to keep the whole school open since September and, although some children and staff have had to self-isolate and work from home during the autumn term, the overall attendance figures have again been impressively high. I sincerely hope that we can continue to keep fully open in the New Year but until further scientific studies on the omicron variant of the Covid virus have been completed it is impossible to know whether this will be achievable or what changes to routines may be needed. Your continued cooperation with any necessary changes to the procedures and safety guidance from Mrs Moss would be greatly appreciated.

As is normal practice, the school has set targets for each year group for the overall academic standards to be achieved by next June. The regular assessment of the performance level of each child is also a key feature and allows individual issues to be identified at an early stage and appropriate support provided as needed. The Governing Body has a duty to routinely monitor progress during the year. This is done by a combination of Governor assessments and by expert external inspections by the Local Authority and by Head Teachers of partner schools. I am pleased to report that the external views strongly support our positive internal assessments.

It is likely that we will be inspected by Ofsted in the coming months if schools remain 'open as normal' and, in light of the above, I am confident that we can demonstrate that we are providing a well-balanced programme which meets the needs of all the children in line with our vision. Families with children in the earlier classes may not be fully aware of how much the operation of the school has been affected by the pandemic but I am well aware that on site visits to classrooms and for activities such as Christmas and Summer Fetes and the traditional activities at St Catherine's church have not been possible in light of clear guidance from WCC health and safety advisors. I have missed attending these activities as they are an important part of school life.

The possibilities for educational trips, competitive team sports and residential trips are currently limited but I am pleased that the children have experienced a visit this term and am sure that these activities will be fully reintroduced as soon as it is safe to do so. I should particularly like to thank the PTFA for their various efforts e.g. the scarecrow event, which have supported the community feel of the school at a time when some of the traditional activities such as the Summer Fayre and Christmas Fete have not been possible. Finally, I should like to thank Mrs Moss and all the staff for their truly outstanding efforts throughout the year. We are indeed fortunate to have such dedicated staff.

Season's greetings to you all.

Hugh Evans
Chair of Governors

