



Dear Parents and Carers,

I want to start this final newsletter of the year with a huge 'thank you' to you, the parents and carers of our 440 children. I want to thank you for your support, encouragement, honesty and increased shared determination to make Ark Dickens Primary Academy a very exciting place to both work and learn. Our school has huge potential and that potential will one day see our school become an outstanding place of learning, culture, sporting and musical excellence and I continue to be very proud to be the Principal here.

Pride was a real feature of our Macmillan Cancer Support Charity Day on Wednesday. This fundraising day was 100% the brainchild of the Year 6 pupils, keen to support those who need the help of Macmillan right now. As a result of their hard work and absolute determination, we have so far raised £600 for this superb charity; I could not be more proud! The run in the morning, the football games, the stalls, the show, the raffle, all a resounding success and I am so grateful to the children, staff and parents who made this idea become a successful reality. Thank you so much to all! It has begun a wonderful conclusion to the end of this very special year.

Ofsted Inspection News:

I am delighted to be able to tell you that our Ofsted Inspection report will be published on Monday. On that day we will be sending you home a copy of this important report in order that you too can celebrate the successes and understand the huge task which still needs to be done to make an outstanding school here at Ark Dickens. You will see from the report that the judgement of the Ofsted inspectors, completely agreed with our judgement that the school "Requires Improvement" because it is still not yet "Good". The inspectors made clear that the school has come a long way in the last year or so

and the school has made sure it is no longer failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for the children. You can read for yourself the identified strengths and also the three things we must do quickly to improve further.

- 1) We need to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to make certain all our children are challenged to do really well.
- 2) Behaviour across the school has to be more consistently good and as teachers, leaders and parents we have to have higher expectations of the children so far as their behaviour is concerned. Too many children are still disturbing the learning of others and this needs to stop. During the summer break, we will be looking again at the behaviour policy and revising it so that the expectations are higher and the rewards and sanctions much clearer. Having permanently excluded a pupil for the first time in my career this week, I think I have made clear to all that poor behaviour has no place at Ark Dickens. I look forward to your support with this improvement drive.
- 3) Attendance has to improve. Too many children miss too much school and the Inspection Framework is very clear that unless our Attendance improves, our school will never be good. Too many children (almost 90) are persistently absent from school. This means they have attendance which is below 90% (96% being the national average). In September, beginning in Week 1, where attendance is not 100%, discussions with me as Principal will take place. We are happy to support in any way we can, but as parents you have a responsibility to make certain your children are in school every day unless they are genuinely unwell. Holidays, trips away, days out, extended periods not at school

all contribute to poor attendance figures and this is something we need to tackle once and for all in the coming year.

- 4) Our Middle leaders need to develop now and take on more responsibility. So in September, we will be introducing 'Phase Leaders'. This means that Mrs Grosvenor will be responsible for Years N and R, Miss Strode will lead Years 1 and 2, Miss Griffiths will be Phase Lead for Years 3 and 4 and finally Miss Coombs will lead Years 5 and 6. When we return from the summer break we will let you know how these changes will affect you and any concerns you may have about who to talk to.

So for me and my senior leadership team, the Inspection was a positive one because it proved that we do know what we are doing and that the school is on track to improve now more quickly. The Inspectors will be back within a year to make sure we are continuing to improve and we will, of course, let you know how that goes.

If you have any questions or comments to pass on to me then please do so at: j.waelend@arkdickensprimary.org. Thank you to the parents that have already done so and do please use this email address if there is anything I can help you with.

Time to say 'Goodbye' to lots of great people!

So, it is 'all change' at Ark Dickens this summer. Firstly I am delighted to tell you that Mrs Smith (Year 3 Teacher) safely gave birth to her son on Tuesday this week. We warmly congratulate her on the birth of her baby boy.

On Tuesday we say farewell to three of our teachers: Mr Hughes, who is having a change of career, Miss Carr who is moving to another school in the city, Miss Davies who is returning to Wales. We thank them hugely for all they have done for us and wish them every success in the future.

Several Teaching Assistants are leaving us for pastures new, so we want to thank each of them for all they have done

whilst here at Ark Dickens. Miss Daniels (Year6) is leaving to move to Bristol, Mrs Swarbrick is leaving to move with her family to Canada and Miss Wells is leaving to begin her Teacher Training.

From our Admin team, it is also time to say farewell to Miss Barratt, who has only been with us for a year but we wish her well for the future. We also need to say 'goodbye' to Mrs Davies, our attendance and admissions officer. Most days parents coming into the front office would see Mrs Davies and we will miss her very much. She will be leaving us to work alongside her husband in his developing electrical business.

A huge thank you to all of those people; we will miss you all!

Finally, two quick reminders:

- 1) In September, school will finish at 3pm on a Friday for Years R to 6. If you would like your child to remain with us until 3.45pm on a Friday, you **MUST** contact the front Reception Desk and give them your name and contact email. We will then be in touch with you and arrange details with you personally. This provision will only be available for the first half term, after which parents will be expected to have made alternative child care arrangements for a Friday. Thank you
- 2) Please may I remind you that School finishes at 1.30pm on Tuesday for Years R to Year 6 nursery will finish at the usual time.

Many thanks for all your support this year and have a fabulous summer break.



Joy Waelend
Executive Principal