

# October Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

The first month has whizzed by and we are approaching the end of this half-term at a frightening pace. I am happy to say that the children have continued to settle in well, with almost all aspects of our learning up and running once again including that beyond the school day with a 109 pupils attending our after-school clubs—a welcome return!

In regard to COVID-19, we have had six cases so far, but pleasingly, there appears to have been no or limited spread within the school thus demonstrating the importance of some of the restrictions that we have maintained. Key to this has also been you, the parents and carers, being vigilant of symptoms and using the tests that are at your disposal to identify any infection before it enters the school, for which we are extremely grateful.

Without doubt, the cases will continue throughout the year and beyond as this becomes the new norm, and we will continue to notify classes when this occurs. However, whilst these continue to be resulting in mainly mild illness and limited school absence, we are still hopeful that we can further return to a full programme of education with things such as the school choir and playground leaders soon to return. These steps will be taken gradually and I hope you can understand that there will be pauses to this wider provision when classes need to return temporarily to bubbles and tighter restrictions as cases fluctuate.

**The role of EMAT** Within the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, each of the schools are afforded a lot of flexibility in regard to the way in which they teach and ultimately, the education they provide. This really does enable each school to tailor its provision to the pupils and communities that they serve—something that we are very thankful for.

Instead, much of the support and challenge that comes from the Trust relates to the effectiveness with which this is achieved and the efficiency in which the school operates, ensuring compliance with regulations, financial best practice etc. As such, we are aware that their role can be hidden at times from you and the children, and therefore underestimated. However, this term, there will be a clear example of the advantages provided through working within a Trust, with an investment of around half a million pounds being directed into the school site.

Already, you may have noticed that one of the mobiles has been removed after 27 years of service. Within the next few weeks, this will be replaced with a new mobile returning much needed space for small group interventions. A key part of the school's approach to learning is through the provision of targeted support which often needs to take place outside of the class and has been hampered by the lack of this space.

Perhaps more significantly, the Trust will shortly continue with its work in recovering the entire school roof. This work began in the Spring of 2019 with the EYFS and kitchen's roof replaced, but plans are now underway to address the remaining areas of the school. Whilst I fully understand that these are not the most exciting parts of the school, flat roofs are prone to flooding and leaks with the school probably experiencing 5-10 a year of various sizes. At times, these can cost as much as £1000 a time to fix and therefore, can greatly impact upon the more exciting aspects of education that we can provide. Unfortunately, there will be some disruption at times, but is necessary in ensuring the school remains watertight for the next 25 years, freeing up substantial funds to invest in other areas of the school.

**The Importance of Reading** Now that the children have settled back in, all classes should have started to get in to their homework routines. Beyond just consolidating key skills, homework plays a hugely important role in developing an attitude of life long learning with your child. Perhaps more than any other characteristic, a good work ethic and a motivation to learn (as opposed to just turning up to be taught) is a key predictor in a pupil's success whilst at school.

Whilst all of our tasks, and the fact that they are routinely completed, are important to contributing to this, developing an early habit of reading is the most important. Not all pupils (like adults) will necessarily enjoy reading for pleasure, but those that have a habit of regularly picking up a book can develop a habit that provides a huge advantage that will last the whole of their time in education and beyond. Therefore, we are extremely grateful for the support that you provide in this area.

**PTA** This Wednesday (6th), the school Parent Teacher Association will be holding its AGM at the school. This will take place between 7-8pm in the classroom nearest to the main school gate. We are always looking for members to support the fantastic work that they provide in the school and so all are welcome.



**Curriculum** This year, there have been legal changes around what the children are taught within Relationship and Sex Education during their time at primary school. In terms of content, the school made this change about 3 years ago and therefore we do not see that there will be significant changes to our current curriculum. However, one major change is in a parent's ability to opt out of certain aspects of this learning. As a result, it is really important that we have the opportunity to consult with parents and take your views into account. This was planned for last summer but we will now be aiming to share this virtually in November through a series of TEAMS presentations with more details to follow shortly.

