

Dear Parents/Carers,

A warm welcome to our new families and welcome back to everyone else! I hope you enjoyed your summer, although I will stop short of mentioning any fine weather....

Well done to all our new pupils. Each of them have made a fine start to the academic year, made new friends and are thoroughly enjoying the challenge of a new school and the new routines that come with it. It never ceases to amaze me how much the pupils grow during the break, particularly those moving into Year 8.

Our two training days were packed with work on the curriculum that has been put together by all schools within the Trust. A 'through' curriculum that is sequenced and builds on prior knowledge from year R all the way through to year 9 was a huge undertaking, but provides great coherence for pupils as they move through key stage 1, 2 and 3 and ensuring they hold the correct knowledge, skills and experience to succeed with their GCSEs.

Our core values of Excellence, Endeavour and Enjoyment and our mission statement of being inspired to go beyond our perceived limits have been well set out during this first week. I have been inspired by a team of teachers who have so enthusiastically welcomed all pupils, set their expectations and started to deliver the curriculum with great skill. The pupils have stepped up to the challenge and have already produced some fantastic work.

Fundamental to this hard work is recognising the endeavours, excellence and joy of learning. We launched 'Epraise' this week. I am sure you have heard about this and I have spoken to some parents who have gone an extra step by downloading the app and registering. As it stands the function is disabled as we learn to use all the functions and learn from our mistakes. Once we have sorted this there will be an official launch and I believe it will prove to be a great tool to communicate with parents.

Over the summer we completed our extensive roof repairs and significant internal decoration. The school looks fantastic and one in which pupils and staff will thrive. It has been a busy 12 months developing our infrastructure: with the broadband fully functioning; investment in teaching devices such as the IPEVO visualisers; 60 brand new desktop computers; further development of Accelerated Reader, Hegarty and Tassomai learning platforms. We have also spent thousands on new reading texts for pupils to enjoy as part of their English curriculum and Tutor Led Reading. There is so much to look forward to this year.

Unfortunately I do have to mention Covid. It remains a challenge to us all. We have maintained cleaning rotas, respiratory hygiene routines and ventilation in school. We are lucky to have so many external windows in each classroom. Lunchtimes are staggered and each year group has their own spaces in the playground. We have contingency plans in place should cases rise and will act accordingly. We have just completed the in school testing requested by the Government and I would like to thank all the staff involved in this process as it is a huge undertaking, especially at the beginning of the academic year. Staff and pupils are now asked to test twice a week and parents should have received information on this earlier today. We also encourage any person identified as a close contact (whether inside or outside their household) to obtain a PCR test.

On the brightside, there are now things we have been able to re-start. The most significant being whole school worship. All I can say is WOW! It was lovely hearing staff and pupils alike talk about it with such passion. Our Year 5 pupils were in awe of seeing the whole school together. It has been too long!

Have a great weekend, I am sure many of you will look forward to a slightly delayed start to the morning on Saturday and Sunday. There will be staff looking forward to resting their voices! We are all developing our 'match fitness' of being in school.

Mr Christopher