May 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back after what I hope was an enjoyable Easter break.

We are now over half way through the school year and life continues to be extremely busy in our schools.

I hope you have been able to access the new school websites and are finding them useful; we have tried to think about all the information you would want to find in the easiest way possible. Please let us know if you can think of any improvements.

The journey so far…well, our three schools continue to work closely together and one of our priorities is the transition for children from Y2 to Y3. Mrs Glaister is leading a team of staff from across the three schools to plan for this. As you may be aware this work has started and both children and staff from Grove are already in regular communication with Y2 pupils at Hamilton and Northwood. There are many transition activities planned and we are very excited about the impact this will have on the children.

Our Trustees and Governors continue to commission external Teaching and Learning reviews in all of our schools. To date, both Hamilton and Grove have had independent reviews which report in great detail the many strengths of the schools, the quality of teaching and learning, impact of Leadership and suggest further ideas for improvement. These are very useful because they clarify that the schools are focusing on the right things to continually improve provision for our children. They are also useful because the findings support internal judgements and confirm to myself and Trustees that our knowledge about the schools is correct. Northwood are due a review in the Summer term.

Our Trust is continually looking at ways to improve the indoor and outdoor learning environments within the schools. As you will know, school funding has repeatedly been cut and we work really hard to apply for bids and external funding to help us achieve our vision. I’m delighted to confirm that Mrs Lancaster, our Executive Business Manager has secured a bid worth £129,961 to replace Grove’s fencing and outdoor provision and £86,127 to replace the Hamilton fire alarm. In addition we have pooled resources for our site and Inclusion teams to release monies to improve the indoor environments. At Hamilton this has hugely improved Reception and Year 1 classrooms.

At Northwood, all classes have benefitted from internal refitting whilst at Grove, Mrs. Machin has ensured that all indoor areas have been hugely developed and improved. We are highly committed to improving your children’s learning in every way possible.

As you know, our school’s leadership teams are focused on PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR & WELFARE (PDBW) and TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT (TLA). We constantly focus on improving attendance as far too many children are being taken on holiday in term time. We are also improving pupil voice so pupils have a REAL say in how we run their school, the Teaching and Learning reviews saw groups of pupils being interviewed. Ensuring behaviour is the best it can be, eliminating any bullying and keeping children safe are also high priority areas.

In TLA, the work is all about improving Teaching and Learning, finding ways to motivate children to learn. Our focus on developing Maths across the Trust is going well and pupils are really benefitting from the Concrete Pictoral Abstract approach where they secure their learning initially with physical resources and pictures, before moving on to written methods.

I regularly visit each school but have been absent for the past few weeks due to an operation. However I am kept well informed by Mrs Carrigan, the Deputy Executive Principal for the Trust, that each school is working incredibly hard to ensure teaching and learning is the best it can be.

With very best wishes

Mrs S Moran

Executive Principal