End of Autumn 1 Newsletter

This half term has absolutely whizzed by! It is hard to believe that we are already beginning to think about the "big festive C" in just a couple of months' time. Teachers have already started looking at Christmas performances and planning some exciting events for the end of the term. There is certainly lots to look forward to!

Federation Improvement Priorities

As you will know, every school has an ongoing improvement plan based on its self-evaluation, identifying strengths and areas for further development. This year, our Federation has four key priorities that will help us continue to improve outcomes and experiences for all children.

Curriculum

Our curriculum remains an important area of ongoing development and is something we will continue to refine over the coming years. Mrs Carey (Burley) is leading this work across the Federation and is developing our curriculum journey from Year R through to Year 6. A particular focus is ensuring that children make meaningful connections between new learning and prior knowledge, whilst also strengthening the way our curriculum reflects our Federation vision and values.

Recently, Mrs Carey and I attended the Hampshire Curriculum Conference, where we heard from several inspirational speakers about the strengths of mixed-age classes and explored ways to build on the excellent work already taking place within our schools.

Attendance

As you know, supporting good attendance remains a key priority for us, as it does for many schools nationally. We continue to work closely with the Local Authority, who have been sharing best practice from across Hampshire and supporting schools in strengthening attendance procedures and communication.

We know there is a strong link between attendance and children's outcomes, wellbeing and future life chances. As a result, we are currently reviewing both our attendance policy and our procedures. Mrs Rixon and Mrs Morris, along with our fantastic administrative teams across the Federation,

continue to monitor attendance closely. Where attendance begins to fall, families may receive a letter informing them of their child's current attendance percentage so that we can work together to provide support where needed.

Behaviour

Across our Federation, we are committed to ensuring a consistent approach to behaviour support in every classroom. We see behaviour as something that is taught, developed and nurtured alongside academic learning.

During our next two INSET days, we will be welcoming behaviour specialist, Kit Messenger, to work with staff across both schools. This will support our ongoing work in reviewing and refining our approaches to behaviour, ensuring that we continue to meet the needs of all children effectively.

Teaching and Learning

As a Federation, we have developed a shared vision of what excellent teaching and learning looks like and have established a set of non-negotiables that should be evident across all lessons.

Teachers continue to work collaboratively across our schools, planning together and sharing best practice. Our English and Mathematics leaders have been visiting classrooms to celebrate strengths and provide developmental feedback. In addition, Mrs Sewell is working alongside our Educational Psychologist to further develop our Ordinarily Available Provision. This refers to the universal support that should be available in every classroom to ensure all children can access learning successfully, regardless of need or ability.

We look forward to keeping you updated as this work progresses and as we work towards our longer-term goals for both schools.

Parent Consultations

Parent consultations will take place shortly after half term. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the progress your child is making, look through their work and find out more about their learning and development in school.

However, we would always encourage parents not to wait until consultation evenings if they have questions or concerns. If you would like to discuss anything regarding your child at any point during

the year, please speak to their class teacher directly or contact the school office to arrange a meeting or telephone call.

Teacher Advertisements

We know that many parents follow our social media channels and village community pages. Recently, an advertisement for a teaching role appeared on the Sopley Village Facebook page, and we wanted to reassure families that we are not currently recruiting for a teaching position at Sopley and that our current teaching team remains unchanged.

We are not entirely sure why the old advert resurfaced or how it appeared online again, although we do know it was posted just after midnight. A mystery worthy of investigation!

Maple

Maple continues to settle wonderfully into school life, and it has been lovely to see children visiting her to share their achievements and talk about their learning.

Maple has also been accompanying Mr Bowen on visits to classrooms, helping children learn about safe, calm and respectful behaviour around dogs that may not be familiar to them. (The teaching is done by Mr Bowen rather than Maple, although she is an excellent listener!)

We continue to work alongside ‘The Dog Mentor’ to ensure we are following best practice. On a personal note, it has been an absolute joy to see how much happiness Maple brings to the children each day.

Appropriate Use of Parent WhatsApp Groups

We know that many parents find WhatsApp groups a helpful way to share information, organise events and support one another. These groups can be a positive part of our school community when used thoughtfully and respectfully.

However, we have recently received a number of concerns regarding conversations taking place within some parent WhatsApp groups. In particular, we have been made aware of situations where concerns about the school, staff, families or children have been discussed publicly in ways that can cause upset and sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

We would like to remind all parents and carers that if you have a concern, question or complaint, the most effective approach is to raise it directly with the school. This allows us to investigate fully, provide accurate information and work with you to find a resolution.

If you are worried about something, please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance. If further support is needed, Mr Bowen, Mrs Sewell and the wider team will always be happy to help.

We would also encourage everyone to remember that comments shared online can often have a wider impact than intended, particularly when they involve children. As a school community, we all share a responsibility to model kindness, respect and understanding, both in person and online.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us maintain a positive, respectful and inclusive community for all of our children and families.

Trophies and Celebrations

We love celebrating success at our schools, and if your child has received a certificate this year, they should be incredibly proud of their achievement.

Each week, we also present our Federation Values Cups, recognising children who have demonstrated our values through their actions, attitudes and behaviour. As there are only four cups awarded each week, they are a very special achievement. Children take the cup home to celebrate with their family before returning it on Friday, ready for the next recipient. It is always wonderful to see how proud the children are to be recognised for living our school values.

Staff Changes

Our Burley families will know that Mrs Shutler will be leaving us at Christmas to begin an exciting new chapter as she prepares for the arrival of her baby.

Earlier this week, Mrs Sewell, Mrs Hodge, Mrs Radford (our Chair of Governors) and I interviewed candidates for Mrs Shutler's maternity cover position. We were delighted by the high quality of applicants and we have appointed a wonderful new teacher who we will be announcing after the half

term, once her present school has communicated her leaving with their parents. She will be visiting Burley to work alongside Mrs Shutler, ensuring a smooth handover and giving the children an opportunity to get to know their new teacher before January.

At Sopley, you may have noticed a new member of staff. Miss Woodhouse has joined us as a SEN Teaching Assistant and will be working in school each morning. We are delighted to welcome her to the team and know she will be a fantastic addition to our school community.

Harvest Thanks

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to our Harvest collection this year. Your generosity will make a real difference to members of our local community and provide a valuable opportunity for us to talk with the children about kindness, compassion and the positive impact we can have on the lives of others.

Thank you for your support.

Uniform

Finally, thank you to all families for your continued support in ensuring children come to school in the correct uniform.

A consistent uniform helps foster a strong sense of belonging and pride in our schools. It also helps to reduce unnecessary comparisons between children, allowing everyone to focus on what really matters: learning, friendships and being part of our school community.

We are very grateful for your support in maintaining these high standards.

As we reach the end of another busy half term, I would like to thank all of our children, staff and families for their continued support. We are incredibly proud of everything the children have achieved so far this year and look forward to welcoming everyone back after the break for another exciting half term filled with learning, creativity and celebration.

Have a wonderful half-term holiday.

Mr Bowen
Executive Headteacher
The Federation of Burley and Sopley Primary Schools

Key Dates

Burley

Parent Consultations - 3rd November (Wagtails & Kestrels)

4th November (Wagtails, Robins and Woodpeckers

5th November (Robins and Woodpeckers)

BPSA Christmas Fayre - 4th December

Wagtails and Robins Nativity - 10th December

Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Dinner Day - 11th December

Christmas Pantomime - 17th December

Kestrels and Woodpeckers Carol Concert - 17th December

Sopley

Parent Consultations - Wednesday 4th November and Thursday 5th November

Year R & 1 Nativity - Friday 11th December 9.15am and 2.15pm

Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Dinner Day - Friday 11th December

Year 2/3/4/5/6 Carol Concert - Wednesday 16th December 2.15pm at Sopley Church

Christmas Pantomime - Date TBC

FSS Christmas events will be announced after the half term break