



Enriching generations to serve and flourish

Headteacher Newsletter March 2020

Onwards and upwards is the motivation for all and we have made huge strides towards improvement. Everyone is working towards the common goal of ensuring children are academically, emotionally and physically achieving, whilst supported through the Christian values and teachings in our school. There is always so much to celebrate that within the drive forward we must take time to reflect and recognise the good.

- Thank you parents who regularly give feedback or attend parent forums – this has given us a greater and clearer dialogue to support understanding.
- Thank you to the PTA who are always thinking about what would be good for the children to have in addition to what the curriculum offers.
- Thank you to all the staff who work tirelessly to ensure everything in the school is the best it can be.
- Thank you to the pupils who are well-behaved and a delight to teach and converse with.
- Thank you to the church who regularly pray for us and host services that allow our children time for spiritual reflection.

Together we are a strong team that all support each other but one in which every individual makes a difference.

I hope that this parents' evening is a time for reflection and celebrating the progress and achievements made.

Ofsted actions

Leaders need to train teachers in the use of systematic synthetic phonics

Straight after Ofsted we sent 3 teachers on a two day phonics course which was then presented to all teachers in 2 staff meetings. This was then followed up with training from Penny Bill the improvement advisor for Literacy in Kent for all teachers. She has

also visited for a day to look specifically at reading with our Reading Leader. We now have phonic sessions in place for our readers that need to catch up quickly and are enhancing this through the use of phonic decoding within lessons.

The impact of this is that we have more children who are reading at an age-expected level and those below are making good progress.

Our next step is to continue adding quality books to our library and reading corners and also to develop reading corners in classrooms to become inviting spaces.

To this end on World Book Day, children will be taking ownership of designing, creating and making their reading corners and our pupil leadership team will become judges.

Subject Leaders are new to roles and need more training to enable them to help all teachers

All subject leaders have now been on or are booked on subject specific training. Within our collaboration we have also had subject leader meetings and training which include subject specialists from The Malling School. Alongside this we have had Matt Dickson, Local Authority Improvement Advisor, come and train our teachers in leadership skills and developing actions from research.

Core subject leaders are being further developed in their leadership through accredited courses.

The impact is that leaders have greater understanding and ownership of their subjects to support and drive standards.

Leaders need to ensure that they communicate clearly with parents

Thank you to all the parents who completed our recent communication survey. This showed at 98.5% are happy with the following:-

- Parents find the weekly Thursday email communication informative
- Most parents use the website to look at homework/dates and upcoming events.
- Class Newsletters are informative.
- Generally parents' evening is held frequently enough.
- The school office staff are approachable and deal with enquiries promptly and professionally.
- Parents find the automated answer machine for absence useful.



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Areas to be discussed:-

- Giving parents sufficient notice for school events, eg school trips.
- Some parents feel they would like more information and have a better understanding of their child's progress at parents evening.

At the next parent forum we will be discussing the information given to parents about pupil progress and how we can improve this.

Leaders to ensure staff workload and well-being is acceptable

In light of the above action, we changed our Peer Review to focus on workload and well-being in the whole school. A peer review is carried out in collaboration with other schools and is supported by the Educational Endowment Fund. As a collaboration we are part of a research project into whether working in effective collaborations improve KS2 results. This is something we have been part of for the last year and a half and is a three year project. Each year, each school in the collaboration has a peer review with an agreed focus. This means that Headteachers and trained peer reviewers visit each others schools to look at an identified school priority in depth for a day. The findings are then used in a staff meeting, run by Improvement Champions, to celebrate the strengths seen and create actions going forward.

The outcomes from our peer review, on the 21st January, are as below:-

What we celebrate:

- Attendance - this is above the national average and is improving, the leader has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development.
- The staff wellbeing survey was positive and this was backed up in discussions with staff. They like the cycle of observations, the style of feedback which they receive and they were happy with their workload.
- Approachable SLT- this was mentioned by all groups spoken to.
- Students were happy at school, they feel supported by staff.

What we recommend for further development:

- Ensuring consistency between classes.
- Students understanding of mental health as opposed to well-being.
- Staff resilience so they avoid feeling overwhelmed in difficult situations.

Leaders must ensure that record keeping about incidents of physical intervention are precise and accurate

Since Ofsted we have had no incidents requiring physical intervention, but we have set up a clear and precise system to record the incident, action and subsequent reflections.

School Improvement Advisor Visit

Headlines

- Current assessment information shows that Year 6 are on track to reach above the national standard at both expected and greater depth levels.
- Whole school pupil attendance continues to be strong at 96.98% overall.
- The school has a comprehensive action plan in place to address areas for development.
- Subject leaders reported that they are more aware of the leadership part of their role and talked of additional professional development they have received.
- The reading leader is passionate about the subject and has taken a number of actions to address areas for improvement.
- Phonically decodable books have been purchased and are being used with target children.
- All teachers and TAs have received external training in phonics.
- Storytime has been developed across the school with teachers reading to pupils 3 times a week.
- On the learning walk it was apparent that the quality of teaching has continued to improve towards a good standard.
- The pitch of texts selected were appropriately challenging and the quality and quantity of work in pupils books has improved further.



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- Classroom displays and working walls are a strength of the school.
- 96% of staff reported that they feel happy in the school.

Actions

- Assessment and moderation support with Local Authority to ensure all judgements are accurate.
- Ongoing focus on developing subject leaders.
- Book corners to be more prominent and enticing.
- Monitor phonic sessions and reading interventions.
- Review text selection for 2020/1.

Extra-curricular

We can celebrate our children's participation in young voices, cake sales, football matches, a visiting author and a safer cycling talk for year 5 and 6.

Coming up...

World book day
Mother's day afternoon tea
Sports relief
Colour run

School crossing patrol

And finally I would just again like to congratulate Denise Bartholemew, our school Road Crossing Patrol, for being the best in Kent. She is outside in all weathers and dedicated to the safety of the children in our school, I can't thank her enough.



As I said at the beginning please take a moment for reflection as you read this prayer.

Prayer

Lord our God, we thank and praise you for the greatness of your love, shown to us in Jesus Christ, who was willing to die for us, to bring us into your family, and to bless us with the life that lasts for ever.

We thank you for the new life we celebrate at Easter; help us to keep growing in the life that never comes to an end.

We pray for our families, our friends, and all those we care about: fill them with hope and happiness.

We pray for people who are unhappy today: those who are hungry, or homeless, those who fear violence or harm; may they find protection and peace.

We pray for those who are ill, or facing difficulties: may they find hope in the cross of Christ, and be strengthened by the knowledge of your love.

Lord, accept our prayers, and be with us now and for ever.

Amen.

Miss A Coulbault (Headteacher)