



# Ormskirk Church of England Primary School

Greetby Hill, Ormskirk. Lancashire L39 2DP

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Headteacher: Mr G.Storch B.Ed. (Hons) P.G. Dip. Psych. N.P.Q.H.

9<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## Headteacher Letter Autumn Term September 2024

Dear Parents,

We had a great first few days of the new school year and today we see the first week for our new Reception pupils (who start with half days). This letter serves as a combination of things to come as well as some logistics and policy updates.

### Our New Action Plan:

We have reviewed our strengths and potential areas for improvement and have concluded that we need three strands to our new action plan. We want to embrace all the people around each child in our action plan.

- 1) **“I Belong”** – The focus here is on two aspects. The first is to ensure that new children and their families feel that they belong in our school community. This also means that we will focus in more on transitions between key stages and offer additional support to those who may struggle emotionally with change. The second aspect is that all people in our society are equally important and this ties in with a need to focus on inclusion in a pluralist society – in response to the events in the summer. We have raised the profile and slightly altered the weighting of the priorities of Personal Social Health Education. To belong and feel secure you need to feel safe – after the summer we had locally we have reviewed a few systems and you may notice a few changes, both in drop offs / pick ups but also in some ways we run clubs including the holiday club.

Children can help other children feel a sense of belonging by welcoming and supporting new pupils in school. We also have two new teachers this year: Miss Woods who is teaching in Y2 and Mr Williams who is teaching in Y5. Miss Maryna used to work mainly with Ukrainian and Russian speaking children, but now will be working in the school office and helping us complete our conversion to our new website (which is now ‘live’ but still needs a number of tweaks). Parents looking out for other new parents is so important in helping families feel welcomed and included – please keep an eye out for each other, thank you.

- 2) **“I Know”** – This is largely about three-way communication. We are keen to improve the recording of a lot of the great things which go on in school and for parents and the extended community to see this. We have started with upgrading our school website, but you should notice a slightly better flow of information about what your child is learning and how you can support them. ‘I know’ also includes an understanding of expectations. Knowing who is expected to do what and when. For example parents are expected to get their child to school on time every day and hear them read regularly and help their child to complete set homework; a child is expected to try hard and show respect; a teacher is expected to help ensure every child makes progress with their work and is both challenged and supported. These and other expectations will soon be shared on the school website – all may be common sense but is good to have clarity about such things.

Children will be learning to reflect on what they know through a new homework reflective journal which will be slightly different for each year group. Teachers will explain this in a few weeks.

Parents can help by keeping contact details up to date, regularly entering in reading records when having heard children to read and letting us know when their child has experienced a significant change at home which may affect their learning or sleep / anxiety levels.

Inspire

Aim High

Achieve

Shine



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- 3) “I Can” – We want your children to become as independent as possible as they progress through school. This means that in lessons we will always be asking children to have a proper attempt at tasks before we rush in to help, this includes trying a spelling or reading a word first before offering a prompt or answer. If parents can take a similar approach too when supporting then that would be great. The more independent we can help children to become from toilet training, to tying shoe laces to packing their own bags it all adds up to make them more confident and resilient.

There is another aspect to the ‘I Can’ strand and that is that we want every child to find their own area of expertise. We will strive to help each child to leave Year 6 having at least one thing that they know they can truly excel in. This means that we will be offering a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and links to local clubs, such as the running club at Edge Hill, a local tennis or chess club etc. But also we need to ensure that a child who is passionate about history for example has a route to really shine way beyond the classroom in this subject. This talent finding and furthering will obviously involve parents as well as the child and school.

## **Events Happening this Week**

Tuesday: Y5 are visiting two castles in North Wales and then walking up part of Mount Snowdon! – This is to ignite their topic on a study of ‘The United Kingdom’.

Wednesday: Y4 are going inside the White Scar Caves where they see first hand water travelling underground then they walk over stepping stones to part of the Waterfall Walk in Ingleton. Finally, they sketch a small river as it runs through the rural village of Clapham after playing the new Olympic sport of Pooh Sticks (!) - This is the start of the years group’s study of ‘Rivers’.

Wednesday: Y6 are climbing, canoeing and learning archery at a local outward bounds centre. This will help start their PE programme of study which goes on to include orienteering on the school grounds and then later in Ruff Woods.

On Wednesday Y1 will start their swimming lessons and on Thursday Y3 and Y4 will start their swimming lessons. Please remember that children should wear swimming hats.

## **A Heads-Up for Next Week (week beginning Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September)**

Year 2 will start to be picked up at the end of the school day from the Junior not the Infant playground. It has been a bit busy at the end of the school day having Y1 and Y2 so close to each other, but we needed to make sure staff knew exactly who was who for pick ups and having the children’s teachers from last year on hand was our insurance that we were getting the children to the right people. Drop offs in the mornings are less congested as it is a staggered entry system so this will continue to be near the elephant for both year groups. The pick up point for Year 2 from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September will be from the exit opposite the Butterfly Garden (where Y3 also come out from).

From Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September we are starting a number of interventions for children throughout school. Please remember that such interventions are for a complete range of abilities and reasons. For example this half term we are putting in place interventions for a group of Y5 exceptional mathematicians and a group of Y2 summer born children. Many interventions happen between 8.20am and the start of school and other interventions may occur during the school day.

A few quick messages about various things:

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- PE Kits should be kept in school for the whole half term, unless they are needed at home for a weekend for washing and returning on the Monday. The days that classes do PE can vary, for example if it is pouring with rain an outdoor lesson may be postponed.
- If your child has had recently had their ears pierced they will still be able to do PE, but their must have their ears covered with a plaster /masking tape supplied from home. Our policy for uniform and jewellery is available on our school website.
- Y1 will be starting Outdoor Lessons on Tuesdays with Miss Saul. These will start quite basic and then will morph into fully fledged Forest School lessons later in the term. It is planned that slightly older children will then start Forest School lessons in the Spring term.
- When dry and quite sunny Y2 to Y6 used to go on the big field on a Thursday and Friday lunchtime. This will now be a Monday & Tuesday lunchtime and a Friday afternoon playtime (starting next week).
- Extra-curricular activities for this term include Taekwondo (Monday lunchtimes & early evenings), Netball, Athletics, Cross Country Running, Football, Chess, Computing, Dance and Choir. The library will be open on a number of mornings and lunchtimes and the timetable will be shared on the website as well as on the library doors. Art and board games including chess are open to children to do every lunchtime except Wednesdays. A table of all the activities will be added to the school website and Mr Peetoom has included a separate letter and table about the sports he is running which is attached with this Headteacher Letter.
- The final stage of our new roof is hoped to be completed by half term and then the scaffolding will all come down. We are very grateful for this work as not only is it stopping leaks, it is also giving us insulation which is nearly a foot thick! This will significantly help keep our heating bills down 😊.
- Timetabling and staffing has been quite a challenge over the last year, with a staggering ten staff becoming pregnant / having babies since September 2023! In the last few weeks Oliver and Arthur were born (sons of Miss Heaven and Mrs Redfearn respectively) – welcome to the World!

Newsletters will start coming out on Mondays not Fridays from next week onwards.

Look out for any good conkers – the school competition will start in two weeks (details will be shared shortly). It's good to be back!

Giles Storch



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