



Hanley St Luke's C of E Aided Primary School

Learning, Laughing, Loving at Family St Luke's

Welcome back,

We hope you all had a lovely summer and had lots of time with friends and family, but as I said in my Facebook message before the start of term, we know that won't have been the case for everybody, so if there is anything that you feel staff can help you with please do let us know. However your summer went, it was so lovely to see everyone back in school today, with the children meeting the teachers and staff who will be supporting them this year. It was also lovely welcoming our new children too and we are sure they will settle in really quickly. We are really excited about the plans for the new year and I outline some really important changes here. Please do take the time to read them:

New Staff

I introduced you to our new members of teaching staff at the end of the summer: Miss Brown and Mr Whitehouse, but we are also delighted to retain Mrs Whalley, who is now a permanent teacher on the staff, and Miss Parveen, who had been employed through an agency with us for much of last year as a Teaching Assistant. We also welcome our very first Business Administration apprentice, Miss Egginton who you will see as a familiar face in the office. A further crucial appointment is Mrs Cartwright, our new Safeguarding Officer, to replace Mrs Clough and you may have seen Mrs Cartwright with me before school this morning. And finally, of course, Mrs Jennings has now taken up her post as Business Manager now that Mrs Hardisty has retired (and probably sunning herself in foreign parts as we speak!!).

A New Vision

It's important everyone is clear what we are aiming for and what are our motivations are: our vision. The existing vision of the school was a very wordy document that reflected our work but wasn't easy to recall being a whole side of A4!! So after wide consultation with staff and governors during the last academic year, we have adopted the following which encapsulates our existing ethos but is much easier to monitor our actions against. Here is what we are striving for and the rationale behind all we do:

Jesus said: 'I have come that they may have *life* and have it to the full.'

Promoting *life-long* learning

Developing *life-giving* relationships

Exploring *life-enhancing* faith

Inspiring *life-enriching* aspiration

New Behaviour System

Our vision steers our policies and you'll be aware that we amended our Behaviour Policy part way through the year to tighten up on a few areas and create more flexibility of approach in other areas e.g. not automatically excluding children from an end of term treat but having it as an option where appropriate. However, we made those changes around the Dojo points system which was at the core of the policy. Having spent much of the summer term reading and researching and meeting with senior staff during the holidays and over the INSET period with all staff, to share our thoughts around the best behaviour approaches for our school that prides

itself on being inclusive, but still expects high standards of behaviour for all, we have come to the conclusion that the Dojo points system is not helpful. We have not decided this on a whim, but have been influenced by the work of Paul Dix, Advisor to the Education Select Committee on Behaviour and Discipline 2010, who was integral in helping to create the Teacher Standards. He refers to systems such as Dojo (not by name) as Token Economies as follows: ***'Token economies where a credit or merit system is used to reward individuals can never be consistent. It always rewards the highest achievers or the worst behaved- the most 'visible children'- and it is open to abuse by adults and children alike'***. Staff have worked hard to operate the Dojo System fairly over the past 3 years since it was introduced (a term before I joined the school); I have tried hard to lead the school using its principles but after an honest, cold, hard look, we are all agreed, whilst there were some positives for some children, it is not supporting all children or our vision and we need to move away from it for the good of all. Its communication facility, of course, still remains as it is such a useful tool for parents and staff- it is just the behaviour points system we will no longer be using.

So what are we using instead?

In summary we are stripping back our rules to these 3:

Ready Respectful Safe

These cover everything our previous 7 rules did but we all stand a chance of remembering them and can use them to reinforce the behaviours we expect.

We will be rewarding children for going over and above our expectations by adapting our existing systems e.g. Star of the Week awards remain and our Work of the Week for EYFS, KS1 & KS2 will be extended to include any work or behaviour that is over and above and the draw for prizes will be per year group each week rather than per key stage. In class, stickers and stamps and visits to the head teacher to celebrate achievements and effort all remain as do our weekly attendance lottery and termly certificates. By the end of September, we aim to introduce 'Hot Chocolate Friday with the head teacher' as a special reward which is already popular in many schools and we're sure it will be here too!

Our sanctions remain in place, of course, but are to be dealt with on a case by case basis in line with our clear and proportionate escalation process, rather than being led by how many negative Dojo points have been accumulated.

Staff have welcomed your children back today and have explained all these changes (age appropriately). We aim to achieve high levels of behaviour through 'Visible Consistency and Visible Kindness' (Paul Dix Chapter One When the Adults Change Everything Changes) and hope you will support us in our ongoing efforts to ensure we remain an inclusive school with high behaviour expectations. If you have any questions please do speak to your child's class teacher who will be pleased to help you. We will review our approach as the term progresses and will keep you informed of any changes so that we can update our published Behaviour Policy to reflect our new approach as soon as possible.

New Resources, New Look

The exciting changes continue as at last, we are delighted to have been able to replace every single classroom computer, which sadly were a long way past their sell by date! We are not suddenly awash with money- far from it, but have made considerable savings over the last two years and managed our budgets well to be able to afford these essential upgrades that your children so deserve. Of course, you're aware we have also heavily invested in our new reading scheme which we introduced to you at the end of the summer term; your children may have used the on line Bug Club resources during the holidays too. We have also had brand new Power Maths text books to support our mastery curriculum and shiny new reading logs for our KS2 pupils; we've at last managed to replace all the doors around the hall (they didn't shut properly!!) but don't worry, we've saved all the stained glass and are hoping to create a piece of art work with all the beautiful panels we have rescued but that, of course, will cost money so it's on

the 'to do list'! The hall looks really bright and fresh with the new coloured doors, as do the 4 classrooms and library we've managed to refurbish.

And finally, the nursery has been simply transformed into a beautiful calm environment for our youngest children, thanks to the hard work, painting skills and creativity of our Early Years team, giving their own time freely to the project- there was just no stopping them, I promise! We have a rolling programme for classroom/ school refurbishment so hopefully by this time next year, we'll be looking even smarter, but in the meantime we're super proud of what we've achieved in maintaining our beautiful Victorian school but also ensuring it is up to modern day, 21st Century, standards!

You'll receive a further newsletter next week with important dates and further information along with the annual school planner, but in the meantime, if you have any queries, please do just speak to a member of staff who will be pleased to help you.