

Hoddlesden St Paul's Church of England Primary School



07.12.2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

RE: Autumn Term School Progress Report

COVID-19

The Autumn Term is renowned in the world of education as a 'tough' term. It is the first term of the academic year, the children are returning from their summer holidays, the days are shorter and the weather is wetter. These are just a handful of reasons why the Autumn Term can be perceived as 'tough'! Autumn Term 2020 has most certainly lived up to that expectation and a whole lot more.

We have spent 15 weeks in school with lots of changes in local and national guidance. We have been fortunate to have very little disruption to classes, attendance and consistency of staff. As I type this letter, I have my fingers crossed and am touching the wooden surface to settle my paranoia of tempting fate. At the beginning of the academic year, I set out our expectations and as a staff team we worked through our Recovery Risk Assessment (RA). By the end of the first week of term, the RA had to be reviewed and further school restrictions imposed as a result of the community's significant increases in COVID cases. The restrictions were compounded further when we had our first positive case and our only bubble closure in early September. The reality really did hit us hard and from that moment on our internal processes and procedures had to be heightened to ensure the quality and continuation of children's teaching and learning did not become compromised further.

COVID hasn't gone away but we have learnt a lot about the virus and the short term adaptations in our routines that we need to take to ensure our families, friends and community are kept safe. With this in mind, the current risk assessment will continue to be in place for the first part of the Spring Term 2021 (at least). There will be **NO changes** to our current school guidance and practice when children and families return in the New Year.

Over the holidays and with the Government's decision to ease restrictions, school will be preparing for a similar picture in positive community transmission as in September 2020. As a result, classes will continue to be bubbled, school lunches will operate as a grab bag menu and external (indoor) visits will be assessed on an individual basis and in line with guidance from Public Health (PH) England and PH North West.

In anticipation of an increase in positive cases, school has created a [POSITIVE ONLY contact form](#). This can be found on our school website and should only be used if a member of your household tests positive. Please complete this form in the event that this scenario occurs in your household. This form will come directly to my email address and an assessment will be made on the action (if any) needed to be taken.

Please do not message staff on Tapestry, Seesaw or via the school email until Monday 4th January 2020. I am acutely aware that the school staff have worked incredibly long and hard weeks this term and I have been explicit

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as their Headteacher that a 'switch off' is needed, deserved and essential. I am sure you will all agree this is needed in preparation for the New Year and Spring Term.

Curriculum

The last 4 months have seen our children immerse themselves in our Native Narratives, Factual Footprints and Elf Enterprise whole school themes. Our CUBE curriculum continues to empower the children with curiosity, creativity and a love for learning beyond the classroom walls. Over the last term, children have had access to all curriculum subjects and we have been lucky enough to have our teaching specialists and enhancement opportunities continue in our bubbles or via ZOOM.

Under normal circumstances, parents and carers would have been invited into school on a number of occasions over the term to celebrate our successes and view the curriculum showcases. This year has required school staff to work differently to ensure all members of the school family are aware of our learning gains. The teachers have continued to be amazed at your online efforts with our Tapestry, Seesaw and online learning platforms. As our school website hits over 100,000 visitors, I am incredibly grateful to the children, parents and staff who have used this resource to support teaching and learning over the last year. Our current website visitor numbers for the last year alone is above 30,000 and our current weekly Seesaw posts are in excess of 400 posts a week! Learning at St Paul's is really becoming a 7 days-a-week, 24-hours-a-day task.

Please continue to view your child's [class page](#) to view their weekly learning and a summary of their accomplishments.

Assessments

Some parents and carers will be aware that baseline assessments, screenings and tests will be undertaken in some year groups at various points of the academic year. The vast majority of these tasks are implemented to support the class teacher's assessment of your child's holistic development and progress. During the Autumn and Spring term, individual pupil progress is shared during our parents' evening sessions. In addition, concerns pertaining to an individual child's progress or additional need will be raised with parents when appropriate. In line with the national guidance, all statutory assessment results are to be reported to parents and carers in a child's end of year report (July 2021).

Christmas Mission

The Pupil Leadership Team (PLT) completed our annual tradition, The Darwen Christmas Mission. Sadly, we saw an increase in need this year with 21 families (57 children) requiring support. These are nominated families who have been identified by their child's school and who are in need of support over this festive (but sometimes worryingly stressful) time. The PLT will spend some time in the new year creating a worship for the whole school to view, explaining the impact our school family has had on the wider community.

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Once again, this is not achievable without the whole school community coming together; our pupils, parents and teachers have made this possible once again. UNiplay, a local business and long term supporter of our Mission, has once again provided our families with generous gifts for Christmas.

Staff

During the October half-term holidays, Miss Coulton was successfully appointed onto a Master's Degree. As a result, Miss Coulton has requested to reduce her teaching commitments so she is able to pursue her own dreams and aspirations in Further Education.

Miss Coulton is an exceptional teacher with a huge passion for all the subject areas, in particular PSHE, DT and Art. Miss Coulton's approach to teaching has been refreshing and inspiring, resulting in school being a strong participant in the Linking Project. Miss Coulton will still be a frequent face in school and alongside her private study, she will casually support school, lead on the Linking Project and facilitate our PSHE teachings for the remaining two terms.

Joining the team full time in January will be Miss Marsden, an experienced and passionate Key Stage 1 teacher. Miss Marsden has already started discussing transition arrangements with the team and is getting ready to take the helm of Year 2. I was very fortunate to visit Miss Marsden's current class earlier in the term and was blown away by the calmness of her teaching and her wonderful nature with the children. I am sure you will all join me in welcoming her to the team!

Pre-School

September 2020 saw the opening of our Governor led Pre-School for children aged 3+. The staff team includes Miss Clayton (Class Teacher), Miss Kearney and Mrs Walsh who have beautifully transformed the indoor and outdoor provision into a wonderful learning environment for the children. The Pre-School admission process can be found on the [school website](#) and clearly highlights the 3 annual admission windows (September, January and April). Please contact the school office if you wish to discuss any aspect of the school's nursery provision.

Primary Admissions

The closing date for Primary School Admissions is January 15th 2021. Each year, Hoddlesden St Paul's CE Primary School opens the doors for our new starter families and shares our wonderful school with them. This year has had to be slightly different and I would like to thank the families for their understanding. We have taken an online approach to presenting school to families, with the children of St Paul's at the very heart of this. Each week, a class has recorded their environment, provision, learning and personal aspirations. These have been amazing to watch and it has been a privilege to see and hear our children celebrate life at our school.

School leaders will be hosting a webinar for primary admissions in the New Year on **Wednesday 6th January 2021 at 4pm**. Registration for this can be completed by following the [link](#).

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School Lunches

I can confirm that school lunches will continue as Grab Bags when we return after the Christmas holidays. As part of our risk assessment, the grab bags provision supports our class bubble structure and minimises crossover of children in communal places. With January being a period of uncertainty, it is sensible to maintain our current lunch practice and procedures to secure the consistency of our children's education, health and welfare. I appreciate that some children are missing having lunch in the school hall and I am optimistic that at our next risk assessment review we will be in a position to return to a more 'normal' practice.

On a final note...

Over the last term, the staff have been extremely grateful for the kind words and praise from parents and children. Last night, the Governing Body received an email from a member of our school community formally thanking us all for our work and commitment since 23rd March 2020.

Dear Governing Body,

I feel the need to put this formally on the record. I feel really strongly about it and I want to make sure my thoughts and feelings are heard and noted.

The team at St. Paul's, Hoddlesden -from the long-suffering women in the office; to the ever-perky and enthusiastic teaching assistants; to the creative and ingenious teachers, from whom our children learn and grow without even realising they're in a lesson; to the commanding and decisive Senior Team, who appear (to the outside world at least) calm, in control and unflappable; to the total teaching, managing, leading, inspiring (traffic-controlling) Legend that is Mr Dugdale - is absolutely phenomenal.

I have been hugely impressed with St Paul's ever since first setting foot in the school for a Prospective Parents evening.

But their performance, their persistence and their stamina this year has totally blown me away:

- *the effort put in to keeping us as parents informed and in the loop on decision making;*
- *the military precision of the organisation of everything from everyone suddenly being at home back in March and then on a weekly basis since;*
- *to being welcomed back in school and the huge organisational feat of making that work so well;*
- *to the total and genuine care for our children and of making them feel welcome and loved and safe and secure and somewhere they genuinely want to be each day;*

Is something truly remarkable and something that I hope each and every one of them will take a moment to acknowledge, to celebrate and to congratulate themselves and each other.

I am sure I am not alone in feeling this way. And I certainly hope I am not alone in wanting to express my heartfelt admiration and thanks.

I am so thankful and grateful to the whole St Paul's team, staff and governors, and wish you all a very long and restful, peaceful and hopeful Christmas and New Year.

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I am extremely grateful and thankful to the person who sent this in and would like to thank the many parents, grandparents, carers and children who have echoed the same sentiment this term. Hoddlesden St Paul's is a very special place where unity, humility and togetherness is shared and seen on a daily basis. We all have been remarkable this year (as in every year) and after the term we have had it is awesome to still see the hundreds of smiles on our school family members' faces each and every day.

I wish you, your children and wider families a lovely Christmas holiday. Please stay safe and look after the people around you. It is most certainly going to a different Christmas than the years gone by but if any families can take on the challenge of making Christmas one to remember, it is ours!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a yellow rectangular background. The signature appears to be 'C Dugdale'.

Mr C Dugdale

Headteacher