



As God's family, together we achieve

17.12.2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Autumn Term School Progress Report

Once again my hope at the start of the autumn term was to have a more settled year for all! Sadly, this has not been the case and the school has continued to be significantly affected by positive COVID-19 cases in children and staff. I am pleased to report that the school members who have fallen ill with COVID-19 over the term have returned and are fully recovered, or making significant progress towards full health. As a school team, we have worked hard to ensure children continued to have an exciting curriculum and begin to return to some levels of normality (pre-COVID).

Due to classes having positive cases, we have been unable to make school visits and trips this term. With exception to Year 6 who were able to attend their residential, something that the previous two year 6 classes couldn't do.

COVID-19

[COVID-19](#) still remains a threat to schools and to the delivery of 'normal' school life and this will sadly still be the case when we return in 2022. Our own analysis of data shows significant spikes in cases in our school following a holiday period. To ensure we keep the cases to a minimum I would like to request the following:

- Frequent Lateral Flow Testing
- If positive, remain at home and isolate. If you need to bring children to school or collect, arrangements can be made to do this safely.
- Continue to think about distancing when on the playground.
- Adults to wear a face covering when in more confined spaces.

We continue to see restrictions in school due to being at an Outbreak Management Level. These are the following:

- Virtual worships
- Adults wearing masks in communal spaces
- High levels of ventilation (CO2 monitors indicate when this is required)
- In some classes, further restrictions around extra-curricular activities came in for a 10-day period.

By informing parents and carers of our autumn term journey with COVID-19 and with the suggestions above, the spring term has great potential. I am hopeful that after our first week back from our Christmas holidays we may start to see some of our need to implement restrictions lessen and we can move back to a Contingency Level of COVID-19 management.

The school staff have made a large sacrifice again this year and agreed not to have a staff Christmas party. Due to imposing restrictions in school to halt the spread of the virus, it would be slightly hypercritical to have the whole staff team together in a confined space and creating potential positive cases and presenting a greater risk to the consistency of teaching and learning for children in school. We are very optimistic for a staff party later in the Spring term, when the landscape will look much brighter.

In days prior to the publication of this report, Omicron variant of COVID-19 continues to increase and looks to be the dominant strain of COVID. Our short term aim is to continue to ensure consistency for our children right up to the end of the term. I am fairly confident that the government, or Local Authority, will be updating the restrictions and guidance in the coming days and weeks. All I ask for is my school families, staff and children to remain cautious and careful at this time. By doing so, will hopefully ensure that we all are able to spend some much needed family time with our loved ones over the festive holidays. I will update families on any changes to school in the New Year and prior to our return.

Curriculum

This term has given staff a huge amount of data on children's level of learning, gaps that may have formed and how we will need to alter our curriculum as a result. In general, our curriculum delivery remains engaging and children talk positively about their learning. The Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leaders have been reviewing the skills, knowledge and key concepts of all curriculum subjects since the start of the academic year. We have been busy reviewing where we need to recap and review to ensure children are secure in their year group expectations. The curriculum section of the school website gives parents and carers an abundance of information about the learning their children will receive over the years. We continue to be supported by our own talented curriculum specialists in Art & Design, Computing (STEM), Music and French. These curriculum specialists ensure that all our children in school receive the precise learning in these subjects, resulting in lots of children becoming passionate about them. We will welcome the return of our gymnastics specialist after Christmas after her maternity leave. Mrs Winward will be in school every Thursday and will also be looking to begin Tumble Time for children aged 2-3 when we return to a contingency level of COVID-19 management in school.

School Improvement Priorities

Following on from the Summer Term Progress Report, I can now confirm the precise actions that we aim to work on and succeed over the year are:

- To develop the use of research to ensure high quality teaching and learning for all pupils is developed. To further refine our curriculum intent and teaching, drawing on research and securing detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum for all pupils ensuring they develop holistically in readiness for the next stage of learning.
- To ensure all leaders across school create a consistent, curious and coherent culture that contributes towards strategic subject decision-making process. The continued development of teaching and learning, curriculum diet and our 'experience offer' is disseminated and distributed across all branches of school leadership, ultimately securing key concepts are taught effectively and efficiently.
- To ensure the EYFS reforms and new curriculum are understood, embedded and celebrated across the early year's department. The promotion of pupil's success and further school readiness is disseminated across school and subject leaders.

These are in addition to the daily teachings that are underpinned by our core Christian Values. As a school we continue to strive and work towards maintaining a world class education, environment and school family for all. The school's Governing Body and Leadership Team will continue to work towards maintaining the school building and environment to be COVID-19 compliant, whilst ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum is taught.

Assessments

Current expectations are that all National assessments will be undertaken this academic year. These include Year 2 and 1 Phonic Screening, Year 4 Multiplication Check and the end of year Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 SATs. Every term, children will be teacher assessed and this information, along with the National assessment results will be shared in the children's end of year report. Progress towards children's personalised targets will continued to be shared at our parents' evenings and any required progress meetings. The latter being initiated by the teaching team if they feel a discussion on your child's progress is required.

Next term will be another opportunity for parents to come into school again for our Spring Term Parents' Evening. This is planned for mid-March and will follow the same format as our most recent Autumn Term Parents' Evenings. Further details will be shared with parents and carers via the school office prior to the February half-term.

School Dinners – Nuts, packed lunches

We are pleased to share with you the appointment of our new school cook, Ian. Ian has a vast amount of hospitality experience and has integrated into the team very well. In the absence of a school cook for over 18 months, Kerrie and Wendy have pulled together to cover the absence and ensure our children continued to receive a school dinner. Thank you to the both of them for going above and beyond for our children.

As the kitchen team strengthens, you will notice the online menu has expanded in both hot and cold options. Due to the long term absence in staff we have had to reduce our previous quantity of options, but feel this is the right time to return to normal.

The Senior Leadership Team and I are in the school hall each day and are blown away at the level of healthy variety in our children's packed lunches. In response to so many children having healthy packed lunches, we will be awarding children with a lunchtime award. The winners will receive a sticker and an entry into our termly lottery and they could be in with a chance of winning a great prize. Our school dinner children will not miss out, children who eat the majority of their lunch, try new dishes, use their cutlery or clear their plates, may be awarded a sticker and entry into the Lunchtime Lottery.

REMINDER- We continue to be a NUT FREE school! No cereal bars with nuts, no peanut butter and no nuts.

Christmas Mission

Thank you to the many families and local residents who have kindly donated food, non-perishables, gifts and financial donations for our 2021 Christmas Mission. This year we have supported 12 families across Darwen who have been referred to school. These are some of our communities most vulnerable families who will most certainly have a much more positive outlook of Christmas this year. The school's Values Committee have taken the time to wrap, box and deliver (to the schools) food parcels and some presents. Each year we receive thank you cards and messages and the school's Value Committee share these with the rest of the school community via a worship. This a real example of our children being Courageous Advocates and continuing to be active disciples.

Staff

We also say goodbye to Ms Jill Kershaw who will be leaving St Paul's this month to undertake a new role in the Local Authority SEND Services Team. This is a great opportunity for Ms Kershaw and we are very proud of her achievements. We will continue to see her in school in her new role so it isn't a real 'goodbye'. Ms Kershaw has been a fantastic member of our team and supported children right across school. Her talents and passion for child development will be missed and we will always welcome her back with open arms.

We will be welcoming two new members of staff to the team. Miss Lucy Brogan will be joining the Pre-School team following Miss Kearney's redeployment to Reception. Miss Brogan has lots of experience with pre-school children and her passions for the early years will be another strength to our Early Years team. From February half-term, we will welcome Miss Rebecca Holden to our Reception class, in addition to Miss Clayton, Miss Kearney, Mrs Walsh and Mrs Matthews. Miss Holden's experience as a Reception and Pre-school teacher will bring another level of awesomeness to the EYFS team. Miss Holden will be joining our team as another supporting adult in Miss Clayton's team.

As a school that supports initial teacher training and developing great teachers of the future, it is likely that we will see some of our amazing support staff team promoted to posts outside of Hoddlesden St Paul's CE Primary School at the end of the summer term. This isn't the time to start asking who, but I think it is really important to share this information early in preparation of the likely changes.

Looking forward to September 2022, Miss Riding and the Governing Body have agreed that Miss Riding will be stepping away from her class teacher role to solely lead our SEND and Early Help priorities. As a result of this change and Mr Newsham's move 18 months ago, we are in a position to now look at extending our school's core leadership team. From the beginning of this week, the Governing Body has advertised an Assistant Headteacher position. The successful candidate will help in the leadership of school and support Mrs Bass and I in the operational and strategic decision making of school. This is an exciting opportunity for our school and we look forward to securing another outstanding teacher and leader to our school community.

Uniform Update

Please ensure your child's uniform (both PE and School) follows our agreed policy. Over the last 2 years, we have relaxed our policy in light of COVID-19 and the impact to clothes shopping. From January, we are asking all our families to make a concerted effort to ensure school uniform is in line with our school policy. Should you have any questions, please ask the school office for further support.

I must also stress that children are not allowed to wear jewellery in school, unless for religious purposes (agreed with School prior to wearing). In addition, medical tags and bracelets can be worn should a child have a medical condition.

Primary School Admissions

The online admission form for admission to our Reception Class in September 2022 is now accessible using the following link:- <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/SynergyWeb/>

The closing date is **Saturday 15th January 2022**

Please note, you do not need to get your Church supplementary form signed by your clergy before completing your application. Mrs Mackey in the school office will organise collecting in signed forms once all applications have been made online.

Children attending our school's Governing Body managed Pre-School are not automatically admitted into the reception class. Parents and Carers of children in this provision will need to complete an application following our school's admission policy.

Please ensure that you complete the admission application and select three preferences. This is crucial in ensuring your child or children attend a school of your choosing.

Parent and Pupil Voice

As many of you know, I do try to be as visible as possible at the front of school during drop off and pick up times. Being present at these times enables me to have conversations with parents and carers and helps in addressing any niggles or queries. However, it is important to me and the Governing Body to hear your views on matters more formally and this may come in the form of Survey Monkey, consultations or questionnaires.

Over recent months, the leadership team have sought the views of parents, carers and children on a variety of topics and themes. All the findings from this stakeholder voice can be found by following the [Parent View](#) or [Pupil Voice](#) links.

All that there is left to say is, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

'Lord, I pray that you will turn our hearts toward you as Christmas approaches. Let us not get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season this year and miss the chance to celebrate the gifts of hope, peace, joy, love, that you sent to us on that first Christmas. That first Christmas, you gave us the gift of hope wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Thank you, Lord, for your immeasurable gift. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen'

I wish you and all our children a restful and enjoyable Christmas holidays. May God bless and watch over you all and return you to school safely in January.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Dugdale', written on a light yellow rectangular background.

Mr C Dugdale

Headteacher