

24th April 2017

Dear parents/carers,

Update at the beginning of my second term at Murrayfield

I write to say thank you for the continuing warm welcome, which I experience from both you, the parents and carers, and also from the pupils. I am still really impressed by the pupils' willingness to learn and their enthusiasm for asking and answering questions. Your children are a real credit to you!!

I provide, below, some key updates on issues which have arisen and decisions which have been taken in preparation for the term ahead.

Review of the quality of learning and teaching

I commissioned an external review of the quality of teaching and learning at Murrayfield at the beginning of last term. This provided me with an impartial view of the school's strengths and its weaknesses. The areas for improvement were:

- take steps to stabilise staffing
- improve pupils' attainment and progress and hold staff to account for the performance of different groups of pupils
- take swift action to tackle any inadequate teaching and address the endemic weaknesses
- tighten staff approaches to behaviour management by making sure that they take a consistent approach, especially with regard to bullying
- put in place a curriculum which provides structure and progression for pupils of all abilities in every year group
- continue to implement the new assessment processes and monitor them tightly, to ensure staff are tracking pupils' progress accurately
- tighten safeguarding procedures and ensure that the single central record is brought up to date quickly.

Principal: **Amanda Phillips CBE**

Nacton Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9JL

t: 01473 728564

murrayfieldacademy.paradigmtrust.org



Take steps to stabilise staffing and improve pupils' attainment and progress and hold staff to account for the performance of different groups of pupils

There have been changes to staffing and there needed to be.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are no staff changes: Becki, Catherine, Jane and Hannah will continue to be our EYFS teaching team.

In Year 1, we welcome Ana Magalhaes who has been appointed as a permanent class teacher and is replacing a supply teacher, this will ensure long-term consistency. Also, in Year 1 Louise Ward has secured a long-term placement with us, as a newly qualified teacher. We are ensuring that both members of staff are settling in well and the pupils have a smooth handover by keeping the supply teacher for at least x4 weeks. Both of the new teachers attended all of our training last term.

In Year 2, we have a permanent team: Georgina and Rebecca will continue to lead the Y2 classes.

In Year 3 and 4, there were no changes made to staffing this term: Paige, Rebecca, Merryl and Anna continue to teach the lower key stage 2 pupils.

In Year 5, Kiri Francis has started her maternity leave and we had difficulty appointing suitable cover. We have trialled and appointed a long-term supply teacher, Melanie, to secure continuity of staff. This supply teacher had a thorough handover, during the Spring break from Kiri and is working alongside Leon and x2 higher level teaching assistants, to ensure classroom routines and systems are continued, and to minimise disruption for the year 5 pupils.

In Year 6, there are no staff changes: Beth, Susan, Richard and Neil continue to be the main teachers; however there is additional support from members of the leadership team across Paradigm Trust, who are also teaching in year 6, to ensure the best possible outcomes in the end of year assessments. There are further changes in the year 6 timetable, to ensure curriculum coverage, and to best prepare our pupils for the Y6 tests, which take place in week beginning 8th May.

I am delighted that our high quality agency staff have all requested to be given permanent contracts with Paradigm Trust, this is very good news for the school community.



I am confident that the staff arrangements and timetable changes, which are now in place, will bring consistency and improve progress in our pupils' learning in order to secure the best possible outcomes for all.

Take swift action to tackle any inadequate teaching and address the endemic weaknesses, put in place a curriculum which provides structure and progression for pupils of all abilities in every year group and continue to implement the new assessment processes and monitor them tightly, to ensure staff are tracking pupils' progress accurately.

We have provided staff with the training and resources they need to improve the quality of teaching and we have focused the curriculum on the core subjects of English and mathematics. Our assessment point 2 has happened and we are collecting and collating the data today. You will receive your child's assessment letter/s in the next few weeks.

Tighten staff approaches to behaviour management by making sure that they take a consistent approach, especially with regard to bullying.

All staff have visited the schools in London and seen what good behaviour for learning looks like. Your children are attentive in class, which means that everyone can learn. Anna Reynolds is leading a working party on developing a new protocol for behaviour management, which includes pupils, parents/carers and staff. This will be values-driven and shared with you when it is completed.

We have led assemblies on all types of bullying to ensure that the pupils know what bullying is and how to keep themselves safe from harm. We have ordered new posters that will highlight the need to keep each other safe at all times.

Tighten safeguarding procedures and ensure that the single central record is brought up to date quickly.

Our safeguarding procedures are now in line with all of the academies in Paradigm Trust and are followed rigorously.

Birthday cakes

I am writing to inform you that we have decided that it is no longer possible for pupils to bring birthday cakes to school. The main reasons for this decision are to ensure that we are compliant with health and safety guidelines, and most importantly, to ensure that as a school we are



absolutely focused on teaching and learning and that no other matter is hindering or distracting us from our core responsibility to teach the pupils and secure their progress.

As we are not able to account for the ingredients in birthday cakes, we could therefore unknowingly give a product to a child to which they are allergic. Even if we had a list of ingredients, in a busy school day, it is too much to expect teachers/adults to read ingredient lists and then decide who can and who cannot eat the product. I am sure that you can appreciate that a teacher's/adults's time is best spent educating the children rather than cutting up cake, handing it out and cleaning up afterwards.

Any cakes sent into school for birthdays or other reasons will therefore be sent home, uneaten. We appreciate that this may be disappointing to some of you, but we would not do this unless it was absolutely necessary. Thank you for your understanding and compliance with this.

Breakfast club

Please book places and pay for breakfast club in advance, as we have to plan our budget carefully. I am reviewing monies owed and we shall be contacting families, as we cannot continue to subsidise this service.

Easter Fair

On behalf of everyone I should like to thank the Murrayfied Friends' Association for their tremendous effort and energy in organising this event. Over £500 was raised! The Chairman of the Board of Directors had the pleasure of judging the 'Bake Off' and was very impressed by the standard. There were some adults who shouted at staff in classrooms, when they wanted to take their child/ren to the fair, this is wholly unacceptable. No public servants should come to work and be verbally abused.

PE/swimming lessons and kit

Having reviewed the scheduling of PE and swimming all pupils have now been reminded/told by their teachers when PE/swimming is taking place this half term. There will be a further review after the Y6 test period. It is very important that pupils have the correct kit/equipment in school.

Yours faithfully

Amanda Phillips CBE

Principal