



8th September 2023

Newsletter No.1

Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

A big welcome back to all our families and a particularly warm welcome to those families who are receiving this as their first newsletter now their child/ren have joined one of our Reception classes.

What a first week back we have had! All our children have impressed us with how quickly they have settled back into school, and any worries or nerves that the children had before school on Monday are now gone, replaced with big smiles and a confident stride. Well done, Bellbirds! [for new parents/carers, we call ourselves Bellbirds as we all belong to The Bellbird Primary School community].

Our newest Bellbirds in Wrens and Robins have enjoyed a quieter start to their week, with smaller groups joining us each day. Mrs Lovewell and Miss Meechan have spoken positively about this staggered start in getting to know the children as it has supported them to spot where a child may need some extra support or challenge, which could have been missed in a class of 30. Thank you to our Reception parents for supporting us in this; we know that for some families it has been tricky to juggle work and half days but we believe passionately that our approach is the right one to ensure we start each child's journey with us as positively as possible.

This week we are using our newsletter to share some key information, which we hope will begin to help you understand how things work in the school. This would normally include our vision and values, but these are under review and will be shared once they have been redeveloped. Don't worry, there are a few photos at the end as we know these are the best bit [what can be better than seeing the children!], and there will be more to follow in future editions!

Pupil Progress Meetings

As a team of professionals, we believe passionately that it is our duty to *each and every child* in our care to ensure they leave us happy, with a love of learning, having achieved their very best, ready for the next stage in their education. We know that if we get it right now, in their early years, we can make a real difference to their future.

With this belief guiding us, over the next two weeks each Year 1-6 teacher will be released for a day to join senior team in pupil progress meetings. These meetings are designed to identify any child who did not make the expected progress during their previous year and most importantly make a plan of strategies of what the class teacher, pupil, senior team and parents can do to further support the child to make good or better progress this year. Reception parents, do not worry, we will hold these meetings termly and Reception teachers join us to review the progress of our youngest learners at the start of the Spring term.

During your parent consultations in the Autumn term you will be told if additional support or challenge is needed and what this looks like for your child.

School Improvement

Our school is already a successful school, with a talented team of teachers, teaching assistants and senior leaders, who together have a clear focus on each child 'soaring to success' [for new parents and carers, 'soaring to success' is our school motto - we are very proud of it and you will hear it a lot!].

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But, we always want to get better, to not only grow as practitioners but to also ensure we provide the best possible provision for our children, based on the latest research and guidance. To help us do this, at the end of last year, senior leaders collected the views of staff, parents and pupils to give us a clearer understanding of what they believe we are doing well and how we can improve further. Our Governing Body will feedback to parents the full results of the parent survey within their Annual Update, which will be coming out to you soon.

From all of our monitoring and evaluating activities we have identified 5 key priorities for further development in 2023-24. They are:

Target 1: To diminish the difference for our vulnerable groups, with a particular focus on pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium and those with SEND.

Target 2: To further improve the teaching, learning and assessment of writing across the school.

Target 3: To further enrich provision for personal development as part of the school's wider offer.

Target 4: To ensure subject leaders are able to lead in the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum for their subject.

Target 5: To continue to ensure safeguarding is robust across the school.

Each target has a named senior leader [or leaders] and governor who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the myriad of actions which we believe will contribute to achieving the target. We will keep you updated with our progress as the year goes on.

Key Improvements for Parent/Carers

We hope you will feel the effects of our school improvement plan as the term goes on, none more so than through specific actions linked to two of the main themes that came from parent feedback in our July 2023 survey.

a) **to streamline our communication to parents/carers** - we are aiming to send key messages from school at the end of the week, in one larger email/document. These will run alongside our fortnightly newsletters. Having said this, there will be times when more urgent messages and reminders need to go out, in which case these will be combined at the end of the day. Alongside internal information we get asked to share information from other organisations, this too will be combined into a weekly email of further information. Our new business manager, Mrs Annette English-Matern, will be leading on this and we hope to have this up and running within the next few weeks. We really hope you notice a difference!

b) **to improve our wider offer through more lunchtime and after school clubs** - covid put an end to all clubs, and as a school we recognise now is the time to push forward with developing a more cohesive programme of lunch time and after school clubs, for all ages. As I expressed to some interested parents this week, this will take some time, as we find people who are able to commit to leading these sessions. If you have a particular skill you can share with our children through a weekly club, please do contact Mrs Collins. For example, we have had three very kind parents running a chess club after school, which proved to be very successful.

Whilst we develop this new programme, of course, Premier continues to provide after school sports based clubs; football, gymnastics and multi-sports this term. Mrs Collins is continuing Choir for Key Stage 2.

We have already timetabled more sports at lunchtimes, run by Premier. So, Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, will get two 30 minutes slots a week where they can join Premier for a multisport type activity! We have asked the children for their feedback on sports they would like to be offered to increase engagement.

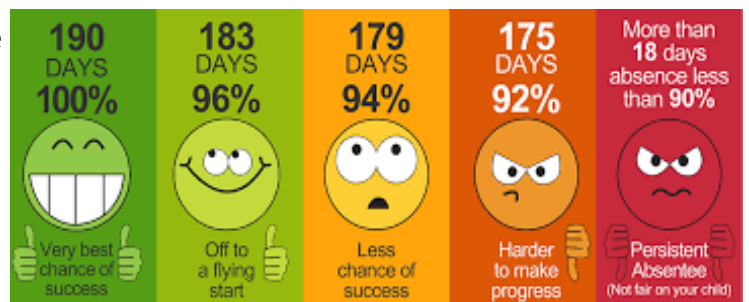
Attendance

Parents will remember that last term we met with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and, following this meeting, we reviewed our lateness and attendance procedures so they were in line with Local Authority expectations. We also appointed Mrs Tolhurst in the office as our School Attendance Officer.

Good attendance [above 98% and no lower than 95%] is one of the most influential factors in ensuring children achieve. Quite simply, if a child is not in school, they can't learn and they miss key knowledge and skills which is needed as the foundation of future learning.

Please remember that we have to follow these procedures *strictly* and our practice is monitored closely by the Local Authority throughout the year. Therefore, can we ask that children arrive in school at 8.45am ready for their morning work. The school gates will close promptly at 8.55am and anyone arriving after this will have to enter school via the school office and a late mark put in the register. If a child arrives after 9.15am when register closes, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

It is also important to note that each child's attendance percentages do not start afresh each academic year. Your child's attendance in 2022-23 has to be included in our monitoring of attendance. If your child's attendance drops below 95%, we are required to act via telephone and/or letter. We also are required to fine parents who take a term time absence that is not exceptional or unavoidable.



We will include a link to our new attendance policy within next week's weekly information email, so you can read in more detail how we are required to manage lateness, attendance and term time leave at The Bellbird.

Open door policy

The Bellbird has an open door policy, which means, if you have any concerns, worries or questions, we encourage you to come into school straight away. Your child's class teacher may not be able to see you instantly, but will see you as soon as possible, normally the next day, and certainly by the time the week ends [unless of course it is a safeguarding issue when we will ensure someone sees you there and then]. I can promise you, having only joined the school myself last term, that, here at The Bellbird, we have the most kind, caring and welcoming group of teachers and senior leaders, who will do their utmost to listen and support you.

A final thought

As the Autumn term commences we look forward to developing even stronger partnerships with you, as our children's primary carers. We are so grateful for your past, present and future support; we couldn't do what we do without you and feel lucky to have such lovely families in our Bellbird community. We also look forward to seeing your children blossom in their new year groups, with ever developing skills, knowledge and happiness.

May we wish you and your families a restful weekend. Please be careful in the heat!

Best wishes, Mrs Emma Clayton and Mrs Rebecca Pentney, Co-Headteachers



Year 6's first ukulele session



Two of our Year 1's 'building it' in maths