

Newsletter No.9

Dear Parents/Carers and Children,

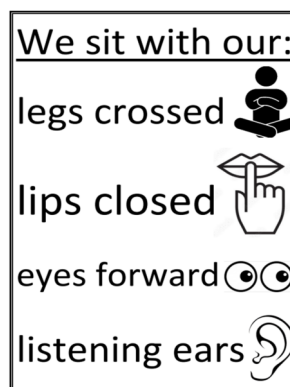
Happy New Year to you and your family. We hope you all had a relaxing Christmas break and avoided the germs that have been doing the rounds. We have loved welcoming our Bellbirds back to school, all of whom have returned from the Christmas holidays with a renewed focus, interest and enthusiasm for learning.

We are using this first newsletter of the Spring term to give you some updates which you may find interesting and useful - including key dates for the rest of this academic year on the final page - note there are some additions/changes from our last newsletter - these are highlighted in green/red to make it clear that it is new information.

School Improvement for Spring term

As you know, we are always trying to improve the quality of our provision here at The Bellbird so we can be the best we can be for our children. Following monitoring and evaluating in the Autumn term, this term we are focussing on the following areas of improvement:

1. **Renewing our vision and values** to drive our school - hopefully you have seen the link to a parent survey which asks for your thoughts on renewed values and rules. If you have missed this, please find the link here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/D3GS99F> This survey has also been given to governors and staff to collect their thoughts and teachers have this week been surveying the children on to see what they feel are important statements for their learning and rules they think are necessary in the school. Once all the surveys are closed, the senior leadership team will work on pulling it all together...once we have done this, you will be the first to know! Look out in future newsletters to see the outcome of this exciting project.
2. **Reviewing our curriculum** to ensure it is as good as it can be, and knowledge, skills and understanding for each subject are clear for each year group to ensure progression. We have four twilight meetings this term to review this and make any improvements needed. Another exciting project!
3. Implementing the actions to **further improve our early reading and phonics provision**. Those parents/carers who have been with us for a while will know we bought the Little Wandle Phonics scheme following the DfE's requirements from 2021 for all schools to be using a synthetic, systematic phonics scheme that had been approved by the government. We were lucky enough to have an audit of provision from the New Wave English Hub at the end of November, and they have given us some great ideas for how we can make our early reading and phonics practice even better, so we will be making sure this is a focus so that as many children as possible leave Year 2 being able to read fluently.
4. **Embedding high quality teaching** across the school from professional development that took place in the Autumn term
5. Improving **conduct around the school** - we have new posters which set the expectation all children will walk silently around the school so not to disturb the learning of others. The posters use dual coding - a evidence driven approach which communicates in the most efficient way, with key words and simple diagrams. The children have been brilliant at responding to this—all rising to the challenge. See our posters below.



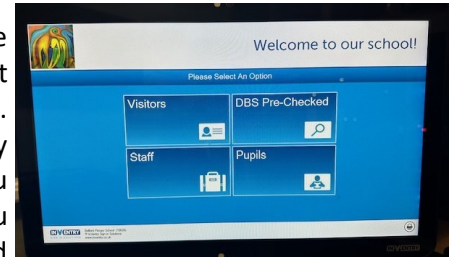
Pupil Progress Meetings

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 this week and next, each teacher will be released for a day to join senior leaders in pupil progress meetings. These meetings are designed to identify any child who did not make the expected progress during their previous year/term 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. During your parent consultations in the Spring term [see key dates] you will be told if additional support or challenge is needed and what this looks like for your child.

Inventory - late sign in

Some of you will have noticed for several weeks we have had a new machine in the foyer as you enter the school. This is called 'Inventory' and is a new signing in and out system for staff and visitors. It also is how children who arrive late will need to sign in. Please be aware that this is likely to take longer for children to sign in, particularly whilst parents learn how to sign their children in, so arrival times will be later as you will have to wait in a queue. Your child's arrival time will be recorded as the time you sign them in on the system, not when you arrived in the foyer. Remember your child receives a late mark up to 9.15am and an unauthorised absence past 9.15am. The best way to not be stuck in a queue, waiting to sign your child in, is to ensure you are here before the gates close at 8.55am. Please know you will be required to give a reason for lateness on this system. If for any reason you are unable to arrive at school before the gates close please do let either myself or Mrs Pentney know and we will happily meet you to look at how the school can support you.



Studybugs

As part of our commitment to the government's initiative, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' we have invested in a new programme called Studybugs. This makes monitoring attendance even easier by creating weekly reports on class attendance, children who have unauthorised absences, more than one late mark, attendance that falls below 90% etc. But the great news for our families is this also allows you to report absences via the Studybugs app - more information to follow soon!



Attendance - Updated Term Time Leave Request Form

Due to some families not receiving their term time leave request form back, we have been advised by the Local Authority to send these via Royal Mail, so we can be sure families receive them. This is particularly important if the absence is likely to incur a penalty notice from the Local Authority, as this may change a family's decision to take a period of leave.

In light of what we have been recommended, we have created a new term time leave request form which can be found on our website or collected from the office. This asks for the postal address and email address to contact you with our reply to the request. We have also added a box which clearly states if it is likely you will receive a penalty notice from the Local Authority if you still take the term time leave when it is unauthorised, so that it is very clear.

May we remind all families that whilst we are fully committed to the government's pledge to tackle non-attendance, if your child is too poorly to come into school, we know the best place for them is to be at home with the care and love of their family. If you are unsure if your child is well enough to be in school, please trust that we would send them home if they were not well enough to be in class. Teacher's are experts in spotting when children are under the weather!

Thank you

We wanted to say a very big thank you to all the families that joined us for one of our community events in the last few days of the Autumn term. It was so lovely to welcome so many of you into St Marys Church for our church service and the school for singing around the Christmas tree. We look forward to seeing you at many more events in the future.

Congratulations to Mrs King

Finally, big congratulations to Mrs King, one of our wonderful teaching assistants. She has just found out she has passed her Level 2 Understanding Autism course - well done, Mrs King! We know how hard you worked to complete your units and are very proud of you.

May we wish all of our Bellbird families and friends a wonderful weekend. Wrap up warm - it is going to be a cold one!
Best wishes, Mrs Emma Clayton and Mrs Rebecca Pentney, Co-Headteachers

Key Dates for Spring and Summer Term 2023-24

Week beginning	Key dates so far
1 st January 2024	Thursday 4 th January: Spring term starts
8 th January 2024	Friday 12 th January: Whole school pantomime (at school)
15 th January 2024	Thursday 18 th January: Year 6 online SATs meeting [after school - time tbc]
22 nd January 2024	Monday 22 nd January: Big Bird watch assembly Thursday 25 th January: Year 4 Bikeability
29 th January 2024	Monday 29 th January: Year 5 and 6 National Measuring Programme Monday 29 th January: English Challenge Tuesday 30 th January: Young Voices Friday 2 nd February: FABS KS1 Disco
5 th February 2024	Wednesday 7 th March: Year 4 sharing assembly [9-9.45am]
12 th February 2024	Tuesday 13 th February: Parent Consultations pm Thursday 15 th February: Parent Consultations am
19 th February 2024	HALF TERM WEEK: NO SCHOOL
26 th February 2024	Friday 1 st March: FABS KS2 Disco
4 th March 2024	Saturday 9 th March: Singing with The Perse at West Road Concert Hall , Year 5
11 th March 2024	Monday 11 th March: Year 5 Challis House Visit - Victorians Wednesday 13 th March: Year 5 Challis House Visit - Victorians
18 th March 2024	Tuesday 19 th March: Book Fair Tuesday 19 th March: Year 3 sharing assembly Wednesday 20 th March: Dental Survey Wednesday 20 th March: Year 5 Victorian day Friday 22 nd March: FABS Easter Bingo
25 th March 2024	Thursday 28 th March: Last day of term Friday 29 th March: Good Friday, Easter holidays

Remaining Term Dates 2023-24

<u>Term Dates 2023-24</u>	Spring Term	Summer Term
Term Starts [first day of school for children]	Thursday 4 th January 2024	Monday 15 th April 2024 [May Day - 6 th May]
Half term	19 th -23 rd February 2024	27 th -31 st May 2024
Term Ends [last day of school for children]	Thursday 28 th March 2024	Thursday 18 th July 2024
Professional Days [school closed to children]		Friday 19 th & Monday 22 nd July 2024