Civitas Academy Bulletin

15/07/19



**Welcome from Mr Wieder**

We are entering the final eight days of term, with this being the penultimate bulletin of the year. Last week was busy with interviews as we made the final arrangements for the start of next academic year. Unfortunately, I missed the ukulele concert as I was conducting an interview at the time, but I was informed that it went well. Well done to all the Y3 children that took part.

Reports with end of year results went out on Friday. Included in the pack was a questionnaire. I would be grateful if you could return this back to school. As a school, we are constantly evaluating our systems and process, so we would be grateful for your feedback. Please could all completed questionnaires be returned by Monday 22nd July. I will share the results with you all in a bulletin next academic year.

There have been a large number of absence from learning requests that have come into the office recently. Please could I remind families not to book holidays in term time as all of these requests will be unauthorised and may result in a fine from the local authority. Although the average attendance has increased by almost 1 percentage point from last academic year, it still remains extremely low when compared to other schools. Rates of attendance at Civitas are amongst the lowest in REAch2 schools and other Reading based schools. This will continue to be a school improvement priority next academic year. Please note that next academic year, the decision was made to place two INSET days at the end of the Summer term. This will mean the school will finish earlier than other local schools and should support families with securing cheaper flights. As a school, we have made this gesture to support families, so please could families bear this in mind when booking holidays next year and avoid booking in term time.

**Staffing Update**

As a result of Miss Gundry’s departure at the end of the academic year, we have decided to change the class teacher for two classes. Miss Boman will move back in Y2 and become the teacher for BFG Class and Pinocchio Class will now be taught by Mrs Aram and Mrs Tailor. This week, children in these classes as well as the children in next year’s Gruffalo Class will have the opportunity to spend time with their new teacher.

This created a gap in cover arrangements for the school and we have appointed an additional P.E. support assistant to work alongside Miss Vaal in school. Mr Milstead, who has extensive experience of working with primary age children and is also a UEFA B category football coach will deliver lessons alongside Miss Vaal next year. This will further strengthen our P.E. provision next year.

**Mrs Bestherwick (Mrs B)**

Mrs B is coming to the end of her temporary contract at the school and we will be saying farewell at the end of this term. I would like to thank Mrs B for her dedication to the children at Civitas since her arrival last November. We wish her all the best for the future.

**Mrs Meech**

At the end of this term, we also say goodbye to Mrs Meech, who has been working in the kitchen at Civitas since the start of the school. She will be moving out of the area and as a result will no longer be able to work at the school. Mrs Meech will be missed by the entire school community and I would like to personally thank Mrs Meech for her all of her hard work and dedication to the school.

**School Games Silver Award**

I am pleased to announce that the school has achieved the School Games Silver Award. This is a massive achievement for the school and we will look towards trying to achieve ‘Gold’ in the future. Thank you to Miss Vaal for all of her efforts in securing this award for the school.

**Changes in 2019-20**

As the school grows we will need to evaluate and make changes to certain systems. Next year we have made the decision for children in years 3 and 4 to line up on the upstairs play deck when the bell rings in the morning. The decision has been made that a member of staff will be positioned at the bottom of the stairs each morning to collect messages from parents for children in Y3 and Y4 as parents will not be permitted to go upstairs with their child at the start of the day.

Lunchtime arrangements will also change slightly for children in Y3 and Y4. Lunch for children in these year groups will be from 12:15 to 13:15 instead of the current 12:00-13:00.

The end of the day for children in Y3 and Y4 will change to 3:20pm instead of 3:15pm. This will enable all year groups to be collected safely as under current arrangements we would be running out of exit points if all classes finished at the same time.

**Tapestry**

Please note that there will be no further observations made on Tapestry for EYFS children and current accounts will be deactivated from 1st September 2019. If parents wish to retain any information from the site they are encouraged to download and save any content before then as from September 1st it will be deleted.

**Question and Answer Session**

Two parents attended and good questions were raised. One parent asked about the school’s approach to Relationships and Sex Education with the relationships aspect of this education being made compulsory from 2020-2021 in primary schools. I have attached a link below from the government to myth bust some common misconceptions about the proposed changes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education-faqs>

We are currently reviewing the policy and awaiting further guidance from REAch2 who will be working on a generic policy that we can adapt and then consult with parents and the community before any implementation. There are statutory and non-statutory aspects of the curriculum. It is the school view at this stage that we will cover the statutory aspects of the curriculum. For the non-statutory aspects we will either not cover or give parents the right of withdrawal if they wish.

A question was asked specifically about the approach the school will be using regarding the promotion of LGBT relationships. Below I will quote the government’s response to this question (included on the link above):

*No, these subjects don’t ‘promote’ anything, they educate.*

*Pupils should be taught about the society in which they are growing up. These subjects are designed to foster respect for others and for difference, and educate pupils about healthy relationships. RSE should meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their developing sexuality or identity – this should include age-appropriate teaching about different types of relationships in the context of the law.*

*Pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years - we expect secondary schools to include LGBT content. Primary schools are enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content if they consider it age appropriate to do so, but there is no specific requirement for this. This would be delivered, for example, through teaching about different types of family, including those with same sex parents.*

As you can see there is no statutory requirement for LGBT relationships to be covered at primary school age, however primary schools are ‘enabled and encouraged to do so if they consider it age appropriate’. Therefore, if LGBT relationships were to be included in the policy, then parents would have right of withdrawal as it is non-statutory at primary school age. As a school, we are still formulating our policy and are awaiting further guidance from REAch2 who will be introducing a generic policy that could adapted to each individual school. When it is ready next academic year, we will consult with parents and the school community first before any implementation. I respect that as a school we are in a diverse community and any policy will need to reflect this.

Another question was raised about the ongoing parking issues around the school. Despite several reminders, parking continues to be a problem. I have contacted Reading LA in the past about this and they were not prepared to make any further changes. In the past, I have requested parents to park further away and walk in. Also I have made it clear that the other side of the road to the school is resident parking only and permits are required to park in these spaces. As parking is a highways issue, we have also contacted traffic wardens and the community police officers to support with parking offenders. However, it is not possible for community police officers and traffic wardens to attend all of the time. If parents are unhappy with current parking arrangements then the best way to implement change is to write directly to the council. If they receive sufficient responses, they may consider changes.

A possibility was raised about a parental group running a potential homework group at the school. I would be happy to support any community group; however I explained that I would need to see a formal proposal with how safeguarding requirements would be met before commenting further.

**Summer Key Dates (new events in yellow)**

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| **Date and Time** | **Event** |
| Tuesday 16th July | Y3 trip to Ufton Court |
| Tuesday 23rd July | Civitas Talent Show (children only) |
| Wednesday 24th July | Last Day of Term |