



Headteacher's Newsletter – January 2017

Dear Parent and Carers

Welcome to the New Year newsletter from Mill Water School. Time has moved on quickly since we wrote to you in the last newsletter before Christmas and we have much to update you with. First of all, I would like to say that it was so good to meet many of you at the events before Christmas. Amongst many end of term activities, we held a very successful Christmas Fayre – a huge thank you to all in the PTFA who organised this event. Well done to everyone in class 1, 2 and lower school - your nativities really set the standard this year. Thank you so much to staff across the school who worked so hard to make our Christmas celebrations so special for all of our children. Thanks to all of you who came to the school carol service at St Peter's in Budleigh. It was very well attended by parents and many members of our local community, and thanks to the team at St Peter's for hosting us.

Interim Leadership Arrangements

We have made some changes to our leadership team here at Mill Water School. We need to make sure that the whole leadership team has the capacity and the drive to ensure that we are able to meet the challenges of the future, not least to ensure that the rapid and sustained pace of improvement across the school continues as it has done under the leadership of Sarah Pickering. In order to support the work of the school, and to support Sarah whilst she continues to recover from her serious accident, Governors have asked me to remain as Interim Headteacher until the end of the summer term. I will be supported in this by Sarah Pickering and Sally Cregan as school Deputy Head Teachers with a particular focus on Teaching and Learning and Pastoral Care. They will be very ably supported by Kayleigh Price (Lower School), Roz Harman (Upper School) and Sarah Clarke (Complex Needs) as well as the wider team of excellent staff across the school. I am sure you will join me in wishing Sarah Pickering a full and speedy recovery.

Homework Consultation and Parents / Carers Survey

Many thanks to all of you who returned the recent homework consultation and parent and carers survey. We will be taking time across this term to speak with everybody in school including staff and pupils to find out how we can do things even better. Feedback from consultations is a key part of this – you will already know that we always ask for comments on how we can improve after every whole school event and we are always ready to learn. Please don't wait for a consultation form though, you can always leave feedback with Ofsted Parent View: parentview.ofsted.gov.uk

One theme that is coming through our recent consultation is that we would like to find even better ways of communicating with parents – so far we have set up a texting service for key information, especially about school closures. We are also looking to trial a Facebook page to support the work of the PTFA and we would like to investigate how Twitter can help us celebrate the life of the school.

Recruitment

We are looking to strengthen our teaching team at Mill Water and will be interviewing candidates for a teaching position in the lower school this week; I will update you on staff changes in the next newsletter, as well as introducing our successful applicant. We are also currently recruiting for Teaching Assistants to work with us at Mill Water. Further details can be found at devonjobs.gov.uk or by contacting Gail Evans at school.

Attendance

We would always seek your support to ensure that your children attend school as often as possible. As there is a legal requirement for children to be in school, we are only able to authorise occasional term-time holiday requests in exceptional circumstances. We fully understand that this may be difficult for some families, and are grateful to those parents and carers who have been able to take holidays out of term time.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is always at the forefront of our minds here at Mill Water, we regard it as the 'golden thread' which runs through all of our work with your children. At the moment we are reviewing our online safety learning throughout the curriculum, a valuable piece of work led by Simon Winward which will help ensure that all of our children have access to online safety learning at a level that suits their need. In the meantime, look through our website links to valuable learning support and resources which can help at home with your children.

And finally...

I would like to finish this newsletter by saying a big thank you to everyone at Mill Water School who has made me feel so welcome. I can already see there is a very supportive school community of parents and carers, a well-qualified, experienced staff and governor team, a really great building to learn in, but above all there are wonderful children to spend the school day with and share their learning journey. I am looking forward to working with you all as Interim Headteacher.

Very best wishes

Clive Padgett

Interim Headteacher

Key dates for your diary:

World Book Day March 2nd 2017

Red Nose Day March 24th 2017