



Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### **End of Year Letter**

Dear Parents & Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you well. It's seems hard to believe that we have almost reached the end of the academic year and that the school is about to close for the summer break. I appreciate that the past few months have been very difficult and presented significant challenges for our school community. Many of our families have been greatly impacted by the coronavirus situation, socially, emotionally and economically. My thoughts go out to each and every one of you.

I would like to thank you, again, for your commitment to supporting your children's education at home. I know that this hasn't been easy and recognise the huge disruption to learning and social interaction that has affected the vast majority of our children. Although it has been wonderful to have welcomed back a small number of pupils to our school when we partially reopened in June, the majority have been away from school since March and they have been greatly missed.

Our wonderful children have continued to impress us with their resilience, creativity, and positivity. We are so proud of their achievements and cannot wait to share their new school with them in September. It is important that as a community, we remain positive and optimistic about the future as the completion of our new build project will mark a turning point in the school's history. The new Earlham Primary will provide our children with fantastic and appealing learning environments and transform the way that we teach and learn.

I am sure that you will want to join me in expressing my thanks to our dedicated team of staff for their incredible work over an unprecedented school year. They have risen to the many challenges presented by lockdown which have included, online learning via Google Classrooms, video conferencing and training and virtual meetings but remained committed to providing the children with the best learning opportunities possible. It has not been easy but we have always held the children at the heart of everything we do and we are coming out of this crisis stronger, united and prouder than ever.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Governing Body who have been so supportive this year. It is with regret that we have to say goodbye to one of our long standing members, Euan Macdonald. Euan stepped down as the Chair of Governors in September 2019 but over the past six years, has been committed to supporting the school to drive positive change. He will be greatly missed! We wish him all the best for the future and hope that he will stay connected to the school that he has helped to transform.

On behalf of all the staff and governors, I would also like to thank the parents and carers of Year 6 pupils for all the support they have shown during their child's time at Earlham. Even when the children leave our school they will always be part of our school community. As we were unable to give them the send-off they deserve, we plan to invite them back to our school in the autumn term for a very special event. We therefore hope that these families will keep in touch with the school so that we may contact them with news of how and when this will take place.

We will also be sad to say goodbye to some of our excellent teaching staff this year. Two of our teachers, Mr Pugh and his family will be moving to Sussex and Ms Paintsil will also be moving out of London. Mrs Patel will also be leaving us as we welcome back Ms Kaya from her maternity leave. Each of these members of staff has played an important role in moving the school forward and I am sure that you will want to join me in thanking all of them for their contribution to the school this year and to wish them the very best for the future. We hope that they will come back to visit us and to see the children again next year.

I am delighted to let you know that we are fully staffed for September, having recruited some super new teachers. We very much look forward to welcoming Ms Christofides to Year 5, Miss Cross to Year 2 and Miss Wills to Year 1. As you may recall that Miss Wills previously taught Amethyst class in the spring term for a number of weeks so we will be extremely pleased to see her back in school after all these months.

I am very pleased to confirm that we will continue to receive support from our school counsellor, Belinda, next year. Belinda has been committed to working with vulnerable children and families throughout the school closure and we greatly appreciate the help that she has provided.

Today, your child will be finding out who their new class teacher will be. Ordinarily, we would be arranging a 'moving up' afternoon to welcome and introduce the children to their new year groups. Regrettably, this is not currently possible due to the current situation arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, our teachers will be posting a video of themselves in your child's current Google Classrooms to introduce themselves to the children and to provide them with information about the new school year. These videos will be available to view this afternoon. You will also be receiving an electronic copy of your child's annual report today via email. If you wish to discuss this report, please contact the school office to arrange a telephone appointment with your child's current class teacher tomorrow.

As I am sure you are aware, many schools are currently faced with the issue of tackling falling role numbers. Sadly, our School has also been affected by this issue. We have therefore taken the decision not to provide nursery provision for the next academic year. There will also be some changes to Year 4 next year. Due to low pupil numbers in both of the current Year 3 classes, two classes will be merged to become one class in September. A separate letter has been sent to parents and carers of pupils in this year group with further information on this matter.

We know families will still be anxious about coronavirus so please be assured that we are working hard to plan a smooth, safe and successful return for the children in September. This will involve following advice and guidance from the Government and the Local Authority. As you will understand, we will need to wait until we have moved into our new school building before any plans

can be completed and shared with you. Detailed information will be published on our website from Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September so please put this date in your diaries.

The Government has made attendance for all pupils compulsory from the start of the autumn term so we will expect to see all children in Years 1 to 6 back in school on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September unless they have been advised not to for medical reasons. Reception pupils will have staggered start dates. When the children return to school, things will certainly look and feel very different. We know that every child's experience of Covid-19 will be different and the impact of so much loss, both to social norms and daily structure, may not be felt until their return. The health and well-being of each child will undisputedly be of paramount importance and our curriculum plans for the autumn term will therefore have a large focus on the well-being and academic needs of all pupils. Our priority will be to help the children to reconnect as a school community and to support them to settle back into school life and adjust to the necessary changes. At the same time, we will ensure that steps are taken to support their academic progress as the majority of our children will have been away from school for over five months.

There is a great deal to consider, plan and do in preparation for the autumn term but I cannot wait to welcome you to the new school building and 'the new Earlham' in September!

I hope that you all have a relaxing summer break and look forward to seeing you back in school in September.

Take care and keep safe!

Yours sincerely,

*N Rezai*

Natasha Rezai

Headteacher