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Dear Parents,

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017

### **Federation Newsletter - May Edition**

Welcome to the May edition of the monthly federation newsletter and isn't it great to be writing this document as the sun shines so brightly in the sky! If the forecast is to be believed, it looks like this may be a feature of the days to come and I sincerely hope that it lasts for the half-term holidays, which are now looming large on the horizon. Anyhow, you will not be surprised to hear that our children have been very busy since the publication of our last newsletter, including Engage Days, visits, discos, SAT's, visitors into school and other curriculum enrichment opportunities; exciting times indeed!

### **Thank You!!**

Just a short note of thanks to you all for your many good wishes during my short period of absence. All appears to be heading in the right direction at the moment and I am very much looking forward to getting back to work as soon as possible. I also wanted to pay tribute to the staff and governors for the amazing way they have kept everything running so well since Wednesday of last week. It is so reassuring to know that we have such a professional and dedicated team who can step-up whenever the need arises. Thank you to you all, once again, and looking forward to seeing you all very soon.

### **SAT's in Years 2 and 6**

As is always the case, our children in years 2 and 6 have been working incredibly hard during the month of May as they embrace the government's national tests, often referred to as the SAT's. I often lament how lucky I am not to have encountered these exams as a child and the level of challenge is incredibly high. It is to their eternal credit that they always respond so well but I also know that they are glad when they are over, as am I, and the staff. I think as a federation, we are very well aware of the national debate regarding these tests. Indeed, the government appear to be listening to the profession and I fully expect SAT's to be withdrawn for Year 2 pupils next year. Year 6 SAT's are likely to remain but I am also hoping that the government will again listen and offer 3 year trend data against schools as opposed to the current snapshot approach. Regardless, I do feel the wheel is turning, a little, in this area and if this can safeguard our pupils' emotional wellbeing at such a difficult time, it is to be very warmly welcomed.

On a separate matter, I know that the staff were very touched by a number of social media posts that praised our schools for the pastoral and highly supportive approach that has been adopted as we have gently prepared the children to do their best. This included the extensive programme of 1:1 tuition for all Year 6 pupils and the now legendary SAT's breakfasts throughout the Year 6 SAT's week. As a staff, we strongly believe that our children's emotional wellbeing is the cornerstone of their success and I am very proud that we have been able to safeguard this in such a successful way. I know that they have all done their best and this is all we ever ask! Year 6 can now look forward to the publication of results at the beginning of July, and my very sincere thanks go to all concerned.

Finally, a note of thanks to all of the parents in years 2 and 6. You have ensured your children have come into school consistently, are well-prepared and always willing to give of their very best. Such great teamwork will really help to ensure that our children cope and these are very valuable life-skills that will follow them through their primary school careers. Thank you, once again.

### **Staffing 1**

Tomorrow, our school will be interviewing for a new Executive Head Teacher and I am hoping to be able to share the outcome with you very soon. I am very aware that there has been a period of instability, of late, but our governors have shown great resolution, holding out for a very strong candidate indeed. Pleasingly, we are now ready to interview and three serving Head Teachers will be attending at Lutton in the morning and Gedney in the afternoon/early evening. Let us look forward to good news and great clarity in the next few days.

### **Staffing 2**

Over the last year, many of you will have got to know Mrs. Rowe through the amazing work she has carried out as a Forest Schools Leader and also the Lead Teacher for our specific aspects of targeted provision on an individual and small-group basis. From the beginning of next term, Mrs. Rowe will be reducing her commitment to us as she will be taking up a teaching position at the newly opened Freiston Centre, which is setting itself back up as a Pupil Referral Unit with residential provision. We are very pleased to hear that the centre is back in use and many of you will remember the campaign we led to keep it open when it was first threatened with closure a couple of years ago. Mrs. Rowe will continue to work with us on a Friday and I am very much looking forward to seeing how her work will develop on a slightly reduced timetable. I am also very pleased that she wishes to remain with us at what must be quite a difficult and challenging time for her. Finally, I wanted to reassure you that our Forest School Programme will continue, with Mrs. Powley as the Lead Teacher. I will also be looking to recruit a new teacher to Mrs. Rowe's role for either 2 or 3 days per week in the near future.

### **Staffing 3**

Due to the steadily increasing numbers at Lutton St. Nicholas, we are looking to appoint an additional Midday Supervisory Assistant. The commitment will be in the region of 7.5 hours per week, term time only. If you, or anyone you know might be interested, please feel free to contact me at school. I will happily talk you through the role and explain the application process. Please also keep in mind that becoming a Midday Supervisory Assistant can often lead to other paid roles within the schools' workforce so if ever you have had an ambition to become a Teaching Assistant, this could be a very useful stepping stone. I shall look forward to hearing from you!

### **School Starting Times**

Just a quick reminder about the official starting times at both schools. At Gedney, we open our doors at **8.15 am** to all pupils who wish to engage with Breakfast Provision. We are unable to accept pupils any earlier than this unless specific arrangements have been made with myself, Mr. Bland or Miss Jacobs. At Lutton, if you wish your child to attend Breakfast Club, they need to be in school by **8.15 am** and places normally need to be booked. For all other pupils, the start time is **8.45 am** and we cannot accept pupils any earlier than this. I very much apologise if this appears to be an inflexible approach but I have to do this because of insurance. If a child were to have an accident before these times, indemnity could not be guaranteed because the pupil was on the school premises without permission. Finally, I pride myself on our flexibility and if you wish your child to be in school earlier for good reason, please make an appointment to come and see me or senior staff – I can promise you a very sympathetic hearing!

### **And Finally...**

Our schools will close for the half term holidays on **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May**, reopening on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June**. I strongly feel that our children really deserve a good break after all their hard work and on behalf of the children, governors, and staff, I would like to wish you all a very safe, enjoyable and rewarding time.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr. L. Whitney - Head Teacher**

Gedney Church End and Lutton St. Nicholas Federated Primary Schools