

**SPRINGVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**Newsletter- Week 1 Tuesday 5th September 2017**

**Welcome Back:** A very warm welcome back to all our staff, Governors, families and, most importantly, our children! We hope that everyone had a restful and enjoyable Summer break and that everyone is excited and energised for the new term! The Autumn Term is always a very busy one with many exciting learning opportunities to enjoy! A list of key dates for the year and (in more detail) the Autumn Term will be with you in the next fortnight so you can be well prepared for school events.

**Leadership:** I am delighted to be able to finally take up post and start my work here as the new Headteacher. I will be very visible around school- getting to the EYFS doors and on the playground as much as possible at drop-off and pick-up times. Please come along and introduce yourself when the opportunity arises- I have lots of new names to learn so please don’t be offended if I clarify who you are and which child we are talking about (I should get the hang of it before July!). I always have a little note book with me so I may jot things down to ensure that I follow up on any conversation, where necessary.

I am really excited about the current position of the school and the potential for further improvement during my time here. We have a magnificent team of staff and we are here to ensure that your child is happy, trying their best, enjoying their learning and thriving. I look forward to leading the school to further improvement in the coming years. I would like to invite all parents into school on **Wednesday 4th October 2017 at 6.30pm** for an information evening to formally introduce myself and explain some of our initial plans for the future. The evening should take 30-40 minutes. As our staff may wish to listen in and we want parents to be able to hear the talk clearly (and ask questions where necessary) I cannot offer a solution for childcare on this occasion. If you cannot attend then please be assured that I will add the notes and presentation file to the school website the very same evening. After the event we will have some (very well) trained Y6 leaders to take any parents who wish to have a little tour of school, around the learning environment. Parents who wish to take a look around school in lesson time are very welcome to do so and should make an appointment to meet with me at a mutually convenient time via a telephone call to the school office.

**Communication:** We will be making significant changes to the way in which we communicate with families from the start of this year, including:

* A weekly newsletter (in the format of this introductory letter) will be emailed or sent via paper where requested. They will also be added to the website each week.
* A fortnightly learning journal that explains a little bit about the key skills that children will be learning- this will help families to know what we are learning about and, hopefully, join in and help us to raise rates of progress and achievement- this will begin in the near future when we have developed the format for the document with staff
* A termly diary dates letter (with a half-term reminder) to give parents good notice about school events. Any events that are added to the diary in the appropriate term (smaller events or sports fixtures) will be communicated through individual letters, weekly newsletter snippets and/or on Twitter. All key dates will also be on our website.
* Our school Twitter feed was launched recently. The Twitter feed is @SpringvalePS and we would love it if you joined us! Twitter is simple to use and free to join. We will be updating Twitter each day with little snippets of breaking news as well as sharing pictures of the children and their fabulous work to keep you informed of our amazing curriculum experiences. I will send out some guidance on how to join Twitter in the coming days. Please note that we have also added the Twitter stream to our website home page so that parents who do not wish to join Twitter can still access the information easily. Please note that we would love to share your own updates more widely- achievements out of school and/or visits of interest, perhaps.

Please note that Twitter is a positive interaction system to share the exciting things that will be going on in our community.

**Ethos:** The school’s vision is under review and all of the staff spent time yesterday exploring how we can focus our vision and shared goals to ensure that we all attend school with one key message and ethos in mind. We agree with our aims as a school but would like a simple motto that encapsulates our work as a learning community. In the next newsletter we will explain this in more detail but please note that we would like our children and families to be heavily involved in creating this- look out for more details soon, your opinions really count!

**Consultation and initial questionnaire:** Like the example above, we hope to consult more regularly with children, staff and families to ensure that our school is working together effectively to ensure that Springvale is a happy and thriving community. Things like behaviour systems and policies, homework policies, etc may be sent out before final Governor/leadership approval for your feedback. With this in mind, and as a new leader, I would really appreciate your support on our next newsletter. The letter will contain an A4 summary questionnaire that can be completed with or for your child (depending on their age). This questionnaire will ask for your child’s views, or your own as a parent/carer, on a range of matters in school. This initial questionnaire will not be published- it is a baseline to help me to ascertain parental views on the school. There will be a further questionnaire at the Spring Parents’ Evening event for your views on school at that time and this will be published with a full analysis and response. There will be space on the form for general comments and feedback as well as the questions and responses to tick.

**Holidays:** Many parents have already asked for my views/rules on holiday requests. I will review the policy with the leadership team and Governors in due course but we will still not be able to *authorise* absence for holidays. The impact of a term-time holiday on the learning and progress of a child is detrimental and the impact on the school’s attendance data is also significant. I fully understand the difficulty of many working parents who cannot take holidays around school breaks and we would not fine families if holidays were taken for this reason. Parents who undertake vital work in the emergency services, for example, regularly struggle for leave during holidays- I absolutely understand how frustrating and difficult this is. I have very rarely fined families in the past at my previous school but where I have it has been due to children taking regular holidays and/or children with poor general attendance, without a valid medical reason, taking a holiday.

**Parents’ Evening:** We will be making a change to our Parents’ Evening appointments (in November and February). We will be using an online booking system so that you can book appropriate times and change them if necessary. We will start the appointments at 1.30pm and the final appointment will be at 7pm. So that staff can be released to see parents we will have classes in activity and film clubs from 1.30pm whilst teachers are based in the hall for appointments. Each appointment will be ten minutes maximum due to the number of parents to see. Parents who have significant concerns are encouraged to arrange an appointment for a different evening to ensure that we can address these concerns whilst still ensuring that other appointments run smoothly. We can also offer a more private space for the appointment, where requested, should you wish to discuss personal or delicate matters. Maths and Literacy books will be available to look at on the evening before or after your appointment.

**Staffing and New Starter Updates:** We sadly said goodbye to Mrs Parker from our school office in July and also Miss Threlfall and Mrs Doherty left our teaching staff at the end of term. We wish them all the very best for the future and thank them for their hard work and dedication to the children of Springvale. Today we welcome Miss Goodyear as our new Year 3 teacher and Miss Chapman as our new Admin/Finance Officer. We also welcome some new children and families across the school, mostly in the EYFS. We look forward to working with you all and welcome you to our happy team!

**Have a fabulous first week back. I look forward to working with everyone over the coming years!**

**Mr L McClure, Headteacher**

**We will update families each week on attendance and punctuality statistics at the bottom of the newsletter. Our attendance target this year is 97% and we would like to impose a zero-tolerance approach to lateness as it impacts the learning of the whole school community and has a detrimental impact on pupil progress. Please contact the school office if a serious traffic incident or unavoidable situation has caused, or is likely to cause, lateness. Please ask our staff at the school office for a reminder of our school’s uniform policy if required.**