



2nd September 2015

Newsletter 1

Dear Parents/Carers,



Welcome back! It is lovely to see all the children. We hope that you had a lovely summer break with family and friends. After an interesting, rewarding and enriching experience supporting and leading another school; I am delighted to be back at Excalibur this term. I would like to thank Mr. Cotterill and all staff, parents, children and governors for ensuring that the school continued to develop in my absence. I look forward to catching up with you all on the playground and at forthcoming school events.

As ever at Excalibur, we don't stand still – following a successful bid to the local authority, we have had the school kitchen completely refurbished over the summer. Mrs. Preen now has all the up to date equipment she needs.



Free School Meals

Since September 2014, all infants have been eligible for a free school meal, but some children may be eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium.

It is worth registering for Free School Meals anyway because if you register:

- ***School receives a 'pupil premium' – an extra payment which can be spent on useful services;***
- ***Registering your child may also get you financial help for extra things like uniform, trips or music lessons.***

Whether a child is entitled to pupil premium is confidential between your family, the class

teacher and the senior leadership team. The rest of the school community (including governors) can only see anonymous data.

Please see Mrs Hilditch in the office or visit www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/fsm or call 0300 123 5012 to see if your child is entitled to or to make an application.



Meet the Teacher

You will shortly receive an invitation to attend a short presentation to 'meet' your child's class teacher. I encourage you to attend; teachers deliver important information about the curriculum, homework, expectations and routines for the year. All of these things do alter and develop as a child moves through the year groups and as education policy and practice is updated. Often, attending this meeting can help to: understand the best ways to support your child with their learning; alleviate any uncertainty and pre-empt any confusion later on. **These meetings are for parents/carers only.** Unfortunately, on these evenings, we do not have capacity to supervise children or siblings. Therefore, we politely request that only adults attend. Thank you.



Pupil Outcomes

As you know, we are a child-centred school and the emotional intelligence, individuality and well-being of pupils is our priority. Our curriculum is shaped around developing key life skills; that is we work hard to enrich, challenge and engage, not just teach to a test.

However, I have to mention how proud we are of our pupils' academic results over the last few years. Once again, during 2014-15, in all the key assessment phases, our pupils excelled in progress and attainment. Data is available for you to view on our website. We are very pleased with the commitment and behaviour for learning growing in our school. Well done everyone and thank you for your hard work!



Staff and Curriculum Development

Over the summer, as usual, staff have been preparing the classrooms and planning the curriculum for the children.

We have held INSET days exploring some of the best practice in teaching and learning and planning how we can incorporate this into our school. At the end of last term, several teachers attended year group specific literacy courses and a few members of staff visited colleagues in other schools to observe some exemplary practice.

You may not be aware, but for almost two years now, Excalibur has chosen to work in partnership with a group of similar schools in Cheshire East developing and improving teaching and learning and therefore outcomes for children. We are part of a large group, but within this we have been working closely as a smaller group with Cledford, Haslington and Rode Heath with good effect.

This academic year, Excalibur will embed 'Assessment without levels' and we will be distributing a parent guide for you later this half term to explain what this all means.

As part of our policy update and renewal cycle, we have updated our Behaviour Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy; these will be ratified by governors and then the updated policies will be available on the school website. As part of our safeguarding training cycle and following on from the whole staff and governors safeguarding training held in April, teaching staff will also receive bullying prevention training from the SCiES team this half term.

Excalibur continues to be an integral member of Alsager Community Trust (ACT). As part of this work and our commitment to the well-being of all Alsager children, we have successfully bid for funding to become KiVA schools. KiVA is a Scandinavian anti-bullying initiative and approach which has been shown to have good impact. Once we have been licensed by the University of Turku in Finland, this project will develop over the academic

year and supplement the already strong and successful focus we have on personal, social, health education and citizenship.

A couple of members of our pupil school council will be visiting Westminster this term with other ACT school council members. Again, this will enhance our already effective activities and curriculum which promote democracy, the rule of law, liberty, mutual respect and tolerance.

Finally, as usual ACT has a packed itinerary of sport ahead! Hopefully, we can retain those trophies and shields in our new (blingy!) trophy cabinet and maybe collect a few more along the way!

New Faces

We welcome Miss Gemma Birch to Excalibur this September. An experienced teaching assistant, Miss Birch is an associate teacher following the Schools Direct route into teaching and she will be working alongside Mr Cotterill and Mrs Bain in Y4.

Unfortunately, at the end of the term in July, we were let down at the last minute in the recruitment for our administrative assistant role. As an interim measure, Miss Victoria Hilditch has agreed to work on Reception until we can permanently appoint someone to this role.



Friends of Excalibur (FOE)

FOE raise a terrific amount of funding for those 'extras' which benefit all of our children. They are a great support for the school. If you would like to get involved in any way at all, please do – everyone is very welcome at the meetings (usually held in the evening at The Manor). You might not be able to attend all meetings and events, but any help at all is appreciated. Dates of meetings and events are found below. The AGM is a good opportunity to come along and find out more...we hope that you will....thank you.

A few reminders..

Some of these messages are not new but for your information:

- Pupils should not play on any equipment in the morning before school;
- Any late/leaving early pupils should be signed in/out using the touchscreen in the office area;
- School cannot authorise pupil absence in term time except in exceptional circumstances;
- Please drive and park with care and consideration; to keep our children safe and to respect our neighbours;
- Uniform prices have had to be increased slightly due to an increase from the supplier;
- Excalibur is a healthy school; please try to send only healthy snacks into school – no sweets/chocolate bars;
- Water bottles are encouraged to be brought in daily (water only please).



And Finally..

Excalibur operates an 'open door' policy which means that we will always endeavour to speak with you and support families in any way that we can. Please arrange to speak to a member of the team should you have any questions or concerns. If you are a working parent, we can be contacted via notes, by telephone or email and we will reply to messages as soon as possible.

Please remember that teachers are with their classes from 8.50am to 3.15pm and should you need to speak with a class teacher, a time after school is preferable and provides a better quality opportunity to support. If you need to speak with me, I will always try my best to do so as timely as I can. Appointments may not always be necessary.

We look forward to working in partnership with you this year and building further on the successes of the school.

Yours Faithfully,

Lise Houldsworth
Headteacher

Diary Dates

This is a list of dates currently in the school diary. You can also use the school calendar on our website which is updated as dates are added.

2-9-15 School opens
2-9-15 FOE Tears and Tissues for reception parents/carers 2pm school hall – come and have a cuppa!
8-9-15 Meet the Teacher (adults only) 5.00 Y3 5.30 Y1 & 2
9-9-15 Meet the Teacher (adults only) 5.00 Y4 5.30 Y5 & Y6
15-9-15 Y3 Love Music Trust rehearsal @ Alsager High School – details to follow
21-9-15 FOE AGM 7.30pm @ Excalibur School – all welcome
23/24/25-9-15 Y6 residential visit to Kingswood
5/6-10-15 Life Education Van – details to follow
7-10-15 ACT school council reps visit to Westminster
8-10-15 Book Fair arrives
10-10-15 One World Week festival in Alsager
15-10-15 Parent/teacher consultations 4-7pm – letter to follow
19-10-15 Y6 First aid training
20-10-15 Y4 & Y5 First aid training
20-10-15 Y1 & Y2 Fluenz nasal spray – details from school nursing team will follow
20-10-15 Parent/teacher consultations 3.30-5.30pm – letter to follow
21-10-15 YR, Y1,Y2,Y3 First aid training
21-10-15 Governors meeting – Community 5pm
23-10-15 School closes for half term
3-11-15 School opens
16-11-15 Anti-Bullying Week
25-11-15 Governors meeting – Strategic Leadership 5pm
9-12-15 Governors meeting – Teaching & Learning 5pm
16-12-15 Full governors meeting 5.30pm
22-12-15 School closes for Christmas