

## From Mr Chappell - Welcome back!

Welcome back to a new academic year at St Helen's! Despite some of our children not attending school for a significant period of time, all staff members have been so impressed over the last couple of days about how they have all returned. Change is never easy and, with temporary measures in place in school to safeguard everybody as well as possible, the children's attitude, enthusiasm and positivity cannot be faulted as they adapt to these changes. The children have come back to school in such a positive way and I have noticed a real 'buzz' right across the school throughout the last few days. This positivity is something that we have talked about as a staff, as part of the Inset Days, as we look to re-connect with our school values and vision in order to help all children be Flying High. Alongside our twelve school values, as a partnership with St Mary's, we have also taken the value of 'Hope', which we will weave into our curriculum work this term throughout the school. Have a great weekend.

## The St Helen's community, children, families and staff - 'Flying High - Soar on Wings Like Eagles'

### Emotional Wellbeing

We know that some of our children and families will have had very different experiences of the previous few months. It is important to know that as always, we are here to help as much as we possibly can. As a school we pride ourselves on our relationship with all of our families. Our open door policy, that we talk about so much, will be there over the next few weeks and months, as children and families



reconnect with school. Please be aware that we are here at any time to listen to any worries or concerns and to help support you in the best way possible. This may be through support we can give your child directly in school or by signposting you to external services that we can access, for example the services of the school nursing team. If you need anything please do not hesitate to ask and make contact with school.

**New adventures begin:** Not only would we like to say a huge welcome to all our new children who have joined us in reception, we're also very excited to welcome several new members of staff. A very warm welcome to our new teaching assistants; Miss McHardy (EYFS and Year 4), Mrs Tweehuysen (Year 2), Mrs Oakey (Year 4), Mrs Novak (Year 5) and Mrs Sunderland (Year 5). We hope you all enjoy working in our lovely school, and thank you for all your hard work over the last few days to get to know our school and children. At the end of last year we said goodbye to Mr Curtis, who was working in Year 1.

**Inset Days:** We held two very successful Inset days earlier this week. Although it was slightly different to be meeting over Zoom, the two days enabled us to think very carefully about the year ahead, how we can continue to move forward as a school and also in our partnership work with St Mary's. On day one we looked at subject leadership and the development of our Connected Curriculum, as well as updating all staff on the latest safeguarding measures in school. During the second day, we looked at our priorities for this year at St Helen's and how we can continue to develop and move forward as a school.

**Reading:** We love reading at St Helen's and every staff member is looking forward to hearing all about the great books, magazines and comics that the children have been reading over the last few months. We knew exactly where each child was in terms of their reading level and could provide the right coloured band for the children's reading book through our benchmarking system. However, we know that some children will have progressed rapidly over the last few months, whilst utilising the resources that we have sent home, such as the ORT website <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page/>. With this in mind we would ask you to bear with us, as we look to provide the children with the right level for their reading book. Over the next few weeks, we are planning to reassess all the children in reading and this may mean that they will not be bringing home reading books. This gives a good opportunity for the children to widen the breadth of their reading genres, and as soon as we possibly can, starting with the KS1, we will make sure the children are reading the correct band of book. Thank you in advance for your patience in this matter.

**Staggered starts:** We have been really pleased by the way the children have come back in to school at the staggered start times. However, it has been noted that a few parents are arriving much earlier than they should be, and this can cause congestion in some places on our one way system. On Monday when we all return to school, this could cause an issue so please make sure that you adhere to the correct times for starting and collecting your child(ren). Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

**Meet the Teachers:** There's a lot of information to communicate at the beginning of a school year and probably even more so this year. With this in mind we would like to invite all parents and carers to a 'Meet the Teacher' evening. This is something that we have done in the past and and, despite not being able to meet in large groups in person, we would like to hold these meetings via zoom. This will enable the teachers to talk to families about expectations for the year and give further information about the curriculum in their specific year group. In order for parents to be able attend all meetings, each class will have their meeting on a different day and time. These will be held **week commencing Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September** and further information will be sent out next week. We would like to ensure that these teacher meetings keep to a focus on teaching and learning and curriculum expectations, but we understand that you may have questions about operational matters in school. Therefore Mr Spens and myself will be holding a separate meeting that week, to take any specific questions you may have. Again, more information about these meetings will be sent out shortly.

#### Back to school today:



Year 1



Playtime



Year 5



Working in partnership with St Mary's Primary School, Yate  
'Growing together, pursuing life in all its fullness'

