



Friday 15th October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you at the end of another week, with just one more to go before the October half term holiday, this term has been very busy and seems to have flown past! Today I have included in my letter the usual round up of information and news.

Government household grant

This week we have been informed that KCC has been given some money to help support families by the government as part of their household grant. This means that pupils that receive income/benefits related free school meals will receive a £15 supermarket voucher to support their families over the October half term. I wrote to the parents of pupils who will receive these vouchers next week. Please contact your child's school office if you have any questions. At present we don't know if the vouchers will continue for any other holidays but will inform you as soon as we have any further information.

Black History Month

I am sure you are aware that October is Black History month. Here is some brief information about why it is important.

The event is intended to recognise the contribution and achievements of those with African or Caribbean heritage. It's also an opportunity for people to learn more about the effects of racism and how to challenge negative stereotypes.

When Black History Month first started in the UK, there was a big focus on black American history. Over time there has been more attention on black British history and key black figures from the UK, such as:

- Walter Tull, the first black officer to command white troops in the British Army and one of English football's first black players
- Malorie Blackman, a bestselling author and the first black Children's Laureate
- Olive Morris, a social activist who co-founded groups such as the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent and the Brixton Black Women's Group
- Dr Shirley Thompson, the first woman in Europe to conduct and compose a symphony within the last 40 years
- Lewis Hamilton, one of the most high profile competitors in Formula One and the only black driver

Black History Month is also celebrated in the community in places such as museums, care homes and workplaces. A broad range of topics is covered, from Britain's colonial past to migration and music.

In the Aspire schools it is our belief that Black history is too important to only be limited to a month. We are therefore ensuring that our curriculum includes Black key figures who have influenced our lives, such as the people listed above and others such as the hidden figures women who played such key roles in the space race.

National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership

Miss Brignall who is the Year 2/3 Willow Class teacher at Platts Heath and the English leader for Aspire has been accepted on to the above qualification. This is in recognition of the work she has done as our English leader. She will attend courses and complete assignments over the next 18 months to gain the qualifications. Congratulations and best of luck in your studies Miss Brignall.

Miss Brignall will remain Willow Class teacher, most of the studying will be completed in her own time.

Mrs Steer is in the completion stages of the National professional qualification for headship.

Projects

This year we have been offered the opportunity to be involved in some projects which will improve the quality of education within our four schools. Here are some brief details about each of them.

Maths mastery through the Kent and Medway maths hub

Teaching for Mastery – Maths Hubs are supporting schools at every stage of introducing and embedding a teaching for mastery approach: • Establishing Work Groups of teachers from schools who are becoming 'mastery ready', who are introducing teaching for mastery, and who are continuing the work started in 2019/20 primary mastery projects. • Work Groups are available for schools at four stages of introducing and sustaining teaching for mastery: Mastery Readiness, Development, Embedding and Sustaining. • All primary mastery Work Groups focus on supporting schools to develop strong curriculum, teaching and professional development practices that reflect a teaching for mastery approach.

Mrs Masters our Aspire Maths lead is leading this project

Number Sense- A maths programme for pupils in years R/1/2

Systematic Number Fact Teaching

Are your children stuck counting on their fingers? Number Sense Maths is a highly visual number fact teaching programme for schools that leads to a deep understanding of number and number relationships, and fluency in addition and subtraction facts.

The programme is aligned with the NCETM PD materials and with the ready to progress criteria in the 2020 DfE guidance on teaching mathematics in primary schools. Mrs Masters, our Aspire maths lead is leading this project.

NELI- Early Language Intervention

NELI is a programme for children in Reception (4-5 years) which has been found to improve children's language and early literacy skills.

This project will be used with our youngest children and is being led by Mrs Steer, our Aspire EY lead.

Kent Inclusion Leadership Project

This project is run by Leadership learning South East and is looking at developing the inclusive nature of schools. This will ensure we are providing the very best support for our pupils with additional needs.

A new and innovative programme of development to support school leaders across Kent in their work providing inclusive education for all.

This programme will lay the foundations for sustainable inclusion practice in Kent, led by skilled and confident school leaders improving outcomes for SEN children and families. Opportunities for middle and senior leaders, Headteachers and Executive Leaders in mainstream schools from Early Years to 6th form.

A cohesive programme of development* over approximately 1 academic year that includes:

- Inclusion Peer Reviews
- Inclusion Leadership workshops
- Core SEND and Inclusion training
- Tools and strategies for use in reviewing and planning for action in relation to whole school inclusion and individual leadership practice

I will be leading this project along with our SENCos Mrs LeMar and Mrs Coleman,

We are lucky to have been given the opportunity to be part of these projects and it is testament to the Aspire team that they are always open to refining and improving the schools for the children.

I can be contacted via email at exehead@aspire-kent.org.uk, during working hours, if you have any questions about any of the information in this letter.

Wishing you all lovely family weekends,

Kind regards,

Emma Hickling

Executive Headteacher

Aspire Federation