

LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE FEDERATION

In any organisation, the leadership team play a crucial role in setting the vision and the ethos for everything that happens in the building. It is very important that all leaders within the organisation 'sing from the same song sheet'. This is never more important when there is an absence from the leadership team or there are changes within the team. My focus has been on Calverton since January and both Central Park and Dersingham have run effectively with me working at a distance as Executive Headteacher. It is a credit to the leadership teams there that everything has been managed very well and the schools continue to improve. However, the leadership teams will always be tested.

Lando Du Plooy, Headteacher at Dersingham, fell ill at half-term and as a result has been absent from work recovering. I know he has been continually in touch with the leadership team but huge credit to Lara Akinfie (Deputy Headteacher) and the rest of the leadership team who have run the school ably during his absence. He is recovering well and we hope to see Lando returning after Easter. At Central Park, a change is coming up with Rebecca Wilbraham (one of the Deputy Headteachers) about to go on maternity leave. As we wish her well I know the leadership team and staff will all rally round and fill the gap left by her absence. The biggest changes are about to happen at Calverton with Caroline Crompton (the Headteacher) and Michael Speed (one of the Deputy Headteachers) leaving at Easter. We wish both of them all the very best for the next steps in their career. Leaders from the Federation, who have been based at the school, will take on leadership responsibility for the school during the summer term. I will assume direct operational control of the school and take on the Headship duties.

The Federation prides itself on looking internally, through succession planning, to fill vacant positions and this is where we will start. In recent years it has become difficult to recruit school leaders, and this is likely to be even more so after the last couple of years. We look forward to announcing more permanent leadership at Calverton next term.



TESTING SEASON AND REPORTS

For the first time in 2 years the schools gear up for tests next term so there has been a lot of work taking place to ensure children have the best chances of achieving in these tests. Children will have been sitting mock tests so teachers can analyse the answers and help fix the gaps. This year KS2 SATs will take place and these are reported along national results. KS1 SATs will take place. Whilst these have not been statutory for a

number of years we use these tests to help teachers provide a teacher assessment. There is the Phonics Screen Check for Year 1 and Multiplication Tables Check in Year 4. The other year groups will also sit some tests and the schools will use the results for their own use.

Testing was suspended due to Covid-19 in 2020 and 2021 in primary schools. There have been a number of small scale tests to try and identify how the pandemic has affected learning and it is clear that more children have fallen below the previously expected standard. The DfE want to use these tests to gauge the position of learning and therefore the expected standard is effectively unknown at the moment.

As parents, you will want your children to do the best they can, especially those in Year 6 who's results could influence their groupings in secondary schools. However, please do not put any undue stress on them. Children are known to have fallen behind; they have missed chunks of learning and are likely to put themselves under pressure to get questions right. Helping your child with their reading, timetables, spellings and writing is enough to boost their chances.

Annual Reports are being issued and these should help you identify the key areas your child needs to work on in class and at home. Your support is invaluable and it is well documented that children who do their homework and are supported at home by parents do better than those who do not.

Good luck everyone!

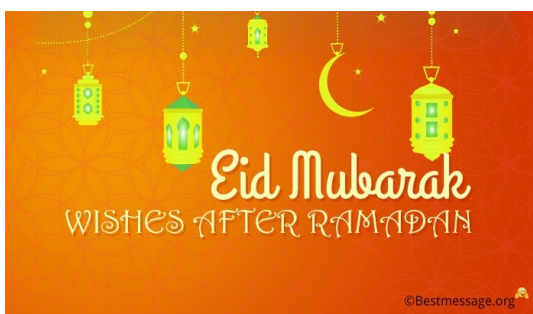


RAMADAN AND EID

Ramadan starts at the end of this week. Across our Federation there will be many families observing Ramadan and some children will join in with the fasting. Children will return to school after Easter and Ramadan will still be happening. As ever, we respect the decisions of parents involving their children in the practice of fasting but as a school we will need to know that is happening. Every year we let you know that young children are not expected to fast, and if they want to join in then maybe the weekends, when they are home, would be a good time to do so. Older pupils may feel they are ready to fast, and with your written permission we will support this decision.

Each school will inform you of the process for letting the school know whether your child is fasting. As we move into Spring, the days are getting longer and therefore the period of fasting is extended at this time of the year. We have also experienced very warm weather at this time of year recently. A reminder that we will always put the health and safety of children first and may need to intervene if a child is feeling unwell or faint as a result of fasting. Of course, we will let you know if this is the case.

EID is likely to fall over the May Bank Holiday so children will not miss a school day due to this celebration. Should the timing of EID or the celebration result in a missed day then this will be recorded as an absence but authorised as religious observance. I do hope those from the Islamic faith fast safely and have a great celebration next month.



PEER ON PEER ABUSE

Keeping Children Safe in Education is a statutory document that schools adhere to. Within the guidance is a long list of safeguarding areas that schools need to address, look out for and report on as necessary. Peer on peer abuse has become high profile with Ofsted monitoring what schools are doing to prevent this. There are many actions being recorded that may have been ignored or dismissed previously. Peer on peer abuse can take many forms—bullying (including cyber-bullying), physical attacks (hair pulling, kicking, hitting), unhealthy relationships (name-calling, bad friendships), etc.

When reading safeguarding records across the schools I have noticed some comments coming up more frequently recently. I've read about children showing their private parts to others, children watching each other in the toilets, touching inappropriately and the use of suggestive, sexualised language. In isolation this could be dismissed as children just growing up or having watched material that is not age-appropriate. However, repeated actions can start to build up a picture and become problematic for all involved. In all incidents I know children have been spoken to so that it can be explained that it is inappropriate.



As outlined in the Relationship and Sexual Education guidance there will be teaching around 'keeping your privates private', to respect others' space and bodies and how to build healthy relationships.

The NSPCC covers many of these areas and is a good source of materials to use with children. Why not share with your child?

EASTER HOLIDAYS

The Easter holidays are almost here. If we are lucky then the good weather will return and you will be able to be out and about enjoying the sunshine.

For Christians, Easter is a very important time of the year marking the resurrection of Jesus and will be marked by attending church. As we fully enter Spring I wish those celebrating a wonderful time and everyone else a lovely holiday.

Darren Williams, Executive Headteacher



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Williams'.