

15th June 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

Though it might be tempting, in the second half of term, to 'lift the peddle' and coast towards the summer holiday 'finish line', the Governing Body and the school's Leadership Team remain determined to keep pushing on, to ensure that all the good progress and achievement to date is sustained to the very end of term.

I know how hard the whole school has been working to continue on our journey of improvement. It is important that those high standards we have set ourselves are maintained - not just so that Ofsted can recognise the progress that has been made and we can shake off the 'requires improvement' judgement but, most importantly, so that the young people in our care get the absolute best education we can offer them and all the opportunities in life that comes from that.

Whenever I'm in school, (pretty much every week at the moment) I am struck by the enthusiasm in the air, the positive relationships between children and staff and the many acts of kindness and friendship going on all over the school. I spoke recently to a wide range of pupils from all year groups who were very keen to share with me a long list of all the great things that are happening in the school, including how their teachers were helping them to learn and improve and how the high standards of behaviour meant that they felt safe and able to give of their best. Of course, it wasn't all 'sweetness and light' and they were equally quick to identify ways to make the school even better: 'bring back ICT' (already being addressed, I believe), 'more clubs, please' (a conversation I shall be having with the Head).

It's been quite a busy time for the Governing Body, at the end of May we approved the school budget for next year. Like very many other schools, our finances are being squeezed, with increasing costs falling on the school and less money available to meet those costs. However, though things will be tight, thanks to the prudent management of our finances, a little more belt tightening and the continued efforts across the whole school to find some efficiencies we are still managing to keep our head above water.

The Curriculum Committee which takes a particular interest in teaching and learning, continues to closely monitor pupil progress and the impact of the various initiatives and interventions which have been introduced to support their learning. The committee has also been looking at sports and physical exercise. My particular thanks to Nicky Combarro, one of our Parent Governors who has been in school recently talking to some of our Year 7 & Year 8 girls to better understand their thoughts on school sports, after school activities and barriers to participation and to help Governors explore, with the school's leadership team, what could be done to help overcome some of those barriers.

Liz Charwin, our new Parent Governor has recently joined us and I thank her in advance for all that she will bring to the Governing Body. It is important that we have a wide set of skills, knowledge and experience to draw upon to help us best support the school, and I am enormously grateful to all our school Governors for their contribution to making Edwinstree such an asset to our growing community.

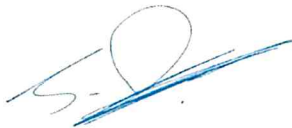
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I have written regularly to thank the school for all their efforts to help us move forward, but it would be improper of me not to say a very big thankyou to our parents for all their support and all the work they are doing to support our children's education. Whether that be hearing them read at home, supporting our Behaviour Policy, or simply getting them to school on time, it all plays a vital part in delivering the successful outcomes we are all working together to achieve. I spoke to a number of parents (and grandparents) who were supporting their children's learning at the Saturday catch-up classes, and was struck by their own determination to play their part to support their children's learning and the whole school's progress.

It's really pleasing to see the positive feedback on Parent View about the school though, of course, we would still like to see those positive figures continue to improve. Please find the time to go on line, if you have yet to do so. Also, if there are areas where parents are less happy, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Gant to share with us those concerns so that we can understand and properly address them. A reminder too that, should anyone wish to get in touch with me or has any questions about the work of the Governing Body, my email address is chairgb@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk. I regularly check my inbox but please forgive me if I take a day or two to reply.

I hope you all enjoy the Buntingford Carnival tomorrow and that many of you will be there, not only to celebrate in this great community event, but also to cheer on our magnificent Edwinstree Samba band who will be taking part this year.

My very best wishes for the weekend,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Boulter', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Mr J Boulter
Chair of Governors