



### Message from the Headteacher

We have had an amazing half term, here in school. Whilst we have been delivering teaching and learning in a more normal way since September, it has always felt a precarious normal (like all sectors of society)! In spite of this, the children's experience of school has been high quality teaching coupled with a socially enriching education.

The whole school has been focusing on closing gaps, lifting skills and providing a more rounded curriculum experience. This term has seen the re-start of swimming lessons, specialist music sessions, virtual workshops and community/charity engagement.

Whilst last academic year saw a pause in all formal national assessments, this year reverts to normal practice and I am delighted to announce that our Year 2 children have achieved above the national standard for the Phonics Screening Test – congratulations to the Peace Class team and to the parental support at home. Our intervention groups will be continuing in the new year to further cement the progress made so far – we would be grateful if you could all continue to read with your child for pleasure over the holidays to keep skills going.

In our charity work, the school has raised £200 for Children in Need and £73 for Save the Children UK – well done to everyone who has helped by making costumes, sorting jumpers and extra fundraising activities! We were delighted to hear the Needham family children had joined the MND charity fundraising event at the start line at the Leicester Tigers Stadium and as part of Bru – Design a Christmas Cup competition link sent out earlier in the autumn term, the winner of the national competition is Skyler Hoare, whose beautiful design in gracing all the takeaway cups this Christmas. The school is continuing to find ways to link with our wider community and for the first time, is taking part in the Advent Trail of over 30 decorated windows around the village. The children have decorated every window and the front doors which has really added to the Christmas feel here in school. When Christmas is mentioned, we cannot fail to mention the Nativity. We could not hold a full Nativity performance last year due to bubbles and floods on site. However, we were very fortunate to have the support of an expert parent and his team which enabled "Prickly Hay" to be live streamed and available to our parents over the Christmas period for sharing within families. We are truly grateful for this support as many schools had to cancel their performances at the last minute. We ask that all families share the link with caution as this must be for personal use only and no images are to be posted to social media.

We are delighted to welcome a new family to the school and we are expecting further transfers to us as a result of our Open Morning for new starters in 2022 – our nurturing feel and friendly school community is showing more widely in more normal times.

We have been able to hold whole school Collective Worship and continue to feel the support of the Launde Deanery clergy team and the Baptist Chapel through videos and we have had in school visits from Reverend Alison for the Blessing of the tree and a special End of Term service. As you all know, Reverend Alison has been promoted to the role of Archdeacon of Oakham and we held her final school service with us this morning. Reverend Alison engaged the children with a talk on Christmas and we treated her to a service through the children using readings, prayers, a song from Prickly Hay (Joy and Peace Classes) and Baby King (Hope and Faith Classes). The song Baby King was sung to the tune of Abba's Waterloo and has lyrics written by Reverend Alison to music originally played on the piano by her son, Nathan, a past pupil. All of this together with special class cards of memories and the presentation of a gift from the Governors, Staff and families of school, guaranteed there was not a dry eye in the place (adults only!) I know you join me in sending Reverend Alison off with our very best wishes in her new role and thank you for your contributions towards a beautiful paperweight for her new desk.

Finally, I will sign off with a firm wish that you all are able to enjoy time with your families and you all get the down time you deserve. This autumn term has been a long one, with heightened challenges around Covid, and ever-changing rules. I look forward to seeing you if you are able to join us at the Journey to Bethlehem service on 19 December at 10:30am or one of the many other Christmas services planned over the holidays.

I will update you all prior to the start of the new term on 4 January 2022 with any new procedures to follow so please do keep an eye on your emails after Christmas! The staff and I will be prepared and all risk assessments will be up to date.

- Mrs. Willcocks

## Dates for your Diary

### Spring Term 2022

(Please note - events may have to be held virtually – updates will be provided)

4 January	School Open – Spring Term
27 January	Big Moves course 6 weeks Joy Class
27 January	Sparx programme 10 weeks Peace Class
2 February	Heights & Weights Check – EYFS & Y6
14-18 February	Half Term
18 March	Red Nose Day & Whole School Theatre Trip (details to be released)
25 March	National Skipping Day – whole school skipping
8 April	School Close – start of Easter Holiday

### Forthcoming Dates - 2022:

10 April	Palm Sunday
15 April	Good Friday
17 April	Easter Sunday
25 April	School Open – Summer Term
9 – 12 May	KS2 SATs week
30 May – 3 June	Half term
6 – 10 June	Phonics Screen week – Year 1 children
6 – 24 June	Multiplication Check screening window – Year 4 children
8 July	School Close – Summer Holidays

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