

24th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

Headteacher's Letter

General Messages:

We have had an eventful month so far at Heron Hill. All the clubs have started and were enthusiastically attended, e.g. choir, board games, judo, Y4 and Y6 before school fun maths clubs, French, dance and yoga.

We have new library furniture in Upper Juniors as part of our focus on enhancing love of reading and creating inspirational reading and small group learning spaces across school. A huge thank you to Chris Stanger, our newest governor, who assembled the furniture for us. Shearwater (near the Y3/4 playground), has also had a refurbishment with the addition of beautiful shelving units, beanbags and resources for nurture groups of children at lunch times.

Mr Buxton is working with some pupils on establishing bird feeding stations, replacing bird boxes and using the former apiary as a viewing hide. If anyone has spare binoculars, bird feeders, seed or other bird-related items to donate, please pass them into the office. If you would like to take part in the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch from 26-28 January, here is a link: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-we-do/education-and-inspiring-the-next-generation>

Celebration:

Heron Hill received a very special letter of congratulations from Schools Minister Damian Hinds because we are in the top 200 schools in England with an average of 24.7/25 for our Multiplication Tables Check (MTC) last year! This is a tribute to the dedication of ALL of the staff who have taught the children their number facts over the years. Well done to all! Having secure recall of number facts is *absolutely essential* for future maths success so these results place our children in a strong position.

Staffing News:

Mike Corrie (our new Assistant Headteacher) has settled in as though he had always worked here! Laura Groves has joined us as a mid-day supervisor and Play Worker. Mrs Wilkinson is the current Acting Headteacher two days per week and Mrs Jones is acting Deputy Head on those days, whilst Mrs Little, our Pastoral Learning Mentor, supports the SENDCo work. The Governors are very busy working on the recruitment process for a new Headteacher from September 2024.

Miss Ashworth sadly leaves us at Easter to work as Key Stage One Leader at Grayrigg school; we wish her well in her new position. Mrs Ladds will return from her maternity leave to teach Year 1 Angletarn, taking over from Miss Ashworth. Mrs Ladds is visiting school on various days throughout this term to get to know the children in her class. Mrs Moorhouse is returning to work after half term as our Design Technology teacher for Year 1,2,3 and 5. She is also visiting the children this week.

Online Safety:

As you know, our young people - even the youngest - are exposed to increasingly more online material which can sometimes be harmful. We have worked hard to ensure that robust filtering and monitoring systems are in place within school and staff are vigilant in checking pupils use of devices, so that the most productive use is made of the positive benefits of the internet. We regularly update our website with resources and advice to help support you as parents with Online Safety.

<https://www.heronhill.cumbria.sch.uk/page/?title=Keeping+Yourself+Safe+Online&pid=109>

Kenyan Link:

Three of our school community will visit our Kenyan link school, Open Arms Academy (OAA) in Eldoret, this year: Mrs Lawson, our music lead, Miss Holmes, our HLTA in Nursery, and Chris Stanger who is a Governor. Mrs Lawson held a meeting last night for parents to share the focus of her recent Masters degree

which was around how singing brings us closer, even across continents, as has been seen with our link with OAA. Staff and Governors who travel to Kenya fully fund themselves and are going in their own time, so this year we would like to support their passion and will therefore have several Kenya fund raiser events coming up. We hope you will support these events as our children benefit so much from the OAA link, e.g. joint environmental and music projects. Our first event will be next Friday in the yard where we will sell warm hot cross buns after school. More information will follow!

Yours sincerely

Trish Merritt

Headteacher