

Our Ref: BSN/KON

December 2015

**ALL PARENTS**

Dear Parents/Carers

Once again, we have reached the end of another term and unbelievably another calendar year. At the start of 2015 I had very high hopes for what would be achieved at Dormston and by each individual pupil. Over the past few days I have been thinking about the most significant achievements of the year. There have been so many that it would be very difficult to mention them all. However, a few highlights are detailed below.

The most obvious success was our record breaking results in the summer. Overall, Dudley saw a decrease in its results but we very much bucked the trend. Dormston was the most improved school in the area and one of the most improved in the Midlands. The real joy of this is seeing all the Year 11s coming into school in August to collect their results, knowing that they have done well and that they can move onto the next stage of life in good shape. All this is the result of a team approach with all the key players (pupils, parents and staff) working together for a common goal. Our current Year 11s are shaping up well and with that same approach will set a new benchmark for us in Summer 2016.

As you will all know, my ideas about how you improve a school are pretty straight forward. I have always believed that it's as easy as A,B,C,E,E,E. Our Ethos is clear and simple. Every child has great potential and we do not accept that they are not capable of great things. Put simply our aim is to make sure that each pupil makes the most of all their talents.

Good attendance is crucial to school life, the more you attend school the more you learn. The Autumn term has seen us once again set a new record. Perhaps one of the best illustrations of how far we have come is Year 11. Three years ago, Year 11 attendance was a little over 91% (the average child missed a day a fortnight), today it is 95.6%. By any standards this is remarkable but an even more revealing statistic has been attendance over the last 2 weeks. Year 11 have been completing their mock exams and we decided in school to make a big deal of these this year. We wanted pupils, parents and staff to take them seriously. Rather like a footballer training before a big game. Last year attendance by Year 11 was 93% this year it was 98%. This tells me all I need to know about this group of pupils, how they feel about their futures and the support that they can count on, in and out of school.

Outstanding Behaviour is vital at Dormston. Inevitably, when you have a large group of people sometimes things will happen that are unacceptable. We will continue to have a completely uncompromising attitude to anything that falls below our very high standards. All children have the absolute right to be able to learn and feel safe in school. During the last few weeks we had a visit from the Local Authority to review the school. The team that came in spent time around the school and in lessons. Their verdict was that behaviour was excellent and that in their opinion it would be viewed as outstanding. My own view is that we have a little way to go before this is the case. We need to ensure that all pupils demonstrate a real thirst for learning at all times and so this is where our energies will be directed next year.

We have had a big influx of pupils from other schools over the last twelve months. This is often because children have moved into the area, or more likely because parents or carers are not happy with their previous school. I make a point of speaking to as many of our new pupils as possible. One of the consistent messages is that they feel they are learning more and making much more progress at Dormston. We have placed most of our energy into improving what happens in the classroom and the comments of these children plus our improved results shows that we have moved significantly in the right direction. However we want to, and can, do better again. We set our standards very high for everyone connected to Dormston.

At Opening Evening prospective parents could not believe how good the school looked, especially when compared to other local schools. We have invested a lot of time, energy and money into the school site and so it is great when people recognise how good it looks. It is something that we are already working on again for the summer. Every year we want the pupils to come back to school feeling excited about the changes that have been made. We want everyone to be proud to come to Dormston and proud of what we stand for.

Our extra- curricular provision has improved dramatically. Our fencers have passed their first badge, our sports teams are having their best ever results and the school production, "Return to the Forbidden Planet", promises to be our most sensational yet. If your child does not take part in an activity get them to make it their New Year resolution to change that.

It has been a great year in school but the most exciting thing is that we are only just getting started. I am utterly convinced that if we continue along the path that we have set off on we will see further dramatic improvements in 2016.

I hope that your family has a happy and safe Christmas. I look forward to welcoming all the pupils back to school on Monday 4 January 2016.

As ever thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely

**Mr B A Stitchman**  
**Head Teacher**