

Our Ref: BSN/KON

September 2017

ALL PARENTS/CARERS



Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you managed to have a break over the summer holidays with your family. I was keen to write to you early in the new term to update you with events over the summer and the start of term. As I am sure you can imagine, the first week back is a very busy and exciting time of year in a school. Everything feels fresh and new with endless possibilities.

For the third year in a row the school achieved its best ever exam results. The degree of change means that at this stage it is difficult to say exactly what it all means but we achieved what I hoped, and what I hoped for was good. As always, this does not mean that we are in any way complacent. Our aim is to make four straight years of improvement.

The first week back has been great. Attendance has smashed all records at over 98%! This is a staggering figure and makes me wonder if we can keep it going at this level for the rest of the year. The one thing I am certain about is that we will only do it with your support. The other thing I know is that our young people will be happier and make significantly more progress if we can.

Behaviour has been very, very good. Uniform issues are very few and far between. I know not everyone shares my belief in the importance of uniform but it is difficult not to reflect on the connection between adherence to uniform policy and a happy, safe and conducive learning environment. When I visit other schools the link is undeniable and it causes me to reflect on the turnaround in our school and the improvement in uniform. Thank you for your support as we start the school year. Nothing will change between the first and last day of the school year in terms of our expectations.

It is striking as I walk around the school that the pupils seem to be happy to have returned (as do the teachers!). The atmosphere in lessons and during social times is calm, purposeful and pleasant, which is exactly what I am looking for. I hope that we will continue at the same level for the next 38 weeks. Certainly, this will be our aim.

During the last three months of the previous school year my Heads of Department worked very hard to improve the curriculum that each child receives in their lessons. To do this we concentrated on increasing our expectations of what our children can achieve by increasing the level of challenge. We have been and will be working hard to improve our lesson

planning so that individual pupils make the progress of which they are capable. The quality of teaching will remain the school's number one priority.

We have been very fortunate to recruit a number of excellent new colleagues. They have all settled in very well and seem to be delighted to be working at Dormston. I am very much looking forward to seeing their impact on the school in the coming months and years. It is a fact that the quality of a school's staff is what determines the experience that a child enjoys. Happily, this is easily the most talented and dedicated group of staff we have had during my time at Dormston.

The facilities that the pupils enjoy in school have been improved once again during the summer. We have new toilets, changing rooms and an additional Food Pod. Our new teaching block is on schedule and should be ready straight after Christmas. The school has spent close to £1,000,000. It is worth saying at this point that none of this would be possible without the support and guidance of the school's Governors. Many people are not aware that being a Governor is a voluntary position and requires a big time commitment. Dormston is very lucky to have a great group who have every pupil's interests at heart.

We now have a good range of extra-curricular activities available for all our young people to enjoy. I hope that as a parent/carer you will encourage and support your child to participate in at least one of the many opportunities. Personally, I believe that the pupils who gain the most in school are the ones who involve themselves in more than just lessons.

So there you have it. A brief explanation of all that has happened and all that we hope will. At this early stage the academic year 2017/2018 promises much but it is important to note that it is we who will determine whether potential becomes reality.

As always, thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely



Mr B A Stitchman
Headteacher