



*'Learning together, loving others, guided by God'*

**Heene Church of England (Aided) Primary School**

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you so much for the positive comments which you have sent in this week in connection with Parent Consultations and the small steps we are beginning to make with some communication. It is clear from what a number of you have been saying that both the reports coming home last Friday and the discussions this week, have been warmly welcomed and helpful. I am delighted about this and reports from the teachers are equally positive so thank you again.

**Covid-19 Update:** Unfortunately we are continuing to see increased infection rates this week and this is having a big impact on schools locally, with some classes and year groups having to close due to lack of staff, teachers having to self-isolate pending PCR test result or those of their children. This is a really challenging time and I feel it will continue to be as we make our way through the final two weeks of term. The staffing situation at Heene is similarly affected with a number of staff, including myself, currently unable to be at school due to the need to self-isolate. It is both unfortunate and frustrating that the unsettled year most of our children have had, looks like coming to a similarly unsettled end due to the current restrictions in place. I am genuinely sorry about this and as always I ask for your understanding that Heene is no different to the staffing challenges being faced by so many other schools at this time. We are hoping for a much improved start to September and a more settled year for all our children.

You will be aware that the restrictions are due to be lifted on 19<sup>th</sup> July but schools are being advised to keep the current arrangements in place for the final week of term, and we are going to do just that, in order to continue to support the effective smooth running of the school. So for that final week of term, bubbles will continue and we will continue to wear masks in corridors and we are asking that you too continue to follow the guidance we have put in place. As I have already said, we are seeing rising infection rates and we really do want to keep everyone safe at school so that a fabulous summer holiday can be enjoyed by the whole Heene community. Thank you in anticipation for your co-operation with this.

**Staffing update: Welcoming Mr. Lockett.** As I indicated in last week's letter, we spent last Friday interviewing 5 potential new teachers for our current Elephants class. I am delighted to let you all know that after a long day, we offered the job to Mr. Matt Lockett and he has accepted our offer of a teaching post from September. Mr. Lockett is currently an experienced teacher working in a school in Tower Hamlets in London. He is looking to relocate to Worthing and we are delighted to welcome him to our team from September. Mr. Lockett will be coming to meet his new class before the end of term, probably during the final week, we are just finalising those details.

**Questionnaire Outcomes:** Thank you all, once again, for your really valuable responses to the questionnaire we sent out last week. All staff, all governors and the senior team have read each of the comments and I cannot thank you enough for telling us how you feel, what your thoughts and frustrations are, now we quickly need to put things right. Thank you too for the 'thank you' comments and the positive green shoots which some of you shared; we are genuinely grateful for all of your thoughts.



Norfolk Street, WORTHING, West Sussex BN11 4BB

Email: [office@heeneprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@heeneprimary.co.uk)

Telephone: 01903 201386

Fax: 01903 215033

The themes from the questionnaire have remained fairly consistent. As I said last week these related to the following:

**Communication** – We simply have to get better at this at all levels of school, from ourselves as leaders to the teachers in the classroom. We acknowledge this and will be working to significantly improve this over the summer.

**Home learning:** This is a really tough one to get right at primary level, but we have already started looking at options for September. However, we are also really keen to know what you as parents and carers think. What is too much? What is not enough? How would you like to see homework or home learning as I prefer to call it? Do please let us know your thoughts on [head@heeneprimary.co.uk](mailto:head@heeneprimary.co.uk)

**Teaching and learning / too many supply teachers / different teachers:** As a new leader to the school, it is difficult to see if this is Covid related, sickness related or training related or all three, indeed some other reasons too. However, whatever the reason I completely agree that this will unsettle the children and interrupt learning. We are looking to September to ensure that wherever possible, the teachers are covered by teachers the children know and so it will be much easier for the children and for their learning.

**Our expectations of the children are too low:** Again this is an area we have already started to work hard on behind the scenes in preparation for a flying start in September. The curriculum for September has been completely rewritten and we will be sharing this with you much more closely from September onwards. We know how many of the children feel about their learning currently and they deserve much better.

**Too many changes of leadership:** We completely agree. It is very, very unusual for a school to have had as many changes of key leadership as Heene has had in the last 12 months – quite exceptional in fact. Mrs Sherlock and I will lead the school from September until at least the summer of 2022, whilst the governors start to look at the longer term security of leadership into the future. The first meeting with the governors about this took place on Monday last week and further dates are planned for discussion. I will keep you fully up to date with this topic of discussion as we steadily move forward.

**Online Safety:** There are times as a leader where it is absolutely crucial to bring to the attention of parents, something which needs to be openly discussed. This week in school we have had a number of instances of inappropriate 'online' behaviour from some of our pupils, all of which have been addressed. However, as a result I want parents to be reminded that most social media platforms including Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok, require a child to be 13 years of age to register. WhatsApp requires you to be 16, since a change in the law in May 2019. All I want to do at this time is bring this to the attention of all parents. There are good reasons why these age limits are in place and more information about that can be found by following the two links below.

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Finally from me, thank you so much for all you are doing to support us at Heene and to wish you a really good weekend. Come on England!

Best wishes

Joy Waelend – Co- Headteacher