

Bitterne Park School

Half-term letter from the Headteacher (Autumn term, 2017)

Firstly, let me introduce myself. For those who don't know me from my first spell at the school between 2000 – 2007 as Deputy Headteacher, I am Graham Wilson the new Headteacher at the school, now in post for seven weeks. In the interim period 2007 – 2017 I have been the Headteacher at Saint George Catholic College. It is great to be back at the school, in our fantastic new surroundings, developing "BPS2". Mrs Trigger, as Executive Headteacher, is also working hard on the Riverside Federation structure and developments, as well as our school-to-school support requirements as a National Teaching School.

We have worked with the school's community from March 2017 to ensure that what transfers from BPS1 into BPS2 reflects the essence and ethos of the new school going forward. Hence our Core Values of Community, Achievement, Relationships, Enjoyment and Respect will be the foundation upon which BPS2 will be constructed.

These are really exciting times for the school community as Phase 3 of the school develops this academic year, with the demolition of BPS1 and the new sports facilities being built ready for September 2018. This will complete our new state-of-the-art campus for all our students.

Moving forward we are working to improve communication between the school and the community; to this end we have held our first Parent Forum this term. Thank you to the parents who attended, we had some really positive discussion about communication, homework, anti-bullying, Frog, and the school website. The next Forum is scheduled for Tuesday 28th November, 6.30 – 7.30pm; please come along if you want your voice to be included.

As well as our move to the new school we have been heavily involved in all the usual start to term activities. We have welcomed the largest year group the school has ever received in our 360 Year 7 students, taking the school population to over 1600. The students have made a great start and are already getting stuck into life with cake baking, performances, sports teams, great attendance at 98% and planning for their first school trip to Osmington Bay.

As well as the new students we have also welcomed a number of new staff to school to cater for the increased numbers of those who have moved on in their careers. The new staff are:

Mrs L Allwright	-	English
Mr M Baseley	-	Science
Miss R Bate	-	English
Mr N Dale	-	Maths
Mr G Hellyer	-	Year 7 Pastoral Manager; Drama/Dance
Mrs K Hinson	-	MFL
Mrs L Holborow	-	ICT
Miss A Howson	-	Head of Year 9; PE
Miss J Lee	-	Science
Mrs E Lewington	-	English
Mrs H Marshall	-	Food Co-ordinator
Miss R McClure	-	Design Technology
Mr G Morley	-	Music
Miss L Thorpe	-	Science
Mr P Tripp	-	Science
Mr S Ward	-	Head of Science
Miss L Woodley	-	English

We have also said "goodbye" to Year 11 and Year 13 since the last newsletter. Both year groups had some fabulous results at GCSE, BTEC and A Level in the summer, doing themselves and their parents proud. We will be inviting the Year 11 students to return for Certificates Evening on Thursday 30th November to celebrate the "Class of 2017"; a huge well done to all of these students!

The "Class of 2018" have made a great start to the new year, really focussing upon the next round of GCSE changes where subjects like Science, Humanities, Languages and Sport are moving to the new 1 – 9 grading to sit alongside English and Maths which made this change a year ago. Please be thinking about them in this year of transition.

I would particularly like to thank all the students who have embraced our new uniform this term and look incredibly smart. Thank you also to all our parents for supporting and reinforcing these changes at home. Building upon the impressive start has been our best attendance ever for the first half term at just short of 97%. This is well above the National average for secondary schools at 95%. Great news for progress and learning as all the research shows, the more often you attend the more successful you are.

Therefore, a hugely positive start to the school year with our students and community ready to build upon some targets set for the school from our recent Ofsted Safeguarding visit. The inspectors judged the school to be narrowly effective with three key targets around the review of our policies, strengthening Governance and reviewing our PSHE programmes. A comprehensive review of these areas has been undertaken and a robust action plan is already in place addressing the issues.

As part of the new policies the Behaviour Policy has been revised. Please can you be particularly aware that we have strengthened the section around permanent exclusion – particularly for drug-related activity. What could be described as “two strikes and you are out” has been revised to a “one strike and you are out”. We need to get a clear message to all our community that we have a zero tolerance towards drugs at the school. Thanks for your support with this very important area of our work. We also need to be absolutely clear that identified bullying is also an area for zero tolerance. Our students do say the school is safe but we still want to make this an absolute certainty.

Please continue to give your feedback about the school via Parent View, Parent Forum and our website. We are currently working on a brand new website to reflect the change from BPS1 to BPS2 and our new relationships with the Riverside Federation. To this end I want to say what a great privilege it has been to re-connect with Mrs Trigger who is now heading the Riverside Federation, which aims to spread the good practice from all the schools to the benefit of all our students in this community. Some very exciting times ahead as we all work closely together to ensure school improvement.

Hopefully this Newsletter gives you a flavour of what BPS2 will endeavour to build in our community continuing to strengthen the partnerships which are essential for growth and development.

Key dates – Autumn Term

Monday 30 th October	-	Back to school
Friday 3 rd – Sunday 5 th November	-	Year 7 PGL Trip
Thursday 9 th November	-	Year 11 Parents’ Evening
Tuesday 14 th – Friday 17 th November	-	School Production – “Oliver” – Sixth Form Theatre
Monday 27 th November	-	IAG 1
Thursday 30 th November	-	Class of 2017 Presentation Evening
Tuesday 12 th December	-	INSET Day
Friday 15 th December	-	Christmas Jumper Non Uniform Day
Monday 18 th December	-	Music Department Christmas Concert (6.30pm)
Thursday 21 st December	-	12.20pm- School closes for Christmas holiday
Thursday 4 th January	-	Spring Term begins

As we go to press on this letter, I am delighted to announce that the Department for Education “league” table for the whole of Hampshire confirms a very strong position for BPS in 2017 results. 16th out of 81 schools. Well done to all involved!

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

GRAHAM WILSON
Headteacher