



# Longmeadow Primary School

**Executive Headteacher: Mr Toby Mills-Bishop**

**Head of School: Mrs Mikki Caplan and Mrs Kerry Randall**

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## Update from Mr Mills-Bishop - October 2022

**4th October 2022**

Dear Parents and Carers,

With the first month of this exciting academic year now 'under our belts' and the school curriculum in full swing, I wanted to write to you all for two reasons; firstly, to say 'thank you' for welcoming me so warmly for this year and secondly, to update you all to the school improvement work that is happening, in the back ground, here at Longmeadow.

As you all know by now, my name is Toby Mills-Bishop, and I am now the Headteacher of both Waterside Academy in Welwyn Garden City as well as the Executive Headteacher, here at Longmeadow. Waterside is a small primary school with a good Ofsted grading and a reputation for both inclusion and high standards.

As I mentioned previously, these are two things that are very close to my heart. An inclusive approach but with a pursuit for high standards at the same time.

My role at Longmeadow this year is to provide the school with stability, after a period of significant disruption, and improve academic outcomes for children in all classes and in all subjects. I have committed to supporting the school for this whole academic year, as I think this gives us a logical and consistent timeframe to work with.

Much of my work so far has been on the school's academic 'intent'. This means a really tight focus on the curriculum offering in place here at Longmeadow as well as then coordinating comprehensive staff training programs so that the curriculum can be delivered effectively.

With a strong curriculum, delivered well, pupils achieve more overtime. I am deeply interested in ensuring the children develop their skills and knowledge overtime, so that they are ready for the next step in their learning journey.

The school now has proper curriculums in place for all subjects. We have adopted curriculum products from trusted companies where we are satisfied that proper quality assurance has taken place. This means that these curriculums are perfectly matched to the high expectations within the national curriculum and have a connectedness to them that helps pupils increase their knowledge and skills overtime.

We have curriculums from a company called HfL in place for both English and maths and then a curriculum from a company called Corner Stones for our afternoon topics. Staff have received training on how to implement these curriculums effectively and more training is booked in to follow this up.

Other products are used in school too; for example, we use Jigsaw for PSHE, Language Angels for MFL across KS2 and Churranga for music. Again, these curriculums have been quality-assured for progression and support our team to help meet the needs of the children here at Longmeadow.

I have also been working with the leadership team of the school to ensure the children have a daily routine that is consistent and well balanced. The children have their daily morning work, daily phonics and/or guided reading, follow-up spelling work for the older year groups, the main literacy hour (English), the main numeracy hour (maths) and then typically two 'foundation' subjects in the afternoon. Across any given term, children will experience a broad range of different subjects, including science, geography, history, RE, art, DT, PE, PSHE, music, MFL (KS2) and computing as well as opportunities to read and to watch Newsround.

In terms of staff training, we have had external professionals come in to work with our team for both English and maths already this year, as well as provision in the EYFS and for wider areas of the school's work like safeguarding and preparing the children for national testing. In September, two of my team from Waterside came here to deliver staff training on behaviour management and, as you know, a new behaviour policy is currently being trialled.

Again, my vision is that if we build a coherent curriculum that sequences learning together well, with clear progression – and then deliver with curriculum really well – pupils will have higher outcome overtime.

So far, this strategic plan is working well and I am very optimistic that this year will be a successful one.

Whilst my role is more strategic in nature than that of a traditional Headship role, I do fully understand the importance of operational concerns that parents and carers may raise from time to time.

At Longmeadow this year, Mrs Caplan and Mrs Randall are job-sharing the role of 'Head of School'.

This new role is a very important part of our new leadership structure and ensures we have senior leaders 'on the ground' ensuring that lessons are running well and pupils are making good progress.

I am really pleased that they will both be here, for part of the week each, to help further support the good running of the school this academic year. Whilst days are times are flexible, Mrs Caplin will be here for the majority of Mondays to take assembly and start the week off with positivity. Mrs Randall is here for the majority of Friday's to lead our 'celebration assembly' and to reward those pupils who have been doing well. I am onsite here at Longmeadow, for at least part of the day, four times a week – all being well – and there are other times when we meet to review attainment, policies, planning, staffing and so on.

The school will also continue to be supported by two Deputy Headteachers. This is a really good level of staffing and I am optimistic that this provision will support good outcomes this year as a result.

Central to all that we believe in, for pupils to do well, is engagement.

I want pupils to be busy and active participants in all their lessons and to work hard to meet high expectations. Lessons shouldn't be something that just happens to children, they should fun and engaging opportunities to make progress. Please do continue to talk to your children about this over the coming weeks. I have told them all in assembly that I want them to 'be busy' when I pop into their lessons. This is an important message.

As I said, I do not intend to change too many things too quickly, as I am keen to further repeat and celebrate the successful things that are already in place... but (having said that) I have asked the team, following staff training, to implement a new behaviour policy and now a new centralised timetable. This is in addition to the new curriculum in place and the staff training that we have been coordinating.

A reminder: The new behaviour policy is based around five 'Golden Rules' –

- **We are kind**
- **We keep ourselves safe**
- **We let other children learn**
- **We look after property**
- **We try our hardest**

Pupils who respect these rules will be rewarded and there will be consequences should pupils not follow them.

Once the new behaviour policy has been trialled and then agreed by the governing body (very shortly now), we will publish this to all parents and carers on the school website.

Please talk to your children about the importance of these rules at home, in order to support the school. Regular conversations about what these rules actually look like 'in reality' and why they are important will be most beneficial.

My vision, for Longmeadow, is one where strong and respectful relationships ensure that children learn in a calm and orderly environment – with pupils busy and engaged fully in developing their skills and knowledge overtime.

Thank you for your support in delivering this vision.

I am onsite this morning and also tomorrow (Weds 5<sup>th</sup>), so please do try to spot me on the playground and say 'Hello!' if you can. We also have some parents' evening booked-in and will host some coffee mornings too, giving everyone the chance to say 'Hello!'.

Thank you for supporting the school with positive energy and enthusiasm – it is much needed but much appreciated too.

I will be in touch again very soon, with further details as to how to get to know me (remember, think... coffee mornings, parent consultations and chances to ask questions).

Many thanks

Mr Toby Mills-Bishop  
**Executive Headteacher**