



# Longmeadow Primary School

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

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

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**Latest Update from Mr Mills-Bishop...**

**Happy New Year – Let's make 2023 a year full of purpose!**

10th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Happy New Year!**

**Thank you for your support, positivity and engagement over the last few months.**

The team and I have been working really hard, mainly behind the scenes, to ensure the quality of education at Longmeadow is of an improving standard and that pupils experience a good curriculum, based on building useful skills and knowledge.

As you know, my role at Longmeadow is to provide the school with some stability this school year, after a period of disruption, and improve some of the academic outcomes for our children across all classes.

I have committed to supporting the school for this school year (2022-23), and I am very happy to have returned to the school, following the Christmas break, and get back to what is a very important challenge – thank you for making me feel most welcome during my time here.

Inevitably I guess, much of my work (so far) has been on the school's academic 'intentions'. Which means a tight focus on our planning and the curriculum in place here at school. We have now put together a curriculum that is coherent and progressive (learning builds on learning). Another important element to my work is coordinating staff training so that our curriculum is delivered as well as possible. There are a number of external professionals involved in supporting the school this year and we are prioritising staff training and development as the key driver for improving standards.

In addition to this work, one of the more exciting parts of my job is putting together some fun opportunities for the children's personal growth to be developed over time. In education, we call this 'Personal Development' or 'PD' for short and it is something I am very passionate about.

As such, I would like to update you on a few things:

The 'Biggie' for today...

## **The Launch of our new 'House System'**

In assembly last term, Mrs Caplan told the children that we would like to officially launch a new 'House System' here at Longmeadow – think 'Harry Potter Houses' and 'points' awarded for good work and good behaviour.



Essentially, we want to create a system whereby we can continuously praise and reward those pupils who show the right behaviour and work hard. There are so many children here who always do the right things and we would like to reward them more.

We plan to do this by awarding 'House Points' and then celebrating successes together as a community. We also plan for the House System to help further create a sense and a feeling of 'community'.

The system is now 'ready to go' and will work as follows:

The children will shortly be put into one of four 'Houses' – with siblings being in the same 'House'.

When children generally produce some good work, they will be awarded 'one' 'House Point'. If children directly demonstrate any one of the 'Golden Rules' in a very clear way, then they will be awarded two 'House Points'.

We asked the children to come up with some 'themes' for the names of the houses. e.g., rivers, trees, famous authors, capital cities, oceans, crystals, composers or tropical plants etc.

Thank you to all of those who put their suggestions in my 'ideas jar'. Having now met with a group of pupils from different classes, we have decided upon our new names...

The theme the children have chosen is: **Crystals**

The new House names, House colours and what each now 'stands for' are, as follows:

**Amethyst** – purple – calmness

**Blue Quartz** – blue – harmony

**Peridot** – green – compassion

**Calcite** – orange – joy

I am reliably informed by the children that different crystals 'stand' for certain things and even promote these things if held for long enough.

Whether or not this is something you believe in, there is indeed such fantastic language here and we plan to use the House system to promote certain qualities and behaviours, like compassion and calmness, as well as further boost the children's vocabulary.

Please do talk to your children about this at home.

Now - after the children have been allocated one of these four houses, we'll need some of the year six pupils to put themselves forward for election as potential 'House Captains'. Year six – please think about whether or not this is for you.

Exciting times ahead indeed – more information to follow in due course. I wonder which house your children will be in?

As I have previously mentioned (above), my role at Longmeadow is to provide the school with stability this academic year and my work so far has been mainly on the school's academic 'intentions'. We have 'adopted' curriculum products from companies where we are satisfied that good quality assurance has taken place. We use curriculums from a company called HFL Education for both English and maths and then a curriculum from a company called Corner Stones for our afternoon lessons.

Staff have received training on how to teach these curriculums well and more training is booked too. Other products are also used in school - we use Jigsaw for PSHE, Language Angels for MFL in KS2 and Charanga for music. The products have been quality-assured for progression and support our team to meet the needs of the children. Additionally, I am in contractual talks with a sports coaching company to help support the teaching and learning of PE.

We have also been working 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 groups, the literacy hour (English), the numeracy hour (maths) and then typically two 'foundation' subjects in the afternoon. Across any given term, children will be taught a good range of subjects, including science, geography, history, RE, art, DT, PE, PSHE, music, MFL (KS2) and computing as well as opportunities to read at length and to watch Newsround (which helps make children more 'worldly-wise').

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, behaviour and preparing the children for national testing in yr6. 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 now in place.

Again, my vision is that if we plan a good curriculum that sequences learning together well, with clear progression, and then deliver that curriculum well – pupils will behave better and have higher outcomes overtime.

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

Whilst my role here 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'. They are both still in post and have returned to school, following the Christmas break, keen to continue to make a difference.

This new shared position of 'Head of School' 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 and times are flexible, generally, Mrs Caplan will be here for the majority of Mondays to take assembly and start the week off with positivity. Mrs Randall is then generally 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 better outcomes this year as a result.

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

I still want pupils to be busy and active participants in all their lessons and to work hard to meet our high expectations. Lessons shouldn't be something that just happens to children, they should be fun and engaging opportunities to make progress.



Please do continue to talk to your children about this over the coming months. I have told them all in assembly, a number of times now, that I want them to 'be busy' when I pop into their lessons. This is an important message – please do follow this up with them at home.

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 the new behaviour policy and 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.

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 today and also again tomorrow morning (Thurs 12<sup>th</sup>), so please do try to spot me on the playground and say 'Hello!' if you can.

We also have some more parents' evening booked-in again later this term – as we feel that proper 'face-to-face' parent consultation meetings best inform parents of how their children are progressing.

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

I will be in touch again soon, with further details as to how the school continue to offer more to our fantastic pupils.

Many Thanks

Mr T Mills-Bishop  
Executive Headteacher  
Longmeadow Primary School