



Longmeadow Primary School

Executive Headteacher: Mr Toby Mills-Bishop

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Latest Update from Mr Mills-Bishop

What's new at Longmeadow...

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your positivity, support and engagement so far this year; we are just over half way through now and with half the year to go.

The staff and I have been working really hard to ensure the quality of education at Longmeadow is of an improving standard and that pupils experience a good curriculum, based on building the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

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

Inevitably, much of my work has been on the school's academic plans. We have now put together a curriculum that is coherent and progressive (so, learning builds on learning) and there are a number of external professionals involved in supporting the school. We are prioritising staff training and development as a key driver for improving standards further still.

A lot of certainly going on at Longmeadow and, as such, I would like to update you on a few things:

Staffing

We have a number of important staffing announcements to make, these are as follows:

Firstly, Ms S Laflin, our Deputy Headteacher in charge of the infants, will be leaving us at the end of term to take on a Head of School role at a SEND setting.

We thank Ms Laflin for her hard work at Longmeadow over the last eighteen months and wish her well for her future.

Ms Laflin's main responsibilities (i.e EYFS leadership, English leadership and her role as the DSL) will be distributed amongst other staff members, over the coming weeks. We will also ensure that the number of qualified teachers, working within the EYFS, is within the ratios set of maintained schools.

The number of professionals working on the school's SLT will now move from five to four, as this is a suitable number to continue to move the school on.

Please join me in saying, 'Thank you for your work Ms Laflin, and congratulations on your new role.'



Secondly, Miss E Jones will also no longer be working at the school.

Miss Jones was a teaching assistant here, mainly supporting our Year Five class. She has now formally left her post at the school. Again, we would like to officially thank Miss Jones for her hard work, and we wish her all of the very best for her future.

The SLT and I will further explore viable options for ensuring Year 5 have the correct level of support moving forwards.

Thirdly, after the upcoming Easter holidays, we will have a new teacher join the school to teach in Year Two.

Her name is **Mrs A Galinska**, and she is an experienced infant teacher, having taught successfully across different year groups over many years.

Mrs Galinska also has experience in subject leadership and has recently completed a nationally recognised leadership qualification.

She will join us as our year two teacher and also as the KS1 phase leader - which is an important 'middle leadership' position at the school.

Mrs Badesha, our 'juniors Deputy Headteacher' who teaches in year two currently, will move back up the school to further support the KS2 pupils - especially those preparing for May's national testing cycle.

We thank Mrs Badesha for her recent work with the year two pupils.

Finally, we would like to extend a very warm welcome to Mr Usher who has joined the Longmeadow team this week as a 'Site Team Assistant' working with Mrs Seals in the Premises Team.

Mr Usher is in school each day between 2 pm and 6 pm, helping to keep our school site warm, dry and (above all else) safe. Please say 'Hello/ Welcome' to Mr Usher if you see him around the school site.

Self-Assessment Dots (SA dots)

Over the next few weeks, we will be launching a number of new initiatives at the school - the first of which is a very simple venture into early 'meta-cognition (thinking about thinking / reflecting on learning) ...

...called - **SELF ASSESSMENT DOTS**

Essentially, from year two up (for now) ...

We are asking all pupils to put either -

one dot .

two dots ..

three dots ...

- above every single recorded learning objective.

They must do this every time a learning objective is present in any piece of recorded work.



One dot - means they have not yet fully understood that lesson's learning (*novice*)

Two dots - mean that have understood 'some' of the lesson's learning (*practitioner*)

Three dots - mean that they have fully understood that lesson's learning (*expert*)

Immediate Interventions

The second of our new interventions follows on beautifully from the first - **immediate intervention groups** (think... short/sharp sessions in the afternoon and, think about... the very notion/purpose of 'intervening').

At the end of the English lesson and at the end of the maths lesson, using the children's SA dots (above) but also teacher assessment, teachers are going to sort out which pupils will need an 'immediate intervention' that very afternoon (or perhaps the next day if logistics are tricky) to directly address the misconceptions seen.

These interventions are to be as soon as possible, following the regular learning. They are to be very short/sharp - five to ten mins max. They are to be recorded and marked within the children's books themselves. They are to be in direct relation to the 'live learning' happening each morning and are not an 'off the shelf' scheme as such.

(think... short/sharp reactive sessions and, think about... the actual notion/purpose of 'intervening')

Initiative number three...

Three Bs before the 'boss'

To help increase our pupils' independence, we are going to relaunch an initiative whereby the children do three key things before asking for an adult's help. Three Bs!

The three Bs are:

Book

Board

Buddy

...and only then, go to the 'boss' (adult).

Children are to look in their book first, as this is where their differentiated tasks will be. This is also where their word mats, or number squares, or vocab sheets or other scaffolding will be - so, always book first.

Then 'the board' - this is where the 'success criteria' will be - as well as any key vocab and a model of the children's task too. So, book first and then the board.

Once children have been through these two stages, then and only then, do they ask their friend (their buddy) for help.

This whole process is designed to support the children to be more independent and to take ownership of their own learning. Teachers then help thereafter.

Book / Board / Buddy - then the boss - to boost independence.

Please talk to your children about all of the above, regularly, over the coming weeks and months.

Our new 'House System'



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

Essentially, we aim 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 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 'LIVE' and working as follows:

The children have been 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.

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 Cornerstones 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 Churanga for music.

The products have been quality-assured for progression and support our team to meet the needs of the children.

Additionally, we have now signed a contract with a sports coaching company to help support the teaching and learning of PE. The company is called Premier Education and are supporting teachers to deliver PE on Mondays and Tuesdays currently.

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 half-term 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 Caplin 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 until Easter and then one thereafter.



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.

A reminder: The new behaviour policy at Longmeadow 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 and Friday afternoons (Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd), 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 next week – 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