

13<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. Winter is definitely upon us with a cold snap of bright, dry weather. Thank you for bearing with us with late opening on Monday. All schools managed to open apart from Blisland who switched to online learning.



All the schools in the Trust continue to deliver quality experiences for your children with the added bonus of Christmas activities well under way. This is a picture of Trenode sent in by Beth Pike, Head of School as the children went to collect a donated Christmas Tree from Santa's Trees in Liskeard – we are very grateful; Santa's Trees also produced the Christmas wreath for No.10 Downing Street this year.

If you have had the opportunity to look at the Bridge Schools [website](#) you will see, we have the Advent Calendar back again with contributions from all the schools [Advent Calendar 2022](#). We will launch the latest edition of Bridge Stories from there over the Christmas Holiday.

### Carnglaze Caverns

The highlight of this half term has to be the event we ran at Carnglaze Caverns. Watching the children from all of the schools take part and perform on the stage was just amazing. It was a reminder of why we do our jobs – to see children's beaming faces as they surprise themselves with the quality of their performance thanks to the input and time from staff. Laura Yeo – teacher at Looe Primary and Trust Music Lead had the initial idea of bringing everyone together for a whole school Trust event. Carnglaze were fantastically accommodating in helping to make the logistics work for us – we had some fun with the parking but got there.

The children were fantastic, we had all sorts of different ideas for the audiences to enjoy. Nick Hart (Musician and trustee), Sean Hewitt (Professional Artist and well known to many of our schools) and Jenna Brewer (Professional Dancer training in London) were our judges for the day. A dubious honour to be awarded as you never please everyone! However, in the morning 1<sup>st</sup> place went to Lanlivery; 2<sup>nd</sup> to Brunel and 3<sup>rd</sup> to Polperro. In the afternoon 1<sup>st</sup> went to Trenode; 2<sup>nd</sup> to St Cleer and 3<sup>rd</sup> to Duloe. The overall winner for the day was **Lanlivery** with their singing ability, costumes, movement and cohesion in working together. Really well done to them and everyone who took part – it was a pleasure to be there and see all the children perform so well.

Everyone works hard to make every day a special day. Events like this showcase the capacity of the Trust working together. A group of 14 schools, sharing ideas to realise the very best we can for all our children. Thank you to all the parents who came to watch the children, I hope you enjoyed the performances.



### **Premises**

We continue to invest in our school buildings with an extensive programme of compliance management, capital works and maintenance. 9 applications for major capital projects at 8 of our schools have just been submitted to the 23/24 Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) totalling £2.7m. Five major capital projects incorporating fire upgrades, replacement doors, windows and roofs and safeguarding installations totalling £670k have been completed this year funded by previous successful CIF bids. As a Trust we have received over £6m since 2016 to complete improvement works across our estate and build in resilience. Minor capital works have been completed across all sites this year totalling £150k including septic tanks and drainage improvements, redecoration, refurbishment to teaching, nursery and support staff spaces, condition surveys and play area improvements.

### **IT Services**

With further investment and sign off from the Trust Board we have been able to continue to enhance provision in schools. In terms of pupil ratio, the focus has been to hit 3:1 minimum which works well with a shared provision and replace old IOS for the next phase of investment. We have achieved this across the Trust with 900+ iPads available for staff and children. We will be adding another £125k of investment again this year on top of the service provision budget of £200k.

### **Financial Squeeze**

We are facing the same cost pressures as everyone else with energy inflation and fuel price hikes all adding pressure to school budgets. We are short on our government funding for staff costs, and supplies and services costs have increased by at least 10%. We are in the fortunate position of holding a 'reserve' to support the schools through any difficulties which may arise – a benefit of pooling our monies together. It will be tight this year, but we will not need to make any drastic changes thanks to our reserve funds which will sustain all activities in schools this year.

### **Viruses**

With us all back to mixing together again in schools, with families and outside events there have been a number of cough and cold viruses moving around the schools. COVID numbers have remained low thankfully, though people are no longer testing of course. We have had some children contract the scarlet fever virus; a handful of whom have become confirmed cases of Strep A (Group A Streptococcus). The signs to look for heads will have advised you of, but they can also be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/> Please stay vigilant and report any concerns to your local GP.

### **End of the Autumn Term**

We will close for the Christmas holidays on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December and all schools will reopen on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 as normal. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support for the schools and to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With all good wishes,  
**Adrian Massey and everyone in Bridge Schools**