

14th June 2023 - Summer Term 2

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope everyone continues to be well and you are coping with the mini heatwave we are currently experiencing, which is great news for the planned sports days and all the other outdoor events which will happen over the next few weeks. We are almost at the end of another academic year; which has been a GOOD year for Bridge Schools.

Children are making expected progress

Formal assessments have taken place in EYFS, Year 1 phonics check, Year 2, Y4 multiplication tables test and Year 6 SATs. Headline figures for the Trust should be at least in line with national averages. Working through catch up plans has helped children to make some of the gains they needed. There are of course examples of children who haven't yet met year group expectations just as there are those who have surpassed them. Our continued aim is to ensure we get all children to where they need to be.

Parent Survey

*There is another opportunity to share your views this half term. We would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete the following **Parent Survey** as this will help us to continue to improve our organisation.*

Ofsted Inspections

Staff and pupils are celebrating after a successful Ofsted Inspection at Wadebridge and a Church School SIAMs inspection at Duloe this year. We received the final report last week for Wadebridge, achieving a good grade in all areas. A tough inspection with three inspectors for both days but children and staff shone through. Duloe received their SIAMs inspection, being judged 'Good' overall. I am so glad for these schools, children, staff and parents, that the hard work of all our teams have been recognised in these inspections. There is still time for Ofsted to come to visit other schools this term. You can read the Wadebridge and Duloe reports by visiting the individual school websites.

Contributing to this success is a Trust shared ethos, built upon the concept of being 'stronger together'. Our pupils are receiving a high-quality education in each school because of the efforts of every member of the team – the central team who look after areas such as sites, IT, human resources and finance to the teachers, teaching assistants, Trust subject leads, executive heads and heads with all other staff and governors working to support learning at each site.

New Senior Posts for September

Following Matt Avery's successful application for a larger school, Andrew Smith was appointed as Head of School for Blisland. Andrew has been a Teacher at Wadebridge for a number of years, formerly Looe and is the Trust Lead for Maths. Becky Marshall (currently at Pelynt, Delaware and Gunnislake) was appointed Assistant Head for Looe taking over from Jon Smith who has been appointed to Trust Lead for Inclusion working alongside other colleagues within the Trust. Katie Lee-Elkins - Assistant Head at Wadebridge will take the role of Acting Head of School following Becky Whitlock's departure at the end of this term. We look forward to working with them in their new roles.

We wish Matt Avery, Becky Whitlock and other staff members leaving us at the end of this term all the very best for the future.

Finance

We are working in difficult times financially, there is increased funding to education but there are more children, all schools nationally are struggling having to trim back to make budgets work. The finances for Bridge Schools remain in good shape with enough money in reserve to continue the IT and buildings projects and investment in resource for all our children. These are the most expensive areas for investment but are crucial together with capable staff in securing high quality provision. We have had to cut back on our in-year budget to make things work but we are in a better position than most thanks to everyone working hard to keep costs down.

IT Investment

During the last year we have continued to invest in IT infrastructure and hardware including the upgrade of our iPad provision with another 250 new iPads which have been made available to children and staff during the last half term. This takes most of the small schools to a 1:1 level of provision. This additional learning resource enables children to access digital learning and build skills during their school day.

Buildings Improvements

We apply each year to the Department for Education for CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) money to improve our buildings. Due to the skill of the team in writing the bids, we have been successful every year. The criteria are very tight, we aren't able to apply for everything we might like but it all helps to improve the environment for our children, families and staff in which to work and learn. This year, only 5 CIF grants were awarded to the whole of Cornwall (~260 schools), I am pleased we were 1 of those 5 receiving a grant. We have now been in receipt of £6.3m in grant funding since 2016.

Inservice Training

We held our whole Trust INSET day at Delaware on Friday 31st March. This gave staff the opportunity to take part in a number of sessions during the day led by me, senior staff as well as subject specialists from across the Trust schools, sharing ideas and resources with colleagues. Face to face sessions bring so much more than an online experience. All the information shared by Trust Leads is then made available on our intranet, which we call the portal. This is the vehicle to share expertise and allow all staff to access high quality resource, a benefit staff enjoy from our shared approach. Well-trained staff deliver better outcomes for your children.

Collaborations

Trust Values Day – Groups of children from across our 14 schools took part in a Whole Trust Values Day event at Gunnislake Primary at the end of last term. Children worked together happily mixing with children from other schools within the Trust, understanding they are part of something much bigger, as they made their way around the exciting activities. The whole day was an extraordinary opportunity to see the Trust values in action. Fabulously rich sessions showcasing much talented work. Thank you to Michele Spencer (Headteacher at St Cleer) and Janine Waring (Headteacher at Looe) for coordinating the day and to all the presenters (Nick Bowden, Rebecca Brewer, Beth Pike, Ben Warwick and Laura Yeo) for their enthusiastic skill in creating such memorable experiences for the children.

Bodmin Airfield - Nine of our schools have been taking part in an exciting multi-school, creative project with Bodmin Airfield and internationally renowned poet, Sally Crabtree. Blisland and Lanlivery have already visited the airfield, where the children enjoyed a tour with the pilots and the opportunity to learn about the operational aspects, sit in the planes and deepen learning from different aspects of their curriculums. Some classes have met a pilot who has flown Spitfires and learnt more about transport in WW2, while other schools learnt more about the history of flight and had the chance to interview Polly Vacher MBE, who has flown solo around the world.

So far, Pelynt, Darite, Wadebridge, St Cleer, Looe, Trenode and Polruan have been busy creating digital learning resources that are being shared across the Trust – enabling children to show off their learning and in turn, teach one another about various aspects of aviation, whilst being inspired in their writing.

On Thursday of this week, poetry from nine schools formed part of a 'parcel of poems' that was handed over to French pilot, Iza; who flew the work back to France to share with schools there, where international links between Bridge Schools and France will then continue into the autumn term. As Sally Crabtree said, she is delighted that the project is letting the children's imagination, knowledge and collaborative creativity 'take flight'!

I do hope that you get to enjoy the school Summer events over the next few weeks and thank you for your continued support.

With all good wishes,
Adrian Massey and everyone at Bridge Schools.

Summer 2023 Bridge Schools Trust
Parent and Carer Questionnaire

