



10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Families,

I hope that you have felt that the first few days back in school have been successful, in terms of a supportive and nurturing transition back. I have loved seeing all of the children again and even more pleased that they have noticed how vibrant the school looks inside. The staff have worked really hard to develop their learning environments to support more collaborative learning again and to showcase some of the learning done at home with you and to share some of what to expect. We will be preparing a short 'virtual' tour of inside of the school to add to our website so please do look out for that soon.

### **Curriculum and timetable changes**

As I am sure that you will all have realised, all schools are preparing their own bespoke 'catch up' programme upon the children's return. The BeDifferent Federated leadership team have worked hard to devise a balanced curriculum and timetable that ensures that key priorities in learning are targeted alongside maximising the children's time in school with us.

Identified as a key priority for this academic year, we are very aware that the Mathematics curriculum has taken yet another 'blow' during this second lockdown. Unlike the skills taught in reading and writing, which are taught throughout the year and are very repetitive, the Mathematics curriculum is organised in such a way that specific units of work are planned for at specific times of the year in a planned teaching sequence. This has meant that the same units of work in Mathematics have been missed twice and these units of work happen to be the hardest to teach remotely, because of the practical/cross-curricular nature of them.

Whilst the quality of teaching and learning resources provided in Mathematics continue to be of the highest standard, we are unable to effectively assess what the children are achieving and how much of what is recorded is an accurate reflection of their ability. We will therefore assess the children on the objectives taught remotely so far, in order to plan the remainder of the spring objectives at a pace that is suited to the children. The assessment of the children will then provide us with the information needed to stream them according to ability in Mathematics from Years 1-6. The streaming in Mathematics will start immediately after Easter. We are sure that this will provide us with the opportunity to teach those that have the greatest gaps in learning, those that need a slightly more fast-paced 'catch up' programme and those that are ready to progress into the next unit of work planned for the summer term, with 'missing' spring term objectives targeted.

Once we have this data and the streamed groups have been organised, we will of course inform you, as to who is teaching your child in Mathematics.





We will not be formally testing the children this year in any of the core subjects but instead we will be providing you with the objectives that your child has mastered. We will continue to informally assess the children as part of our daily teaching, using feedback in our marking to affirm and guide your child in terms of their understanding. Any form of testing will be designed by us so that we are testing the children on exactly what they have been taught. More than anything else, this bespoke testing system guides our planning so that the balance of what is understood and what needs further understanding is addressed.

As well as continuing to prioritise on the children's mental health and wellbeing and their understanding of Being Different and Equal, we will be increasing the amount of physical activity that every child takes part in. Our children have spent far too long learning 'statically' and the impact of this has meant that many children will have gained weight and this in turn would not have helped any form of 'motivation' to be active or indeed optimise their learning and many children are not developing physically at the rate that they should be. Being physical and being outdoors impacts positively on our mental health so we plan to make this happen in a very exciting, scheduled way.

Guidelines have been sent to schools by the Chief Medical Officer, who recommends that Primary School children take part in at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day. These 30 minutes must be over and above their playtime allocation. This means that we have timetabled an additional one and a half hours of physical activity per week. The extra physical activity will include circuits, aerobic exercises, team games etc. We aim for this to happen outside so that the children have a greater space to move and enjoy themselves freely. **Please may you pack your child's trainers/plimsols every day, as they will need them to benefit from these sessions.**

We have certainly not forgotten all other aspects of the curriculum, as Wednesday the **17<sup>th</sup> March 2021** will bring our second curricular themed day: **Going to the Extreme**. This curricular themed day will have a geographical focus.

Please do make sure that you have read all other communication to include the selling of our BeDifferent reflectors and the Bunny Bonnet Parade information for Reception children.

It is great to be back!

Mrs Bull  
Chief Executive Headteacher

