

Inaugural Newsletter – Friday 7th September 2018

Dear Families,

What a fantastic first week we've had! We are all amazed how brilliantly the children have settled in despite the unusual circumstances. They are already getting into good routines, making friends, sharing and listening well to the teachers. They have really enjoyed the school dinners, eating everything up and using super table manners! It was lovely on Thursday when many of them said that they wanted to stay at school longer!

The children are incredibly enthusiastic about their learning – requesting different books to be read, enjoying the role play area and have done some lovely art work already.

Transport: The transport arrangements have worked really well and thank you once again for your understanding and helping it to run so smoothly. You will often hear me talk about how vital it is that we work together in partnership to give your child the best possible outcomes from their schooling and you have certainly shown what great partners you are going to be!

The biggest challenge on the coach was managing some of those little legs up what are quite big steps but they made it with a helping hand or two! We've had fun singing songs as we go and been very excited when we've caught a glimpse of 'the multi-coloured school!' If any of the children that have been brought to Scientia directly by car would like to join us on the coach next week, please let me or one of the teaching staff know if you haven't already via the office@henhurstridgeacademy.org by Sunday evening.

Staffing news: Due to all the different arrangements we have needed to make whilst at Scientia, the Local Authority have offered to pay for another Teaching Assistant whilst we are here to help with moving the children around the school and the transport situation. Therefore, we have taken on an excellent Nursery Nurse, Mrs Morgan, for the time that we remain at Scientia to help us make sure everything keeps on running as smoothly as it has this week. You will see Mrs Morgan sitting with the children on the photograph below.

Site update: I went to site on Wednesday and was very impressed with the progress that has been made. I am attending a Project Board meeting in Stafford on Wednesday where I am hoping to be given a final date for us to move in by the Construction company and the Local Authority. I will let you know as soon as I know.

Tapestry: Our online Learning Journal for the children will be launched shortly. This is a fantastic tool where you can find out what your child has been up to at a click of a button and see photographs of them at work (or play!) at school with comments from the teaching staff. We will let you know as soon as this is up and running with the details of how you can sign up to the secure site.

Teaching news: Starting from next Friday, I will be teaching the children each week during the morning session. This is to allow Miss Coxon and Mrs Blackshaw to have quality time to plan exciting learning opportunities for the children the following week. Joining me, will be Mr Parker

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who has a passion for learning outside of the classroom, so together we will be doing lots of fun activities with the children. Please make sure they have their wellies in school for next Friday.

Dates: Next week, I intend to issue a list of dates for the academic year. This will include: assemblies, parent information sessions, Harvest Festival, Parents' Evenings, Christmas events, Sports Days etc. so that it will help plan your academic year ahead.

Baseline: When children first start school, the children are assessed against an assessment tool called 'Development Matters'. We call this their baseline assessment. There are 17 different areas that the children are assessed against and for each area they are given a banding that the teaching staff believe they are working within. Every child is different and may have a different starting point. Throughout the year, it is the teaching staff's job to ensure the children make good progress from their starting point. The baseline information will be shared with you at your first Parents' Evening. Over the next few weeks Miss Coxon and Mrs Blackshaw will be carrying out these assessments. One of the elements they will be looking at is the children's phonic skills (what letter sounds they know), once they have done this, they will be best able to allocate the children reading books to the right level and then we will send these home, along with a Reading Diary for you to make comments in. More information about this to follow.

To conclude, myself and the staff have had a truly wonderful week getting to know your lovely children and are looking forward to watching them grow and develop over the coming academic year and being our first year group at Henhurst Ridge. Here's a photograph of their first full day which I'm sure you will treasure.

Have a great weekend and I look forward to seeing you on Monday, Mrs Hopkins.

