



THE DOWNLEY SCHOOL

"Learning, Growing and Succeeding Together"



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Dear parents and carers of The Downley School,

Welcome to The Downley School (TDS) 2018-19 academic year. And, a special welcome if you have just joined the TDS community with children starting in the Reception year.

Please take a few minutes to read through this whole communication as it includes important information about how our school is moving forward.

As evidenced in our performance data and recent external audits, our school has suffered a declining capacity for natural, ongoing self-improvement and last year saw the beginning of a transformational time at TDS. We started work to reverse our drift and to re-affirm that achieving the best possible education for **all our children** is the guiding principal at the heart of all that we do.

As we continue our bold and ambitious drive for school improvement, in preparation for the start of the new school year, the summer break has also seen some exciting and significant improvements to the school environment and resources including:

- ☆ A new, state-of-the-art **4D sensory and full surround immersive learning room** has been installed ready for unveiling to the children in the coming weeks (and to parents later this month at the vision launch meeting) bringing innovative 21st century technology to our school and enhancing our children's learning experience.
- ☆ New and existing **ICT provision is now set up in all classrooms**, and general ICT system support improvements have been made enabling ICT to be further integrated into and across the curriculum.
- ☆ **New smart boards** have been installed in the music studio and food tech room enabling more effective teaching and learning resources across the whole school.
- ☆ Storage space has been rationalised, allowing the creation of much needed **additional teaching and learning space** for vital interventions, individual and small group work.
- ☆ Further strengthening our collaboration and interaction with Chiltern Wood School, a **Chiltern Wood School classroom** has been set up in the old, under-utilised art room creating fantastic opportunities including reciprocal best practice to be shared, benefiting both children and staff, in areas such as Special Educational Needs expertise and the values.
- ☆ **Re-decoration** has taken place, most notably in the corridors and most classrooms downstairs, resulting in a significantly fresher and brighter environment. A neutral colour scheme has been introduced **promoting a calm environment and allowing a focus on show-casing the children's work**.
- ☆ **External foundation flooring** has been laid in preparation for a new main reception area this term which will significantly improve both our administrative facilities and also safeguarding by restricting direct access to the main building.



We are also delighted to see the immediate and inspirational introduction of more vibrant, relevant and memorable learning through the expansion of the immersive curriculum approach, the **'irresistible curriculum'**, trialled last year. This term, the whole school will be following a highly engaging **'Into The Woods'** main theme which we are sure you will start hearing much more about very soon from your children.

We are also ensuring that our valuable **higher level teaching assistants and learning support assistants** resource is fully utilised and strategically placed throughout school to best support and flexibly facilitate the learning needs of our children.

You will continue to see many further improvements over the coming months in our school environment, teaching provision and business administration. Using our own internal expertise and drawing from our firmly established external support and guidance links, we are unashamedly determined that our school now takes significant steps towards becoming a place where every one of our children can flourish.

This coming year is an exciting new chapter in our school's story. With your support we can make a great and lasting impact on our children's educational experience for the long-term. Please allow governors and the senior leadership team to fully focus their efforts and the school's precious resources on activities that will make a real difference to the children, to provide the best educational chances in order that they can all 'be the best that they can be.'

Lastly, we would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the members of staff that came in over the holidays and worked so hard to transform and prepare the school ready for the new academic year.

We look forward to seeing you at the Vision launch / meet the team meeting on 28 Sep 18 after school from 3.30pm

Best Wishes,

The Downley School Full Governing Board