



ALBAN WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

The Brow, Watford WD25 7NX • Tel 01923 678240 / 678247 • Fax 01923 678256

Mrs Rachel Kirk, Headteacher

Thursday 3rd September 2015

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Welcome Back!

I am writing to welcome you all to Alban Wood for the new academic year 2015-2016! I do hope that all of our families had restful and enjoyable holidays, and that the children are excited about returning to school and all the opportunities available to them during this new year. As I am writing this letter, busy preparing for all that is to come, both my office and the school seem very quiet indeed and I remind myself, in my fifth year of Headship at Alban Wood, how privileged I am to be looking forward to welcoming so many smiling faces and smart red uniforms next week!

I hope in this letter to capture just some of the exciting developments taking place this year. We certainly have much to sustain and build on, with so many successes during 2014-2015 – our anti-bullying accreditation, our Bronze level Philosophy for Children award, renewal of our Silver Investors in People status, the launch of Alban Wood Community Farm to name a few... More importantly though was our self-evaluation of the school, validated by our Hertfordshire Improvement Partner, which is now agreed to be **Outstanding overall**, and in all separate areas of school life (leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupil personal development, behaviour and welfare; outcomes for pupils and early years provision). Our **pupil outcomes 2014-2015 were excellent** for KS2, KS1 and Early Years, and if anybody would like a second copy of the letter I sent detailing these in July, please just ask. Pupil, parent, staff and governor **surveys** were all completed in July 2015 – thank you so much to all of you – and Miss Davis has been busy analysing the results so that we can, as always, make best use of your feedback. A letter will come home in the next few days, but I am delighted to let you know that **98.2% of parents believe that teaching at Alban Wood is creative, inspiring and engaging, 98.7% of pupils say that learning is interesting and fun, 100% of staff agree that Alban Wood is a supportive school which they would recommend to others, and 100% of governors enjoy their role within our school**. We were delighted to read the pupil and parent comments too: one parent writes ... *'Alban Wood is an excellent school. It provides high expectations in a creative and motivating environment. Staff are dedicated and have high expectations of all children...'* And, from one pupil ... *'I really like Alban Wood School because it is sporty, fun, very educational and just a really good place to learn'*. So, as I say, much to sustain and build on!

During **2015-2016**, there will be **three main areas** which we aim to develop as a school:

- To embed effective use of all **new assessment approaches** within school. Summer 2016 will see new National tests for children in Years 2 and 6, and at Alban Wood we will ensure that children are prepared very thoroughly for these to achieve at their best. Some changes are being introduced to Reception too, which we will explain carefully to **all Reception parents** at their meeting on **Monday 7th September at 2pm**. Finally, it is incredibly important to us as a school that our curriculum is broad and balanced, and that *all* subjects are taught and assessed at an outstanding level, so continued work will take place for assessment in all subject areas, led by our teachers across the staff.
- To sustain an overall **outstanding quality of teaching and learning**. Nothing is more important to us than children enjoying and progressing well in their learning. This year, our Early Years team are going for gold in the Hertfordshire Early Years Quality Mark, we are beginning a special project focussed on mental maths fluency, and our focus in school will be on children's targets in learning so that they are really clear on their next steps and how they can best achieve them.
- To **enrich the broader curriculum**, across the school, as led by the coordinator teams. There is so much to write about within this area! All the ways in which Alban Wood Community Farm is going to be used, as well as its potential expansion; outdoor learning across all subject areas; the second year of our exciting topic curriculum; a high profile to the Creative Arts across school, including a new Art gallery in our main Reception area; a new Sports Apprentice beginning in school, offering further sports extra-curricular and lunchtime activities...

In all of the above, we ask for your support, and as always are open to your questions and suggestions. Specifically, there are three areas that I would be grateful if parents could get back to us:





1) Alban Wood Community Farm. Today our hens, Penny and Henrietta, have arrived and Rhubarb and Custard (our rabbits), Mabel and Marble (our guinea pigs) and Paddington (our giant rabbit) have returned from their Summer holidays! All of these wonderful creatures are going to need excellent care, and we are relying on family support for this each weekend. Please fill in the reply slip below if you can offer a weekend (or more!) where you could feed the animals for us on a Saturday and Sunday, and check on their wellbeing. Please don't wait for others and do put yourself forward for this – it is our Community Farm, belonging to us all!

2) Our School Website and Facebook Page. Launch of our school Facebook page was very successful last year, and I know that parents have all enjoyed seeing updates and especially photographs. It is forming another effective method of communication for us too. The school website has now been relaunched as well, and will be much easier for us to keep current with all the latest information. Please could I ask if there are any parents who are **not happy for us to use their child's photograph on these two online spaces to let us know by Wednesday 9th September at the latest.** This information has gone to all new Nursery and Reception families within their welcome packs to Alban Wood. Thank you for your support!

3) Our PTA is a very important part of school life, and has in the past organised some fantastic events (Christmas Fair, Summer Fair, Halloween discos and much more!) and raised such important funds for use within school (purchasing many of our iPads, for example). This year, we thought it would be great if we could have one parent class rep for each class – please put forward your names below if you can help!

All that remains is for me to wish you all a very happy and fulfilling year at Alban Wood! Please remember that our door is always open, so please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss anything – Mrs Martin and Mrs Jolliffe will always be happy to make an appointment for you to see a member of the Senior Leadership Team (Miss Davis, Mrs Webb or me).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Rachel Kirk
Headteacher

Please return the reply slip below if you **can help with the farm** (please do!) and/or you **do not wish** your child's photograph to be used on the school's website or Facebook page and/or **you would like to volunteer to be a PTA parent class rep.**

Child's name: _____ Class: _____ Parent's name: _____

1) I can help with Alban Wood Community Farm, by:

- Feeding and caring for the animals at the weekend

- In another way, please detail: _____

2) I **do not wish** for my child's photograph to be used on the school's website or Facebook page.

3) I would like to volunteer to be a PTA class rep for my child's class.

