



CHILTON FOLIAT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Church of England, Voluntary Aided

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Mrs Denise Weston

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is hard to believe that we are already well into the final term of the year, and there is a lot going on, so please remember to visit the website from time-to-time to avoid missing anything!

In the meantime, the Full Governing Body had its regular termly meeting in May, and would like to share some highlights with you.

Academy Consultation Process

We invited staff and parents to meet Dr. Patrick Hazlewood, CEO of Excalibur Academies Trust who very kindly joined us for two consultation sessions where we discussed the prospect of joining their Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Both sessions were engaging, and it was lovely to have so many questions raised. We have tried to capture some of the main themes in the attached Q&A document for those of you who were not able to make it.

It was clear from the consultation stage that there was support for the proposal to join Excalibur due to the wide range of benefits. Essentially it highlighted that we would have the advantages of being in a larger organisation, while able to thrive as a small rural Church of England School.

As you may know, since our consultations with staff and parents, the Government has relaxed its position in relation to pushing all schools to convert to academies. At our recent Full Governing Body meeting we had in-depth discussions as to whether this changed our position and interest in converting and joining Excalibur. It was concluded that regardless of the political environment, this move is an opportunity for us on so many levels, and will support the Governing Body's goal of continuous improvement. It will provide us not only with further support to ensure the best possible start to our pupil's learning journeys, but an 'all through' experience that enables our West Berkshire pupils better access to St John's should this be their chosen secondary school.

Pupil Attendance Figures

A regular agenda item is pupil attendance, and we were disappointed to find a decrease in our attendance figures. We discussed our concern that recent media coverage of a legal case in the Isle of Wight may give parents another 'justification' to taking their children out of school in term time. We want to take

the opportunity to say that only in exceptional circumstances do we feel this is acceptable. As a rule, taking children out of school not only deprives them of critical educational input when expectations are very high, but also gives children a strong message that their education is less important than holidays. We support making the most of family time together, but please do not make this special time at the expense of the children's education.

Church Links

We value our Church of England heritage and our Governing Body reflects that with its structure, along with its active Foundation governor committee. We celebrate the popularity of our Christmas and Easter services, and would love to see more families at the regular Sunday services too. Our local church needs our support in order to survive, and we hope we can encourage your attendance – please let us know if you have any ideas on how to improve church attendance. On that note we will be hosting a 'Pet Service' on Sunday 3rd July at school, hopefully in the playground if weather permits! It was very popular last year, and we hope you will join us for that too!

School News

In this final term of the year we look forward to transition – welcoming our full intake of new reception pupils and their families in preparation for their September start, and rounding off the year for our Year 6 pupils preparing them for their great adventure at secondary school.

Thank you for participating in our annual parent survey, and for sharing such overwhelmingly positive and touching feedback about the school. The highlight for us is that 100% of parents would recommend our great school to others, and we hope you will!

Having completed the recruitment process for a full-time teacher, we can confirm that from September we will have 4 full-time classrooms with plenty of capacity for new pupils in each class. We will share more on this fabulous news as soon as we can. In the meantime would like to say how much we will miss Mrs Proctor in September. We hope we can encourage her back from time to time to help us in a supply capacity because she has been a terrific asset to our team!

We would like to thank you all for your continued support of our school, and look forward to the Rio Carnival inspired Summer Fayre on Saturday 25th June!

Yours sincerely,

Sam Wolcough
On Behalf of the Governing Body