

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Subject: **Staffing change, an opportunity for whole school change**

Dear Parents,

We hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to inform you of some changes in our nursery staffing and an opportunity too good to pass up. We wanted to reassure you of our commitment to providing a stable and nurturing environment for all your children.

Firstly, we would like to share some personal news about two of our beloved colleagues. Miss Farress has made the decision to leave us effective at the end of this half term, to support a relative who has fallen ill. Her dedication to her family during this challenging time is something we deeply respect and support. Miss Farress has been a constant at the academy for over 25 years and we hope to give her a send-off worthy of her time in service here.

Mrs Hooper is also leaving at October half term, as she is embarking on a joyous journey into maternity leave, as she celebrates her pregnancy. We are thrilled for her and wish her all the best as she prepares for this new chapter in her life.

These changes will naturally have an impact on our nursery, but also the wider school, and we understand that transitions can sometimes be unsettling for our youngest children. To ensure a smooth and supportive transition, we have carefully planned the following steps:

1. Mrs Baker and Mrs Wilson will be taking over the nursery. Both are familiar faces to the children, having worked closely with them in various capacities. Their presence will provide a sense of continuity and security for our little ones.
2. We will be implementing a gradual transition, ensuring that Miss Farress and Mrs Hooper have ample time to say their goodbyes and that the children can adjust to any new routine with ease.
3. We will maintain open lines of communication, keeping you informed about any changes and how they may affect your child's daily experience at the academy.
4. Our staff will be available to address any concerns, or questions you may have during this time. We encourage you to reach out if you have any specific concerns or if there is anything we can do to make this transition smoother for your child.



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**FLOURISHING FUTURES**

### How will this affect my child in the academy?

This transition has the opportunity to impact the rest of the academy, and while it is always sad to say goodbye, it presents the possibility to support **all** the pupils in the academy. As a result of moving Mrs Baker, and investing in a full-time teacher in the Nursery building, we will be moving to a joint Reception and Nursery class. Mrs Baker's provision will support pupils to have a true Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) experience, rather than mixed with Key Stage 1 pupils. The space will be reconfigured to allow for times of more formal learning for reception pupils as well as plenty of space for experience-based learning for all.

We will also invest in more full-time teacher time in every class. This will support planning and delivery of the curriculum and experiences. We also believe, due to some class sizes and mixes, it will benefit many of the pupils. We recognize that pupils have only just started to settle, and we know that feeling safe and happy at school is the most important focus. The timing is not ideal, but the opportunity is too fortuitous not to implement a plan we have all wanted for the academy for some time.

We have the support of the trust, which will support financing and logistics to make this work.

#### Class Structure

Nursery and Reception	Mrs Baker, Mrs Govier and Mrs Wilson	
Year 1 and 2	Mr Grimley and Mrs Boatman	3 ½ days Mrs Boatman 1 ½ days Mr Grimley
Year 3 and 4	Mrs Clark	
Year 5 and 6	Mr Bird	

We know this is a big change, but we also know this will be the best for the pupils in the long run and that is always our primary focus. Despite the changes, we believe this will have the biggest impact on the pupils, making the best progress, pushing learning further,



supporting pupils with additional needs and supporting teachers in delivering the best curriculum to support pupil learning journeys.

Obviously, the timing is very challenging, but we know that with your support and positivity, pupils will adapt quickly. The team will be putting on face-to-face meetings with you to receive your feedback and adapt to any potential worries or concerns next week on **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 2:30pm and 5:00pm** to ensure you are able to ask any questions. We can also put on further meetings, if you feel you are particularly worried about your child.

### **How will we support the change?**

- The pupils will be renaming their new classes, so they do not feel they are moving backward and have ownership.
- They will have lessons next week on **Tuesday and Thursday** before lunch, to be with their new teachers and in their new classrooms, if they are changing.
- We know there will be worries and we ask you to be sensitive to the children's needs, as they will naturally pick up on your anxieties.
- We will make it as smooth as change can be. We have known about this for a few weeks and have been furiously planning behind the scenes to jigsaw the plan together, with the support of Trust investment, in arguably challenging financial times in education.

Thank you for your understanding and support during this time. Teachers are understandably sad to see their new classes change and wanted you to know they have enjoyed their time with them and seen great progress. We are committed to providing the best possible care and education for your children and will continue to do so with the same dedication and passion. We are very excited educationally for the children, as we know this will impact them positively on their journey through Dunsford.

We are sending this letter out so you have some time to mull the changes and ask questions in the face to face meetings or emails.

Warm regards,

Mr A Grimley

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A Grimley".

Headteacher

Dunsford Community Academy

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## **Potential Questions you might have**

1. **Question:** What will the new timetable/day look like for my child?
  - **Answer:** The academy can provide a detailed timetable for the new classes, but on the whole mostly it will stay the same. We will communicate where you will drop off and pick up. It also allows us to support an 8:45am drop off to Nursery, which I know was previously a challenge. Mrs Jeffrey has kindly offered to run Breakfast club for us.
2. **Question:** How will these changes affect my child's learning?
  - **Answer:** Positively in so many ways. The Year 4 will be less exposed to work more relevant to Y5/6 (but still be pushed where they need it.) The Year 2 pupils will be working within the right key stage making planning and provision even more focused. Reception children will be supported in a more play based environment for learning with a qualified teacher.
3. **Question:** Will my child be in the same class with their friends?
  - **Answer:** Children will remain with their friends and friends they had in previous classes. The school is small fortunately meaning they will have the same access, maybe even more at lunch and breaktimes.
4. **Question:** How will the transition be managed for the children?
  - **Answer:** We already put family groups in place to support some cross pollination in the academy, this will continue. We will also put on two transition sessions with new teachers to focus on the change, talking about worries, and excitement and renaming their new class.
5. **Question:** Who will be the new teachers, and are they experienced?
  - **Answer:** We will be sending out a sheet with the teachers for your children outlined, experience and what they love about learners. We also postponed Parent consultation until 3 weeks after half term so you can meet the new teacher in person and talk about your child.
6. **Question:** How can I stay informed about these changes?
  - **Answer:** We will set up regular communication channels, such as newsletters, emails, Seesaw and two meetings to support you and share the positive impact of the change. You can arrange meetings if you feel it is important with staff in the class
7. **Question:** What if my child struggles with the transition?
  - **Answer:** We will offer additional support, such as one-on-one meetings with teachers, or extra activities to help children adjust.

8. **Question:** How will these changes affect the extracurricular activities and after-school programs?
  - **Answer:** There will be no change to the extra-curricular, forest school and PE sessions, as they are run by external providers.
9. **Question:** Will my child miss out on any trips and experiences as a result of the change?
  - **Answer:** We will work very hard to ensure that the provision across the academy is equitable.
10. **Question:** How can I provide feedback or express my concerns about these changes?
  - **Answer:** You can email in, come to the face-to-face meetings, fill in the form, for you to share your thoughts and concerns.
11. **Questions:** Where will I be dropping off my child?
  - **Answer:** We will send you separate communication with the new class name and where you will be dropping off your child. The only change to time will be Nursery can drop off at the same time from 8:45am.