20th July 2021

Dear parents/carers,

Firstly, I would like to welcome all new parents and carers to the school and Russell community. Despite the unusual year, I hope your children have settled in well.

At the end of the year governors usually report to parents on the progress the school has made over the previous academic year against set targets. At the end of 2020, after our first national lockdown, we decided this did not feel right.

Yet again, we find ourselves at the end of another hugely disrupted year for our children. Governors have continued with their role - albeit virtually- to support and challenge the school. We were so pleased to welcome the children back in September, for the classrooms to be filled again and to make good progress with our recovery curriculum.

Unfortunately, in January we were forced to close again. However, with 24 hours’ notice Mrs Walker and her wonderful staff made the brave move to live virtual learning (whilst still providing provision for key worker children). We know from a survey we carried out that this was a huge success and enabled effective learning to continue from home. I’m sure, if we didn’t before, we all have a new-found respect for our children’s teachers! Thank you to you, the parents and carers, for supporting your children's learning from home. As a parent myself I know how difficult this has been but it really has made a difference to the children's progress this year .

We were delighted to have all children back in school in March and Mrs Walker reported to governors how well they settled in and has continued to update governors on their learning and progress.  We have, like the rest of our community, continued to be affected by Covid with bubble closures but the school has worked incredibly hard to keep everyone as safe as possible and to keep children happy, challenged and learning.

We are now busy planning for September. We hope that restrictions will no longer be in place. However, whatever the situation, Mrs Walker and her team will continue to prioritise children’s well-being, ensuring they feel safe, secure and happy. We will still have our recovery curriculum in place designed to help children make the progress they need to successfully move to the next stage of their education.

We say goodbye to our Year 4 many of whom I remember starting in Foundation Stage! We wish all the children the best of luck for their future, to take all they have learned and gained from their time at Russell and to continue to make us proud of their achievements.

We also say goodbye to Sue Summerfield this term. I want to wish Sue a very fond farewell. She has been an important and integral part of Russell for a staggering 24 years. She always provided a warm and friendly welcome to everyone. She will be really missed!

I would really like to thank Mrs Walker, Mrs Bunney and our fantastic team of teachers and staff for all their hard work, bravery and dedication during another turbulent year! Fingers crossed for a more "normal" year next year!

Nicolette Ford

Chair of Governors.