

Dear Parents and Carers

It is hard to believe that this academic year is soon going to be coming to a close. I don't think we have ever experienced a year like this in education before. Here at St Nicholas we are starting to turn our thoughts to the new academic year starting in September. As yet, we have had no Government guidance so we are planning for a 'normal' start in September and if things change, we will let you know.

The new academic year brings fresh opportunities and we are very excited that from September we will be employing a Deputy Head Teacher. Her name is Mrs Belinda Bolar and she currently works at St Martin's Primary in Sandford as KS1 phase leader and has experience of being part of the school's senior leadership team.

As you know Mrs Roots has now started her adoption leave and Mrs Sanders will be taking maternity leave from September. This means that we will have new staff covering their teaching commitments. We will be interviewing this week for Mrs Roots' position however Mrs Wilson, who has been with us this year, will be covering Mrs Sanders' teaching. We are delighted to have appointed someone who already knows the school and many of the children. In addition, Mrs Salisbury will become part-time, reducing her teaching and also having some release time for all the work that she does as our SENDCo.

The class structures will be slightly different next year too. As many of you know we have some year groups that have very low numbers, fewer than 20 and other year groups that are in the high 20s. There are currently 3 very low number year groups in school, all spread out at various stages. In the past the school has managed to keep these as straight year groups, especially in KS1. However, as budgets and finances tighten this sadly is no longer a financially viable option and next year we are going to have to vertically group classes as we currently do in KS2. We will review this decision each year as class numbers change, and as the smaller classes' work their way through school we hope that we can soon be back to straight years. This will mean that next year the classes and teachers will be as follows:

Acorns – Reception/Year 1 - Miss Ireland

Chestnuts – Year 1 /Year 2 – Mrs Bolar (DHT) & Mrs Wilson

Ash – Year 2/ Year 3 – Mrs Roots' maternity cover

Acers – Year 4/ Year 5 – Mr Adey (Mrs Wilson will also do Mr Adey's Monday)

Oaks – Year 5/ Year 6 – Mrs Salisbury/ Mrs Ferguson

Vertically grouping the classes will also enable us to look at each child's developmental, learning and social needs. This means some children will really benefit from having their needs supported more and others will be able to be extended. The children's current class teachers are currently looking at lists and deciding where each child would be best placed so they may have a conversation with you.

Although the classes will be vertically grouped throughout the school we will still be teaching Maths and Phonics in groups. For Maths the children will be taught in their year group with both myself and Mrs Corbett taking additional groups to facilitate this. For phonics the children will continue to be taught in smaller ability groups rather than in class groups.

Each class will also be assigned a class teaching assistant in the mornings when the core subjects of English and Maths are taught. Therefore there will be two adults in the room to support the needs of the children. In the afternoon teaching assistants will continue to be used for various support and interventions across the school.

Although there are quite a few changes to the school next year, there are many exciting things to look forward to that will have a positive impact on the school and the children's education.

We will very soon write to you very soon to let you and your child know which class they will be in next year and which teacher(s) they will be having.

Yours sincerely

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Headteacher

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Chair of Governors

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