



21 July 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

We have made it!!! The summer is here and I hope the weather is set for the whole #teammece family to get some downtime, sunshine and relaxation. We deserve it!

COVID

Despite the disruptions, uncertainty and anxiety of living in a COVID world, I have been delighted by our progress as a school over the last 10 months. We have been lucky in many ways, as our COVID disruption has been kept to a minimum despite many of our neighbouring schools losing weeks and weeks of schooling over the year. We had a little blip with Year 11 before Christmas and two days for Year 10 and four days for Year 9 during this term. Both Year 7 and Year 8 have had completely uninterrupted years which is remarkable given the times we live in. From a staff point of view, we have been able to keep going, despite the recent 'pingdemic', although it was touch and go for a while!

Teaching and Learning

I have also been so pleased by the quality of education on offer in the school. Despite the disruptions we have kept our focus on strong lessons led by the teacher with clear routines and high expectations and challenges. As I walk around the school I see this time after time, even on Monday, two days before the end of term, as I took a member of the Maiden Erlegh Trust around the school I was really pleased by the quality of learning going on and the positive engaged attitude of the students. Our staff approach to progress and learning was typified by the Head of Science and Maths ensuring that those students sent home on Friday received a hard copy of their end of year assessments in the post. I also got to see from across the school the progress in the quality and quantity of work through a whole school book look we held on Monday 12 July with each subject bringing books from each year group so we could compare the work, the marking and feedback and presentation. Whilst the event gave us some key pointers for our next steps it also confirmed the great strides that have been made in the classroom.

Sports Day and Character Education

MECE's Sports Day was held on Friday 16 July and it was such a great occasion. Sports Day always needs careful management and all the staff to buy in and be hands on with the students. Mr Hunter produced a brilliant detailed plan and staff bought in to it, as a result we had a really fun day, full of cheers, roars of encouragement, laughter and hard sweated achievement. It was fantastic to see the elation from Peppard House when their victory was announced. We cannot wait until next year when the contest is renewed. This event also feeds in to our final day's assemblies and the overall House Point trophy announcement. I am so pleased we brought back the house system and whilst it has been affected in some ways by the restrictions of the last year, so many students have competed and contributed to their houses in a really positive way. We will build on this strand of Character Education with further house activities and other initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award which we hope to launch in early 2022.

OFSTED

One of our great frustrations has been the absence of OFSTED from MECE this term, despite writing to them twice to invite them in. Fingers crossed that we can be seen in the early part of the next academic year so that our wider community can hear about the great things going on in the school.

Staffing

The end of the academic year always marks a sad time when we need to say goodbye to our staff leavers. Jamie Allum who joined as an NQT two years ago will be taking up the post of Master of Shooting at Wellington College, his old school. Jamie still shoots competitively at County level and for England so this is the ideal post for him and we all wish him well. Annabel Foster will be leaving us to take up the position of German teacher at Claire's Court School in Maidenhead. Annabel has worked in the Maiden Erlegh Trust for many years and she will be much missed by colleagues in a number of schools. We wish her all the best for her new venture. Emma Swayne is leaving us temporarily to have her baby and we wish her all the best with this wonderful event. Lastly, Nicola Benham will also be leaving us to go on maternity leave and we wish her our sincere best wishes for her new delivery.

We will also be losing Sri Kunchithapatham who has been a TA with us for the last two years and our wonderful receptionist Ruth Nmadu-Cole who joined us a temporary contract in January. We wish both of these members of staff well in their new ventures.

In place of these departing staff we have Marina Wyatt and Charlotte Kirby joining our Science team and Judi Green joining our MFL department. Both Marina and Charlotte are NQTs but have come in to teaching via various life experiences and Judi joins us from Prospect School in Reading. To replace Nicola Benham, we have created two Associate SLT roles which will be filled by Jyoti Chopra and Darren Hunter, two of our most successful middle leaders, and in addition, Rebecca Clarke the SENCO from Maiden Erlegh School in Reading will be with us for two days a week as SENCO here at MECE.

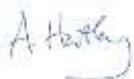
As you can see there has been only a small staff turnover for the second year running and we are fully staffed with specialist teachers once more and this bodes really well for our ongoing success story.

Thank you

This is the end of my fifth term as Headteacher and I am so proud of the school and the community we are creating. Thank you for all of your ongoing support and constructive feedback and dialogue – it is always so useful to hear from you and your impressions of the school.

Take care, stay safe and I hope all the MECE families have a great summer.

Best wishes



Andy Hartley
Headteacher

