

 **Toot Hill School**  
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**TOOT HILL**  
SCHOOL

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## End of Half-term Letter from the Head Teacher

Dear Parent/Carer

This half-term has certainly felt like a very brief one, but it has been a very successful one nonetheless. We have continued to emphasise the importance of kindness to increase student and staff belonging. We strongly feel that when students enjoy a strong sense of belonging to our school, they can achieve incredible things. In addition, we are embedding a culture of kindness in the school where everyone contributes, understanding that that true kindness involves much more than politeness.

### A Huge Loss for Our Community

I am sad to report that Barrie Thomas passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> January. Barrie was a huge part of Toot Hill life, serving as a governor and Chair of Governors for over 20 years. Furthermore, he played a huge role in the local community, for example, running Bingham Tennis Club and publishing The Butter Cross magazine. Barrie simply wanted the very best for the young people in our area. We will miss him dearly and will certainly commemorate and celebrate his life at Toot Hill in the near future. At this time, our thoughts are with his family.

### Year 11 Mock Exams

I cannot praise the Year 11 students enough for their commitment and maturity during the mock exam period. The mock exams mean that Year 11 students and their parents/carers will receive reports straight after the half-term break. This will enable parents and carers to have more focussed conversations in the subsequent Parents' Evenings.

### Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review

In January, an experienced team of six Senior Leaders from across the country visited the school as part of an external quality assurance visit. The Lead Reviewer in charge of the team is also a practising Ofsted inspector. Their role was to determine if our school was meeting its own improvement targets as well as those highlighted by Ofsted. I am delighted to report that they found the school was making clear progress in all key areas. More importantly, they were overwhelmed by the kindness, expertise and determination shown by our students and staff in their three-day visit. They described our school as a 'special place' with the Lead Reviewer stating that there is a magic in the school because of the strong relationships between all students and staff. I will be sharing the ratified report with you next half-term.

### Punctuality to School

Unfortunately, we have seen a recent increase in lateness to school. I would appreciate your support in ensuring your child arrives at school before 8:25 am. This enables them to be ready for tutor set, as well as establish great punctuality habits for life.



### **New School Build Update**

After a very slow start, it feels that the New School Building Programme is finally gaining real traction. For the first time, the Department for Education have shared a target date for completion. They aim for us to move into the new school for a September 2028 fresh start. They then hope to 'decamp' from the site after completing landscaping the following summer.

### **Traffic Around the School**

You may be aware that the local council is already consulting on enforcing a 20-mph speed limit on The Banks. I have expressed my view to that council that this measure does not go far enough to improve road safety for our students. A one-way system, increased yellow lines, speed bumps and a zebra crossing would certainly improve road safety on The Banks.

In the meantime, can I please ask that where possible, parents and carers avoid dropping off and collecting their children on The Banks? If necessary, please use the voluntary one-way system on The Banks: entering from Tithby Road in the morning and leaving by this road at the end of the day. Unless your child has a medical need or you have an appointment in school, parents and carers should not drive into the main school site from The Banks for safety reasons.

### **September Uniform Policy Change Reminder**

Again, I would like to remind parents and carers that from this September, all student skirts in Years 7 to 11 should be pleated. This is to enable parents and carers to plan early for this change.

Next half-term, I will be releasing information about a set of Parent Information Evenings. These will enable me to update you on the future direction of our school, progress as detailed in the recent Challenge Partner's report and new school build plans, as well as answer your questions and hear your voice. In the meantime, I wish you and your family a lovely half-term break together.

Yours sincerely



**Dr C Eardley**  
**Head Teacher**