

8th January 2024

Spring term updates

Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

First of all, I wish you all a happy new year! I hope that you spent the festive holidays surrounded by friends and family, playing with new games and relaxing, and that 2024 is your best year yet. It certainly seems to have started well, judging from our children's smiling faces back in their classrooms today.

At the start of each new term, I like to update you on school development. As many schools do, we have three improvement priorities this year.

1. To provide children with rich, character-enhancing experiences, and to prepare them for future learning and adulthood

We have developed our work on 'aspirations' this academic year, with monthly inspirational figures-focused assemblies and further experiences woven through our curriculum. Aspiration Week in October was a particular highlight so far this year with 22 visits to classrooms from a wide range of people. Recent visits from Calderdale Music choir, The Dogs Trust as well as people of faith – as well as children representing school at events – have also supported this priority.

2. To focus on task design in Art, DT and Music

Our children received a refreshed curriculum offer in these identified subjects at the start of the year and, my goodness, standards are already very high! Leaders in school are impressed with skill development, 'final pieces' from units and how children talk about progression in subjects. Staff have received CPD in art skills and, this term, Calderdale Music are leading further training in developing musical skills and vocabulary.

3. To raise the independence and tenacity of all children, particularly those with SEND

Our 'how to be independent learners' posters in each classroom (devised by our children) have been reintroduced and tenacity continues to be a thread throughout assemblies. Last term, all Teachers and Teaching Assistants received training on developing student independence, based on evidence-informed practice. As a team, we have further tightened what our support for children with complex special educational needs looks like, including bespoke subject-specific curriculums, at times, and how these are assessed.

We are looking forward to continually focus on these targets – and all elements of school life – further this term as we continue our strive to get even better.

Although we do not expect Ofsted to visit Bowling Green Academy for a number of years now, we still receive monitoring visits from leaders within the Trust and from external advisors. One quote from each, based on visits during autumn term, is included below:

'Leadership is well distributed and is a strength at all levels. In English, pupils receive a strong start at Bowling Green and this high-quality work feeds through into all year groups. Senior leaders and staff have high expectations for all. In Maths, there is a consistent quality of work in the books, reflecting high expectations. Clear progress is evident, both in terms of children's development from their individual starting points and the accumulation of knowledge and skills from year to year. Children are working at an impressive pace.'

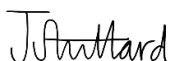
'Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Pupils speak articulately of what is expected of them and they work hard to achieve. Celebrating difference both inside and outside of school remains a focus. Pupils speak with a naturalness of what to do, how to talk about differences and why they should be celebrated. The school continues to go from strength to strength.'

Finally, as we begin a new term, a few reminders on our expectations for all children and families:

- School starts each day at 8:45am. We expect children to be in the playground by this time to come into school at 8:45am. Teachers are usually in the playground five minutes before this time if parents/carers have anything urgent to share, then will take children into class. After a quick registration, phonics and reading lessons begin promptly.
- [Attendance](#) will always remain a priority for school – quite simply, as stated by the Department for Education, 'being in school every day that it is open is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing and their wider development'.
- Please continue to ensure that children's uniform follows our [Uniform Code](#). This includes footwear and PE kits on the appropriate days.
- Children should come to school each day with a bottle of water. Aside from packed lunches, unless there is a medical need, children will only be allowed to drink water throughout the school day.

As ever, we are excited for the term ahead and to continue working in partnership with our families. Later in the term, we will be inviting you all in again to discuss children's individual progress, and I am confident that you will be impressed by your child(ren)'s efforts across the curriculum and beyond.

With best wishes for a wonderful 2024,



Mr Jamie Stuttard