

# LINK ACADEMY TRUST

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Tuesday 8th September 2020

## WELCOME BACK!

Dear parents and carers,

Yesterday it was brilliant to visit schools and see and hear pupils enjoying their learning and the interaction with their friends and staff. It seems such a long time since our schools were really buzzing!

Attendance in many schools was 100% on the first day back and those that were not quite as high as that, absence in the main, was as a result of specific issues, including families still shielding having returned from holidays abroad. We will be asking you to try hard to keep this up, attendance is so important as we assess the children's learning gaps from limited learning access during Covid 19 Lockdown and put our Recovery Curriculum in place to ensure 'catch up' is achieved.

All schools have Risk Assessments in place to ensure we operate as safely as possible, these are currently being put into action and tested for any areas that might need tweaking. Risk Assessments will be put on your school website to allow you access as soon as we are sure they are fully effective and have been monitored.

One of the major areas that we have been focusing on is the improved delivery of blended learning as we recognise that children may be required to isolate in future should they or a member of the family show symptoms and during this time may well not be poorly. Similarly, should a child test positive the whole bubble will be required to isolate for 14 days so it is vital that we improve the delivery of learning to achieve the aims and objectives of the Recovery Curriculum. Access to quality first teaching and learning online is vital as evident in last term's parent survey and all the research. We are now making provision for this as rapidly as possible. Pupils will be trained to access the learning their peers are engaged with and staff will be building a bank of lessons that pupils can view and revisit which will ensure they maintain good progress as part of a wider programme of improvements.

It is great to be able to let you know that over the summer break we have had a very productive period improving the Learning Environments in our schools.

**Bearnes** has had a completely new classroom built which has meant that we have been able to reinstate the school hall and remove the temporary classroom walls which have been in place for 8 years! This project will be completed by October half term, I know everyone can't wait to move into the new space. The Trust funded this with additional contributions held by the LA from developers, known as 106 money.

Following Trust bids, we received Condition Improvement Funding for 3 projects, one early in the year and two during the summer break. Initially the project at **Tedburn St Mary** saw an upgrade of heating and lighting which was planned and completed in the summer. We then received late notice of the two further projects- Heating and lighting upgrade at **Broadhempston** and a new roof for **Yeoford**. Obviously this was difficult to move forward quickly as many contractors were booked for summer holiday work, but Yeoford is underway

and does not affect the running of the school now the scaffolding is in place. Broadhempston has been more difficult to manage as the learning space is very restricted but the Village Hall came to our rescue and we are able to move a class at a time across in order to get the work completed within the time limits of the grant.

Further Trust funded improvements have seen **Widcombe-in-the-Moor** have a reconfigured Administrator office, involving the move of the staffroom and Academy Head office to the top floor, creating better learning space downstairs. A large area of the school has been redecorated and the school hall ceiling largely re- tiled.

**Drakes** have had a final decoration project which sees the school now completely redecorated.

We have been working towards operating our own catering provision across the Trust and have added a number of academies that now provide meals within the Trust. **Hennock** has had an extended kitchen facility this summer to enable them to cook meals for the pupils at Bearnas.

**Moretonhampstead** with some additional improvements, has been able to provide meals for Widcombe and Ilsington this term. The quality of these meals is much improved and children are really enjoying the balanced menu we offer.

We will continue to ensure you are all kept up to date with things that are happening within the Trust through your school's newsletters.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and understanding as we continue to make every effort to provide the very best for the children and families in our Trust. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any concerns that you feel we should be aware of. In the meantime let's hope that the term will move forward without too many issues and our pupils continue to be able to access the best quality learning at school with their friends.

Take care,

Kind regards,

Nicky

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