

21st February 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have managed to enjoy the half term break and are looking forward to the lighter, brighter days as we head into Spring?

It has been a while since my last communication with you and the financial climate has certainly changed, providing unwelcome challenges that we had not anticipated after such a difficult time during the pandemic.

As well as the individual challenges to family budgets that the current financial climate brings, there are several ways in which the financial context has worsened for all schools in the last 6-12 months. We are trying our utmost to minimise the impact of rising costs, inflation, and unfunded pay awards on our schools so as not to compromise the great quality teaching and learning that we have in place. Thank you for your support in all its forms as you participate in workshops to support your child's learning and progress, as you actively engage and volunteer in fund-raising events, as you use the extended services on offer and when you contribute towards the enrichment events and trips that we organise for the children.

I am mindful too that the recent strike action by NEU members may have caused disruption and difficulties for your family. There are a number of further strike days planned for March. Our schools will try their very best to give you as much notice as they can around the arrangements for your child's class on the strike days planned for the 2nd, 15th and 16th March.

Against this challenging backdrop, we do have lots to celebrate across our schools in PACE Academy Trust. We pride ourselves on being a trust where each of our schools remains individual, retaining its own identity whilst benefitting from the high-quality collaboration between schools that we have in place. On almost every day, in whichever school I am visiting, I see members of staff from another one of our schools working in partnership with colleagues and children. Recently, for example, there has been some great work with workshops in writing and maths for groups of Year 6 children. I am very privileged to lead such a fantastic community of schools, full of committed staff, children that love learning and families who help us to achieve the best we possibly can for them.

We will be celebrating the leadership of Beecholme Primary School by our Headteacher, Phyllis Sternberg, as she will be retiring from her post at the end of this school year. And we expect that Ofsted will visit several of our schools in the very near future to inspect them. The wait for Keston Primary School is now over as they were inspected just before half term: we look forward to reading and sharing the report in a few weeks' time.



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If you would like to find out more about what's been happening in the other schools across our trust, please take a look at our PACE website: <http://www.paceacademytrust.com> or follow us on twitter: [@paceschooltrust](https://twitter.com/paceschooltrust).

Let me sign off by sending you my warm wishes and reiterating my thanks for your ongoing support and partnership with us.

Zoe Harris
Chief Executive Officer

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