

11th July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we hurtle towards the end of another busy school year, I am writing to share with you a few of our achievements both individually and across Beecholme, Chipstead Valley, New Valley, Keston and Stanford Primary Schools. Together our five schools comprise PACE Academy Trust. I am proud of the way our community of schools have collaborated throughout the year, working in close partnership with you and with one another to help our 1500 children thrive.

We are fortunate across PACE to have a comprehensive professional development programme for staff, and it is not often that I visit a school without bumping into a staff member from another one of our other schools. Leaders, teachers, and other staff are working together on areas such as income generation, safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities, phonics, attendance, writing, science, inclusion and diversity and the early years. There have been lots of courses, cross-school teamworking, and numerous workshops. We have also introduced coaching across our schools to further support staff in their professional development.

Our Year 5 Global Scholars curriculum has earned international recognition this year, with a member of staff travelling to Boston in the USA to talk about the positive impact of the project and the awareness it creates around issues relating to environmental sustainability. As well as work on environmental sustainability, our schools have focused on equality and inclusive practice, and you may have seen our PACE Diversity newsletter which details some of the positive work taking place across our trust.

We have been kept remarkably busy this year with three Ofsted inspections in our PACE schools since the start of the spring term. There have been lots of highlights to note from these, but I would particularly like to thank you for being willing to share your feedback with the inspectors. I am very pleased to share that your views were overwhelmingly positive: in each school, at least 98% of parents/carers said that they would recommend the school to another parent and at least 98% of parents/carers in each setting said that their child feels safe at school.

The year has not been without its challenges as, in common with all schools, we are facing huge and growing financial pressures, including the impact of unfunded pay awards. Our leaders are working really hard to mitigate the impact on schools of such tight budgets and your support through the PTFA events and initiatives in our schools makes a real difference: thank you.

I am sorry that this school year has been disrupted for some of our children and families by industrial action. Our schools have done their best to minimise the impact of that action but I know that it will not have been easy for children and families and I appreciate your understanding throughout this time.

As we come to the end of the summer term, I would like to extend my best wishes to the staff that are leaving PACE and moving on for promotion, retirement, to travel the world and for other exciting reasons. I



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would like to extend my particular thanks to two of our PACE leaders who are retiring at the end of term. We wish Mrs Sternberg, Headteacher at Beecholme, and Mrs Murphy, Executive Head for PACE (and previously headteacher of Keston) all the best for the future. Thank you for your inspirational leadership and for the positive influence you have had on the lives of so many children.

We are proud of what we have achieved with you this year but know that there are always things to develop and improve. Our plans for next year include a continuation of our work on the wider curriculum (i.e. learning that goes beyond the core subjects of English, Maths and Science like history, geography and music, for example); a relentless focus on improving attendance and more work to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged learners. We also want to focus on ensuring early reading and phonics across PACE are the best that they can be and so you may notice a change in the way that phonics is taught in several of our schools. We know that children learn best when parents, carers and schools work closely together, and we look forward to developing our partnership with you in September.

I sign off by extending my thanks to you for your ongoing support: we achieve the most for the children when we are able to work together with you as their parents and carers in a strong partnership. I am sending my best wishes to all of our children who are moving onto secondary school and to you, as a family, if your journey with PACE concludes at the end of this term.

Zoe Harris
Chief Executive Officer
PACE Academy Trust

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