

23rd February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the second half of the spring term. I hope you have enjoyed the half term break and are now looking forward to the lighter, brighter, and warmer days ahead?

When I wrote to you last July, I referred to the financial challenges many schools were facing and how valuable the fund-raising support is that you provide through your support of PTFA events and initiatives. I know that our events so far this year have been hugely beneficial, making a difference to the things we can achieve for the children. These have included cake sales, fireworks events, Christmas fetes and so much more. In a time of financial challenge, I want to thank you for your ongoing support.

Pupil numbers are the biggest factor in determining funding for all schools. It can be particularly challenging when pupil numbers decline, especially for small schools as the funding received does not cover all the necessary operating costs. This issue has significantly impacted one of our schools – Stanford Primary School - and I must share the sad news with you that we will be closing Stanford at the end of this school year. Sitting right on the border of Merton, Croydon, and Lambeth, Stanford has been hit hard by declining pupil numbers in the local area, over several years. With pupil numbers not predicted to recover for many years, we have had to work closely with the Department of Education and Merton Council to make the difficult decision to close the school.

As we navigate through this challenging time, we remain committed to providing a high-quality education to all our pupils and our team at Stanford continue to work tirelessly to make every school day count for our children at the school. We are working diligently to support affected staff, children, and families during this transition period, ensuring they have access to the necessary resources and support.

Whilst we have been working hard to ensure the closure of Stanford goes as smoothly as possible for all the staff, children and families directly involved, we continue to focus on our trust improvement priorities. These can be found on our website <https://www.paceacademytrust.com>. One of our priorities this year is to improve the teaching and learning of early reading and phonics across PACE and you may have noticed that a new phonics scheme has been introduced in several of our schools. The new schemes are having a positive impact on the quality of phonics across PACE; something I have seen during the regular teaching and learning reviews that we complete with leaders from each school.

Early in January we held a training day for our staff on the INSET day just before the children returned to school. This annual event is an important part of our PACE calendar, providing an opportunity to share important messages about our values, vision, and developments across aspects of teaching and learning. This year, we:

- took some time to reflect on our own school experiences to help us think about what it means to feel a sense of belonging at school. This thought-provoking session led us into a discussion about what we want the children across PACE to remember of their primary school years.



Registered Office:
Chipstead Valley Primary School,
Chipstead Valley Road,
Coulston, Surrey, CR5 3BW

Chief Executive
Zoe Harris



Company No

www.paceacademytrust.com
01737 553255
08891864

Partnership, Achievement, Community & Excellence

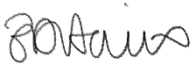
- introduced our staff to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). During this session we explored the benefits and challenges of using AI within education and set out our next steps and the parameters we have put in place to explore it.
- had a practical session for all class-based staff on using 'adaptive' teaching practices in the classroom to best support the learning and progress of all children.

If you would like to find out more about PACE and our schools, please take a look at our website: <https://www.paceacademytrust.com>. You can follow all our schools and us, as an academy trust, on 'X' (formerly **twitter**), where you will gain a quick and easy insight into school events and achievements. Please find details of how to follow us are at the bottom of this letter.

If you have any questions, feedback, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school or our PACE email address: info@paceacademytrust.com. Your input is important to us, and we are always here to listen.

Thank you once again for your continued partnership.

Warm regards,



Zoe Harris
Chief Executive Officer

[@BeecholmeSchool](#)
[@ChipsteadPri](#)
[@kestonprimary](#)
[@newvalleypri](#)
[@paceschooltrust](#)
[@StanfordPrimary](#)



Registered Office:
Chipstead Valley Primary School,
Chipstead Valley Road,
Coulston, Surrey, CR5 3BW

Chief Executive
Zoe Harris



Company No

www.paceacademytrust.com

01737 553255

08891864