

Dear All

We have had a joyful start to the year at Seven Kings, as you will see from the newsletter and our twitter feed, with students taking part in concerts, being inspired by museums and galleries as well as lectures and masterclasses. For me in school, seeing the older students increasingly leading sessions and supporting our younger students in their learning or to develop themselves as members of our community has been a reminder of the goodness, kindness and potential of our young people. We have recently engaged in a social action pilot project which is being led by 6th Form students, more on that as it unfolds.

We have had important data drops with a number of year groups. Years 6, 11 and 13 have much to do but they are motivated and ready to put the hard work in on the home run to their exams in the summer. This term different groups of students will be asked to attend extra interventions and I would ask that parents put these times on the fridge and ensure your child is at their session; this is the first step to increasing their rate of progress. Meanwhile, Year 9 are choosing their options, an exciting time as they begin to visualise their futures. In a few weeks Year 5 will be visiting the secondary site as we begin their induction to the secondary campus.

As a school we are committed to ensuring our current cohorts remain focussed on their futures and are full of hope. Our budget has been severely hit by unfunded pay rises, water and gas prices - we now pay £300k a year compared to £75k last year - paper and food increases. The local authority is also struggling and we are having to meet our most vulnerable children's needs from our own budget. We have not replaced staff who have left where we can, we will however have to cut back on some activities and spend less on infrastructure. We cannot go ahead with our quad renovation where we hoped to create a quiet outside space for no staff and students, we are hoping we may be able to tap into some builders and gardeners out there in our community who could help lead in this area. If you can help in this project, please do let us know.

Many of our teachers joined the strike on Wednesday 1st February and many of the other unions are rebalotting, as the postal strike affected the threshold needed to take strike action. This strike is not just about pay; experienced teachers' pay has fallen 10% since 2010. It is also about recruitment and retention; teacher retention was 29% below this year's target. We are lucky we are fully staffed with specialist teachers but it is getting harder to attract outstanding teachers, especially in certain areas and we have had to go out several times with increased pay to get the right staff for Seven Kings. We really do need to look after our wonderful staff!

Like society in general, we are also struggling with long term illnesses and the cost of covering with agency staff, as we can no longer afford to have extra periods in staff's timetables. With a longer wait for medical appointments etc we have struggled this academic year. It is not the time to be silent, we do need to speak out for our young people and our staff.

Finally, we have had lots of visitors recently and we have also visited other schools. We have had some wonderful feedback, my favourite perhaps that this school, staff and students alike, has such purpose, energy and passion. Our pledge is despite all that is going on around us our purpose always is to give the very best education in the classroom and beyond to our young people, because they deserve nothing less. I would like to thank all of you who support us in this and especially those who go out of your way to tell us so, we

appreciate it.

Have an enjoyable half term.

Best

Jane Waters

Executive Headteacher