



Dorchester Primary School

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Headteacher – Mr S. Mills BA (Hons), NPQH
Deputy Head – Mrs N. Van Der Walt BA (Hons), PGCE



Thursday 22nd July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we come to the end of another particularly challenging year, I would like to reflect on the many positives we have had, as well as update you on the key things you will need to know for our return in September.

There is no question that the pandemic has affected all of our lives, in ways we could never imagine. Our liberties have been restricted and many of the things we took for granted have been put on hold. We have suffered as a school because of national lockdowns and repeated bubble closures over the course of the year, and there is no question that many of our children have been greatly impacted by this – both socially and academically. We know that the next year or two will be vitally important as we support children to gain the skills and knowledge that they will have missed this year. For some, this may take longer – not all children learn at the same pace, but the team here will, as always, do their very best to support children to make the progress they are capable of. On the note of lockdown and bubble closures, I pass on my thanks for your understanding and flexibility, and to those of you who stepped up to become ‘home teachers’ – it was not an easy feat!

With the lifting of restrictions on Monday, we can look forward to getting back to some kind of normality however, I ask you to do so with caution. The infection rate in Hull is currently higher than it was when we went into a national lockdown, so the advice is to continue to wear face coverings in crowded places as well as socially distance where possible.

Despite the troubles we have had this year, our children have been brilliant! They have shown resilience, commitment and understanding. They have returned to school after closures and worked hard to get back on track. They have made us very proud and are a credit to Dorchester and to you.

This term has been particularly busy with school visits – something we have missed out on over the last year or so, and something which our children really do get a lot from. We have seen children visiting Raywell, Let Loose, Sewerby Hall, Pink Pig Farm and the countryside (to do some painting). In addition, we have had lots of visitors to school, including: Prison Me No Way, Hull Truck Theatre, Photography workshops, VEMT workshops and a year 5/6 ‘growing up’ talk from the school nursing team. We know how important wider enrichment is and are committed to providing a range of experiences whilst children are with us. We have created our ‘Dorchester Dozen’, which we will start to implement next year (COVID permitting). This is a list of twelve visits / experiences that we want all children to have the opportunity to take part in during their time at Dorchester. You can find out more about our Dorchester Dozen by following the link: <https://dorchesterprimary.org.uk/about-us/vision-and-values/>

We say a fond farewell and the best of luck to our year 6’s, who have not experienced a ‘typical’ year, with no tests or end-of-year production, as well as to the staff that will be leaving us this year. We hope they never forget their Dorchester experience.



We are hoping that in September, we will be able to return to many of the routines we had in place before the pandemic. Please see the below list for changes / reminders about school operations:

- The school doors will open at **8:45am** for children. A member of staff will be present at each door and children can come straight into school rather than having to line up outside. This gives them ten minutes to get themselves settled and ready for the start of the day, which begins at **8:55am**.
 - Year 5 and 6 will enter and exit through the door opposite the MUGA.
 - Year 3 and 4 will enter and exit through the KS2 playground door (next to the Green room).
 - Year 1 will enter and exit through the year 1 door (located on the KS2 playground near to the Broadstone Close gate).
 - Year 2 will enter and exit from the KS1 playground (to the side of Brightstart Nursery).
 - Reception and Nursery will continue to enter and exit through their normal doors.



- School will finish at 3:10pm for all children (except Nursery – please ask about timings if you are unsure).
- For children attending breakfast club, this will start at **8:00am** and places need to be pre-booked as they have this year. Please complete the slip and return it to the school office.
- When children have PE, we are asking that they continue to come to school in their PE clothes – this has been far more efficient this year.
- All of our key dates will be published on our website, including start and end of term dates. Follow this link to see them: <https://dorchesterprimary.org.uk/calendar/>
- As a school, we will be moving over to becoming a ‘cashless’ school through our use of Parent Pay. You will have received information about this from our admin team. This includes how to set it up and methods of payment. This should be in place for September when we return but there will be a small transition period where you can pop into the office and get any support or advice with setting this up on your devices. You will be able to pay for school meals and school visits through Parent Pay. The cost of school meals for next year remains at £1.50 and this will need to be pre-paid using the app. We are ending this year with £210 still owed to the school for dinners, which clearly we need to address.
- A reminder that Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th September are staff training days. Therefore, children return on Wednesday 8th September.

You will be aware that the school was inspected by Ofsted on Thursday 15th and Friday 16th July under a Section 8 Inspection. Thank you to those parents who spoke to inspectors on the playground before school – they were very impressed with what you told them about your experiences here. The official report from the inspection is probably not going to be with us until the Autumn Term and I am unable to tell you what the outcome of the inspection is at this stage. However, we were very pleased that the inspection team recognised the many strengths of our school and agreed with the ways forward we had already identified.



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Disappointingly, we did receive some negative feedback from the online parent survey, completed by a small number of parents. Whilst we try hard to ensure we work in collaboration with our community, we accept that we are not going to be able to please everybody all of the time. As mentioned, our doors are always open for any parent/carer to come and speak to us about concerns they have. We cannot address your concerns if we are not aware of them. Thanks to those of you who completed and returned your parent surveys that came out with your child's report – we had some lovely comments and some useful suggestions.

As I have mentioned on several occasions this year, we have high expectations of our children and there are some areas which will be focus areas when we return in September. These include behaviour, uniform and attendance/punctuality. These three areas play a significant part in us setting the standards for our children and preparing them well for life once they leave us. We will be asking for your support with these and will be providing appropriate challenge where needed. As I said when I first began at Dorchester, my vision is for this school to be the outstanding hub of this community, where everybody has high expectations and aspirations, and our children grow into successful young adults.

On a separate note, there are lots of events and activities taking place in the city over the summer holidays, many of which are free. To find out what is happening, please visit: <https://www.healthyholidayshull.org/about-us> and click on the 'activities' tab at the top of the page.

This has been a lot to digest in one letter, so I leave you with a final quote, and wish you and your families a lovely, relaxing and safe summer break. We look forward to welcoming our children back in September, refreshed and ready to shine.

“Education is the most powerful weapon for changing the world!”

(Nelson Mandela)

Yours Sincerely,

Stuart Mills
Headteacher

