



TRADITIONAL VALUES, BRIGHT FUTURES, ONE JOURNEY

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## GCSE courses now in full swing

**Our Year 10 pupils are enjoying their first term of studying their chosen subjects in depth.**

They have stepped up to the increasing challenge and workload relating to the more intense and academic expectations of the new curriculum and the standard of work we are seeing from them continues to be impressive.

We have had very few changes between option groups which has reassured us that pupils were prepared for the process. The next round of GCSE options starts in January 2019 with the



current Year 9 having had the opportunity to choose subjects such as German, PE and arts subjects to study through Year 9.

## SCHOOL AWARDED PLATINUM SCHOOL GAMES MARK

**The School Games Mark is now in its 7th year and continues to reward schools and other educational establishments for their commitment to and development of competition, school sport, physical education and physical activity.**

Castle Newnham primary has been awarded the highly coveted Platinum School Games Mark; this award can only be given to a school who has been at gold level standard for the past five years. This means that the school has demonstrated a high level of delivery and sustainability within set criteria such as increasing development in school games and developing competitive opportunities.





Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a very busy and productive Autumn term and have been very glad of the continuing good weather right up to the middle of November! Our pupils have made us very proud as usual with their participation in and enthusiasm for a whole host of events and, of course, in their daily approach to learning. A highlight this half term has been the focus on the 100-year anniversary of the end of World War I with fantastic displays of poppies on both North and South sites. If you don't already, we hope you'll consider following our @castlenewnham twitter feed (it can be accessed through the website even if you don't have your own account) to see a daily diary of all of our special events and examples of pupils' work as well as information about forthcoming concerts and productions.

We have welcomed a number of new staff this term in line with our growth in pupil numbers and all have made an excellent start with us. There are no staff leaving this Christmas but we do want to take a moment to send our very best wishes to Mrs Gayle Watkins who, although she has not been in school for some time following a period of treatment, is retiring at the end of this term. Gayle was a valued member of our teaching assistant team on the North Site over many years and we wish her every happiness in retirement. Our next round of recruitment is already underway as we seek an additional primary teaching colleague (we have an extra class in Year 6 next year) and teachers of a range of secondary subjects to increase the team as we complete our growth to full secondary provision in September 2019.

I am pleased to report again that we attract strong and skilled fields of candidates to any vacancies in spite of the well-reported national difficulties in recruitment.

Our communication to and from parents is an area we continually seek to improve and, as well as regular parents' evenings this term we have also had 'meet and greets' and a parental engagement group meeting on South site to look principally at home school communication books (planners) and annual reports on progress. Parental feedback has also been sought on reporting in the secondary phase with a meeting in November and for Year 6 parents we held a very well-attended Key Stage 2 SATs evening to explain the logistics of the tests in May to parents but also to emphasise the approach we take of valuing the whole primary curriculum and not just the elements focused upon in the tests. Parents have reported positively on the curriculum newsletters with some suggestions for improvement which we are working on.

We have also been working on a communication charter to help guide us (school and families) and a copy is attached to this newsletter. We hope you will agree that this will be helpful in ensuring the most effective and positive use of the various channels we have for communication. In sending this out, we are committing to follow the charter and hope you will feel you can do the same.

We have had lots of lovely events in school to celebrate the end of term and forthcoming Christmas holiday and it was great that lots of families came to the Christmas Fair on December 8th. We remain immensely grateful to our PTA for their tireless efforts in fundraising and we are now looking forward to seeing the new shaded area completed on the South Site which is planned to be in time for what we hope will be another hot and sunny summer next year. Meanwhile, on the North Site, the final discussions regarding the sixth classroom for Key Stage 2 are underway and I will keep parents informed when we have a start date for the work. Further refurbishments in the secondary building are also being planned ready for Year 11 in September 2019.

I wish all our families a very restful Christmas time and a happy new year with many thanks for your support during 2018.

**Mrs Ruth Wilkes**  
**Federation Principal**

# PRIMARY UPDATE



**Children and staff have settled in well in all year groups across our primary phase this term. Recent parents' evenings had a high up-take with very constructive discussions between teachers and families.**

All staff within our Primary phase are working well together with very regular contact between South and North site staff. This allows for a far more cohesive curriculum with good involvement from all staff involved. For children it means that staff in all year groups are very clear on what learning looks like elsewhere within primary, so are more in tune with the needs of each child.

We are starting to work towards end of term results, and all that comes with this time of year. We have worked very hard to ensure that all children feel included in our Christmas celebrations, irrespective of their own background, as a good way to breaking down barriers, just as we celebrate special events of other faiths.

I would like to thank all parents and carers for their continued support of us and all that we strive to achieve with your children. If you feel you would like to be more involved in school and would like to offer your help as a volunteer in the classroom, please talk to your child's class teacher, or any

member of the senior leadership team, as we are always looking for helpers!

**Jim Balmbra**  
**Head of Primary**

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## **Meet Kat Edwards** **New Deputy Head of Primary**

I have been a primary teacher and senior leader in Milton Keynes for several years and enjoy everything about life in a primary school. I have been made to feel incredibly welcome by all members of the school community since I started and am really excited to be part of the journey that Castle Newnham is on. As well as focusing on the day-to-day education of the children in Years 5 and 6, I am working with the rest of the primary senior



leadership team to bring the children based across the two sites together and to help make the transition from one site to the other seamless and the curriculum more cohesive.

# Parents' consultation meeting on secondary report format

A huge thank you to the parents who came to this meeting and provided valuable feedback on our current report format and how it could be improved. We looked at a variety of different school reports, as well as our own and agreed on a way forward in adapting our current format for Key Stage 3; Years 7, 8 and 9 as well as how we would report attainment in Key stage 4 as pupils move towards their final GCSE results. The Year 7 and 8 reports have remained unchanged but the Year 9 reports and end of year reports will follow the new suggested format.

A reminder that parents' evening dates, assessment times and reporting dates are on the school's website:

<http://castlennwham.school/assessment-timetable-2018-19>.

## Castle Newnham Sports Update

### Secondary PE update

This term we have entered forty-four teams into twenty-nine cups, tournaments or leagues across eight different sports.

Well done to each pupil who has represented the school in one or more sport so far this year. We love that you want to play, so keep it up! We are very proud of our teams who routinely put in huge amounts of effort towards achieving their best performances.

Particular congratulations to the following teams for their results:

Year 7 and 8 girls table tennis who got silver at the County Tournament: Mia-Rae D, Emily M, Lily M, Sophie N and Olivia S.

Year 9 and 10 girls table tennis who came 3rd at the District Tournament.

Year 8 boys football who have made it to the second round of the County Cup.

Year 8 girls netball who are semi-finalists at the District Tournament.

Thank you to the following staff who have run PE clubs this half term:

Mr Almen, Mr Carter, Miss Clay, Mrs Dawe, Mlle Girard, Miss Lee, Frau Mai, Mr Maund, Mr Mills, Miss Owen, Mr Phillips, Miss Robinson, Miss Sadler, Mr Sherratt and Mrs Sturge.

### Primary PE update

This half term pupils have had the opportunity to take part in hockey, dodgeball and table tennis clubs and fixtures.

The Year 5 and 6 boys table tennis team were crowned champions at a tournament held here at Castle Newnham, putting them through to the county finals on the 30th of November.

The Year 5 and 6 girls table tennis team came runners up in their tournament to also grant them a place at the county finals. The Year 5 and 6 hockey team played really well in two tournaments recently winning the vast majority of their games and therefore getting themselves into the finals tournament.

Both the hockey and table tennis teams are district finalists too. The Year 5 and 6 dodgeball team are also district finalists and missed out on becoming champions by just one game.

**Please remember to follow  
us on Twitter  
@castlennwham for all our  
latest news and photos.**