



Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Following the consultation about the Friday afternoon finishing time, the governors have reached a final decision to accept this action. Thank you to those of you who responded to the consultation. All your feedback was taken on board and discussed before making the decision.

As a school community, due to Covid 19 and bubble organisation, we have been running this approach since June 2020 and we are pleased to report it has been incredibly successful. We would like to share some of the thinking behind the decision made to help you understand how governors came to their outcome.

It is a statutory requirement that all teachers are provided with 10% non-contact time (PPA - Planning, preparation and assessment time). Prior to the pandemic this cover was always provided by teaching assistants (TAs) so TAs took the classes instead of teachers for the one afternoon of PPA per week per class.

September 2020 saw the launch of our new challenge curriculum at Kentmere which has placed a greater emphasis on all subjects being given their own dedicated timetabled session rather than falling under the umbrella of 'topic'. The curriculum has had a complete overhaul and each subject has high expectations and requires subject specialism which originates from teacher's expertise.

A strong and secure subject knowledge by teachers is required to plan and deliver high quality lessons to the pupils in all curriculum areas. Teachers are in the best place to deliver this education supported by our highly skilled teaching assistants.

We can utilise the Teaching assistants better by ensuring they are deployed effectively to successfully enhance the progress of individual children and targeted groups.

Not only have we been lucky enough to trial this approach at our school but in addition, this system was developed in the Midlands and has been operating highly successfully since 2017. By continuing with the Friday afternoon arrangements the children get to be with their class teacher throughout the week, all the time – for some of our more vulnerable children, including those who struggle with change, having different people taking classes can be very difficult. Therefore continuing with this system makes sense. There are numerous benefits to the changes which we have outlined below.

**Additional benefits of the changes to our school day:**

- We have a new 2020-2021 curriculum and therefore teachers are best placed to deliver the teaching due to the subject knowledge requirement and subject specialism.
- Children will have their regular class teacher teaching them throughout the week for consistency, so therefore the whole curriculum will be planned, delivered and assessed by the class teacher.
- The school timetable ensures there is full curriculum coverage with subjects allocated their own teaching time.



- COVID19 has created even larger gaps in learning and therefore teachers are best placed to deliver quality first teaching and TAs used effectively can be used to target support.
- Teaching assistants will be used to support learning and have a beneficial impact on outcomes for pupils. TAs will be used to support children in lessons, lead immediate interventions, lead planned interventions to close any learning gaps, support SEN pupils completing IEPs, target clipboard (daily readers who are below age related expectation), support pupil wellbeing through therapy groups like Lego therapy.
- It will allow teachers to work together at school to plan, mark and assess lessons as a phase to ensure there is consistency across the classes.
- Clear, set communication times available for phases to meet together.
- Friday afternoon can be used for CPD and particularly to focus on training for TAs and increasing subject specialism knowledge.
- Blended learning can be utilised effectively so that online learning challenges linked to the curriculum can be set for pupils using Seesaw and Tapestry.
- Friday afternoon can be an opportunity to produce some high quality learning logs without it impacting on quality family time at the weekend.
- Parents have a chance to book medical/dental appointments without a negative impact on attendance and thus your child's learning.
- Provision has to be made for pupils with SEND so our TAs are required to provide effective support and education. We have 81 children on the SEND register and 4 with educational health care plans for severe and complex needs (currently in the process of applying for 2 more). We also have 26 requiring additional speech and language support.

We would like to reiterate that the school will support families where parent/s work (where no other options for childcare are available to them). These pupils will stay in school until the usual pick up time of 2.45pm, where they will be supervised by teaching assistants to complete activities like additional reading, homework tasks. This system will be implemented once the regulations around COVID allow children to mix across classes and year groups. Further details and information will be supplied once we are in a position to do so.

The change will come into effect from September 2021, subject to DfE guidance relating to COVID. Please be advised that the Friday afternoon arrangements do not apply to Nursery pupils.

Governors understand that this is an important decision, made in the best interests of the children. This change will be closely monitored for impact to ensure that the very high standards at Kentmere remain.

Should you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact us via the school office.

Simon Day



Chair of Governors

Sarah Isberg



Executive Head

Nicola Howard



Head of School

and the Kentmere governors

