18th September 2019

Principals Welcome – Academic Year 19/20

Dear Parents / Carers,

A very warm welcome back to a new year at Ark Oval Primary Academy.

Firstly I would like to thank the community for their unrelenting support last year. You have been instrumental in promoting and developing a positive academy ethos and community focus. Your words of encouragement and support for the children have been a massive help in raising the profile of Ark Oval and reinstating its good reputation.

I am confident that Ark Oval has a bright future ahead of us. With the on-going sponsorship of the community, the academy will make great strides establishing a parent body to support the school, ever better pastoral care and achieving improved academic levels. We will create not only a sustainable future but a future where the school will grow and we will achieve our aspirations.

If you are interested in forming part of the PTA / Friends of Ark Oval /Ark Oval Parent Association (naming will be one of our first jobs!) there will be a meeting in the Academy library at 7.00pm 3rd October 2019.

Ark Oval 18/19

The year was a successful one; we inducted new pupils and new staff and made the most of the year setting ourselves out as a new organisation with key values and a renewed expectation and aspiration. This was wholeheartedly accepted by the pupils who quickly adapted to and embraced the new academy culture for exemplary behaviour and aspirational learning.

The new curriculum we introduced brought a broad and balanced teaching model to the academy with music, drama and humanities making a reappearance in all classrooms.

The refurbishment and upgrading of learning spaces was undertaken and the academy environment became a community concern with all pupils and adults sharing a collective responsibility for each other and the school as a whole.

The successes are not defined by, but are exemplified in our results:

- KS2 - Yr6 results were the best for 5 years
- Phonics screening results were above the national expectation
- Reception results were above the national expectation
- Attendance was the highest we can find recorded for the academy
- Persistent absence (attendance below 90%) was the lowest we could find in academy records
- The academy was over 95% full at all points during the year and filled reception for 19/20 when many local schools are shrinking in size we are oversubscribed
- 84% of teaching staff retained for new year and academy fully staffed in September 19
Ark Oval 19/20

The academy has had an unbelievably positive start to the year with new staff receiving four days of intensive training with the first teaching week spent embedding and reestablishing the expectations and aspirations of the school.

Some of you may have noticed the considerable regeneration works carried out over the summer:

- The ICT suite has been stocked
- The upper hall completely refurbished
- Four classes re-floored
- Outside toilets refurbished and reworked for added capacity
- Several office spaces gutted and refurbished

This has been a huge undertaking and without the physical and financial support of the network would not have been possible. For pupils the development of the environment is a huge aspect of raising expectations and seeing the power of communities in action.

There have also been changes to the running of the school in other ways:

- We have changed the break and lunch routines to ensure that all pupils have the space and freedom to enjoy both playgrounds and a mixture of structured and non-structured play with fewer pupils in any one place at any given time.
- In the lunch hall we have raised our expectations of manners, noise and organisation and the environment has benefitted substantially from this approach, not least that we are now wasting less than half of the food we were before.

We can now look carefully at moving towards a healthy school status and packed lunches that do not meet this criteria will not be accepted within school. We will publish full guidelines in the coming weeks for parents, but would strongly encourage you to make use of the excellent lunches provided by the school. These are free until Yr 3 and if you are entitled to free school meals status, they are free through to Yr6. If you think you may be entitled to Free School Meals please speak to the school office who would be happy to guide you through the process.

- We are continuing our work on deepening and broadening the scope and implementation of the curriculum and hoping to work closely with the new Ark Nursery and Ark Blake Secondary School to offer an all through approach to education in the area. This is done through supporting the teachers and working in specific subject knowledge and the coaching and support of teaching across the whole of the curriculum. The quality of learning will continue to focus heavily on experiences and trips/in school experiences will take place approximately once per half term.
- Behaviour in school has vastly improved from this time last year and we are working on moving this towards a self-sustaining model where children have the tools to resolve their disagreements constructively with peers and have a calm and resilient approach to all learning; no matter what the lesson or staff involved.

The school is moving in a great direction and although we aren’t where we want to be yet, we are a GOOD school looking to be GREAT.

We are awaiting an Ofsted but that grading does not define us. Ark Oval has proven recently that it can be at the very forefront of education and ensure the very highest standards for all of our pupils regardless of background or previous experience. We are trying to live our network mission statement which is:
“Every pupil has the opportunity to attend university or pursue the career of their choice”

As long as we continue to work hand in hand with you the academy community there really are no limits to what we can achieve.

You can support us in the following ways:

- Filling in the parent view survey for Ofsted [https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/](https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/)
- Making sure you support us in keeping your child’s attendance and punctuality as high as possible
- Ensuring your child has a nutritious and well balanced breakfast before school
- Make a note of the following emails for easy communication with teachers
  - Reception@arkovalprimary.org
  - Year1@arkovalprimary.org
  - Year2@arkovalprimary.org
  - Year3@arkovalprimary.org
  - Year4@arkovalprimary.org
  - Year5@arkovalprimary.org
  - Year6@arkovalprimary.org

Can we also ask for your co-operation in completing and returning the enclosed survey to support the reestablishment of the Nursery. Your feedback is really important to us. Completed surveys to be returned to the School Office.

In closing I just wanted to remind you of our schools values: to be brave, resilient, honest, and respectful and to aim high. I know that we will all continue to promote these values in everything we do and encourage our pupils to do the same, fulfil their potential and be the very best they can be.

Here is to a successful year at Ark Oval.

Kind regards,

Toby Martlew
Principal

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