



The Federation of Minster and Monkton Church of England Primary Schools



13th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are keeping well, despite our current situation of lockdown. Who would have thought at this point last year that this would have become our new normal?!!!

I am writing to you to explain how both our schools intend to keep you up to date with your child's progress this year.

Quite a while ago, I wrote to you about the fact that we were changing our systems and that 'Arbor' would be our new management information system. This obviously means that there are changes in the practice at both schools, as systems such as SIMs and Classroom Monitor are now no longer in use and haven't been since the beginning of March 2020. It has changed some of the way we do things behind the scenes.

Therefore, we have always known, since adopting Arbor, things would also have to change regarding the way we communicate with you as Parents and Carers.

A couple of examples of this would be:

- **The Arbor Parental App**
This was introduced at Minster, for you to book your Parent/Carer Consultations on in the last academic year and we intend to launch it at Monkton too. We are exploring how we can use it to ensure that you have more information about your child at your fingertips.
- **Arbor for email communications with Parents/Carers**
This has been in place at Monkton for some time and we intend to launch this with Minster Parent/Carers too. We also hope to develop its use in the future with other messaging systems.
- **Reports on Classroom Monitor**
Our system of reporting to you - sending you some updates from Classroom Monitor in January and April, as well as the end of year report in July. This can no longer happen as we no longer have Classroom Monitor. Therefore a new system is being developed.

So where do we go from here?

Firstly, let us look at what the Government expectations are. Legally, as schools, we have to provide one written report about your child's progress a year and give you the opportunity to discuss it. However, we have always offered far more opportunities for discussion than that, and this is something we want to continue to do, as we recognise the importance of our relationship with you and your child.

Parent/Carer Consultations

As stated above, these are non-statutory, but still a vital part in our communication and relationship with you. In the past we have offered 2 Parent/Carer consultations a year (we usually do one in October and one in February/March time), and the opportunity to discuss the end of year report. This used to be in the form of an Open Afternoon.

We have already completed consultations in October this academic year and will be offering them again in March. They will be virtual, and I am pleased to report that we have received a great deal of positive feedback from Parent/Carers and Staff alike, saying they worked very well and that people were happy with the process. We will also offer something at the end of the year, but I honestly do not know what form this will take. This will depend on the 'National' situation in terms of the pandemic.

Reports to Parents/Carers

As I said earlier, the Government expect us to give you one written report a year. This will still happen and you will get a written report in July. To go alongside this, we are looking at what Arbor can offer in terms of interim information (as well as how this system can also contribute to the end of year report).

With regards to this, I must ask for your patience and understanding. We moved to Arbor in March 2020. We had a great deal of training booked for the staff in the use of Arbor for the many different applications it provides, however the pandemic has had a major impact on what we have been able to do and on the training we were able to have.

It was all cancelled!

In fact, we have only just been able to rebook this for the coming months, so will be skilling up in the very near future. We are also trying to balance the many other demands on our plate, due to this unprecedented situation.

Believe me, I am not looking for sympathy, just an understanding why we are not as far down the path as we intended to be at this point. However, you know us well at both Minster and Monkton, and you know that we will always do our absolute best to provide the highest quality of information and communication with you as we can. It is just that at the moment, introducing a new system may take a little more time than we intended!

So to summarise, you will receive an end of year report about your child and their progress. Hopefully, if training and systems allow you will have some interim information as well, but it will not be in the form it took last year as this is no longer possible. I will let you know as soon as I can, regarding any developments.

I will be in touch soon with information about Parent/Carer Consultations and I know that the teachers are looking forward to their communication with you.

Please rest assured that whether your child is in school or at home at the moment, we are dedicated to providing the very highest standard of education for them as well as great communication with you.

We are so thankful for the support you have given us over this very difficult time, please know that we appreciate all you are doing too!

I look forward to our continued work together.



Wendy Stone

