



Federation News

12/11/2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to what is going to be another amazing term for both schools in the run up to Christmas. There is an action-packed calendar of events to match up with a fun and invigorating curriculum and I look forward to seeing many of you when attending these.

As a Federation we are working increasingly closer together and I thought it might be nice to highlight what we have been working on to show how 'Federation working' makes a very positive difference for both schools.

OPAL

Both schools have started their OPAL journey and have transformed playtimes into something that is fun and exciting for all. We are constantly evolving with this so if your children would like to see things that are currently not provided (within reason of course!) then make sure they pass this on to school councillors or the OPAL teams. Both Myself and Darren Philpot (Chair of



Governors), sit on the OPAL team for both schools and have been able to draw on this for best practice. OPAL leaders have also been working closely together, sharing ideas and problem-solving things like wet weather! We look forward to this growing further and playtimes at both schools being the very best that they can be.

Federation Business Hub

Previously I've been the only shared (Federation) staff member working across both schools. As our Federation strengthens, I plan to develop these opportunities further.

In the summer, the School Business Manager (SBM) left Minster and this gave an opportunity to reshape things. As schools are increasingly expected to operate as businesses, it makes sense to have someone who sits across both schools ensuring best value for our settings.

With this in mind, I created the Federation Business Hub. Helen Ling is now our Federation Business Manager and runs finance across both schools. Carol Makowska is our HR manager for the Federation, and we have employed a receptionist for front of house at Monkton to free up Helen.

Tobi

Many schools that I visit have a school dog. I have to admit to being a bit jealous, as having a pooch on site offers so many benefits for pupils and staff. Both schools are lucky having a reading dog, but this isn't quite the same.



I explored what measures needed to be taken to allow a dog into school and with the appropriate permissions granted and a risk assessment in place I'd like to introduce Tobi (my dog). He is a Miniature Golden Doodle and is two and a half years old. The plan is for him to come to both schools, and we will build this up over time. As you can imagine, it may well be quite overwhelming for him initially and he will need time to adjust. If your child is anxious around dogs or has any allergies, please make sure that the class teacher is aware. We look forward to seeing the positive impact this has on both schools.

EKC Trust

As our support from KCC diminishes due to reductions in capacity, I have been looking for support partners to work alongside. This has led me to signing us up as an associate member to the EKC Trust. As church schools this is also good as EKC has the Diocese as part of their Trust Board. Working with EKC will offer lots of CPD (training) opportunities for staff at all levels. It offers a network of Headteachers to share ideas with and problem solve situations. It also has support for business and HR.

Working with a larger cluster of schools will also offer more opportunities, most importantly for the pupils at both schools with us being able to access Trust events and use outreach facilities at the collages.

This is an exciting partnership that will offer some great opportunities for all moving forward.

THRIVE

As we are all aware, there has been a steep rise in children suffering from SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) issues. Both schools do an amazing job with SEND and have strong reputations in Thanet for this. We are not trained councillors however so both

schools needed a toolkit for supporting this growing need. Thrive is something that both Jo Guilder and Emma Hill (SENCOs at both schools) are leading, with training coming from STLS (Specialist Teaching and Learning Service) for the whole staff. This is a whole school approach so all children will get class Thrive but there are also bespoke interventions to support those who are identified as needing further support. Early signs are very promising.

Should you like some more information around thrive please speak to our SENCOs.

Working Together

The curriculum is the driving force for both schools and the ideal opportunity for collaboration. Key priorities are identified and where these link across the Federation connections have been made for staff to work together. Currently this year alone we have joint working happening in the following areas:

- Maths
- Writing
- EYFS
- PE
- Music
- SEND
- Thrive
- OPAL

We also have a Federation Leadership Team that meets weekly. This enables us to work strategically together sharing ideas and reducing workload by not double doing things.

Parent Link

We are always looking to improve and use Parent Link (our private FB group) as the mechanism for this. This will be relaunched at Monkton this week so if you are not already a member then please request to join. Parent Link is all about school improvement and a platform for your help drive the schools further forward. There are certain rules for the group and Mr Marston will get these out to you very soon. I look forward to seeing your ideas and suggestions that we can discuss at our leadership meetings.

Darren Philpot (Chair of Governors)

During the past three years as my time as Chair of Governors, the Federation has been through a huge amount of change and evolution. Both schools have recorded impressive results for both Ofsted and SIAMs, restructured the Senior Leadership Team with



the appointment of Mr McCarthy as Executive Headteacher and Minster recently appointing Mr Russell as Head of School.

I feel now with all that has gone before the Federation is in a great place to continue to give the children the continued first-class education which I believe will only be strengthened by the ability to work collaboratively across both schools. Mr McCarthy has set out above some of the key ideas we hope will benefit the children of the Federation and I am excited to see where the next few weeks and months take us. I strongly believe the schools are in good hands and there is much to be proud of.

And finally.....

That's it for this instalment. I will be in touch with further Federation developments as they happen. In the meantime, don't forget to use Parent Link to add your positive input for future school and Federation development.

Warmest regards,

P. McCarthy

Paul McCarthy

Executive Headteacher