

Letter from the Chair of the Governing Body

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of the first half term of 2021, there is much to be appreciative of and thankful for. Our schools remain open for children of key workers and for vulnerable children. But there is also a full programme of home learning in place with daily updates for the children from your teachers and support staff.

I have been speaking to some parents at Bowes School since the beginning of January and they have all stated how pleased they are that the school remains open and thankful that the teachers have shown great enthusiasm in ensuring that our schools continue to deliver an outstanding level of teaching and learning opportunities.

The recent challenging weather has not prevented staff from travelling and they are to be commended for this dedication to their profession and to the children at our schools. This is now the longest sustained spell of adverse weather since 2010 and many young children may never have known or experienced the degree of snow or cold that we are currently subject to. Sledges have been dusted off and put to good effect within the villages and in particular on the famous Bull Banks. We are indeed fortunate to live within such a beautiful part of the country.

The Governing Body is in the process of undergoing considerable change in the light of the successful federation with Cotherstone Primary School which went live on 11 January. We will shortly be holding our inaugural meeting of the new Bowes Cotherstone Governing Body and to reinforce what I outlined to you before Christmas, Governors stand ready to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- Ensure the educational performance of the schools and performance management of the staff remains uppermost in our actions
- Oversee the financial performance of the schools, making sure that money is spent wisely

Notwithstanding the continuing challenges of the COVID-19 virus, our schools continue to adhere strictly to the detailed risk management plan ensuring school remains a safe environment for the children, the teaching and support staff and to any essential visitors who come into the premises.

As you enjoy your precious time with your children in your homes this half term, please spare a thought for our teachers and support staff who continue to work tirelessly and will be planning for the results of the roadmap that the Government will be publishing on 22 February. Without prejudging or pre-empting anything, it is to be hoped that more good news concerning schools reopening fully will be amongst the details within the Government's plan.

It just remains for me, on behalf of the Governing Body, to wish you all a happy and enjoyable week and to trust that you stay safe and secure.

Peter Nicholls

12 Feb 21