



Friday 18th November 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had another busy week at Aspire, it is lovely to end the week with a bit of spotty fun in honour of Pudsey and in support of Children in Need. We know times are tough for families at the moment, with the cost of everything rising so we thank you for continuing to support our events.

Please find below the usual round up of news and information, which I hope you find useful.

### **Platts Heath School Choir**

Mr Waters, Head of School at Platts heath, has asked for the following information to be shared. The choir would be delighted to welcome any of our Aspire families to watch them perform.

#### **Choir performances at Grafty Green Christmas Craft Fair.**

On Sunday 20th November 2022, Platts Heath choir have been invited to perform at the Grafty Green Christmas Fair. This will be our first public performance.

The fair runs from 10am-2pm and we will be performing twice - at 11am and 1pm.

We will be singing songs from the Young Voices - Rockstar, Don't Worry and Trolls as well as some traditional Christmas carols - Calypso carol, Mary's Boy Child and Silent Night.

### **KCC SEND inspection**

Please see below from the KCC website

*Ofsted and the CQC conducted a 3 day re-visit to Kent in September 2022 to assess whether the local area – KCC, NHS Kent and Medway, and local schools and settings – have made progress in addressing the areas of significant weakness identified in their inspection of the local area in 2019.*

*They have now published their letter, which states that the local area has not made sufficient progress in any of the nine areas of significant weakness raised during their inspection in 2019.*

This is a reflection on central services and not on the schools themselves. It does perhaps explain why both the schools and parents have to fight so hard for assessments and appropriate support.

The following open letter has been published to all parents with a child/ren with SEND

Dear Parent or Carer,

Publication of the Ofsted/CQC Local Area revisit letter

We recently had a revisit from Ofsted and the CQC to find out how the local area – the local authority, NHS Kent and Medway and local schools and other settings – have worked together to tackle the 9 areas of significant weakness they outlined following their inspection in 2019.

I am writing to let you know that Ofsted and the CQC have published their findings in a letter this morning, which states that the local area has not made sufficient progress on any of the areas of weakness. You can read the letter and our response to it on our website.

We fully accept the findings in the letter and offer our heartfelt apologies to all the children and their parents and carers who have been let down by the insufficient progress across our services and we are very sorry for the impact this has had on families.

We take the findings from Ofsted and the CQC very seriously, and our immediate focus now is to rebuild trust and confidence in the SEND system by building on very recent improvements rightly demanded by families and to be more responsive, transparent and collaborative.

While we will continue to build upon the co-production we already have in place with Kent PACT, we will also be reaching out to other parent/carer forums to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the experiences of families and learn from this to shape future plans.

We will now be working with the Department for Education to produce an Accelerated Progress Plan to transform services and we will be publishing further details of this, what it entails and who it will involve in the coming weeks on the SEND Information Hub (local offer) website.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Hammond Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

Dame Eileen Sills Chief Nurse, NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board

### **Christmas events at Lockmeadow in Maidstone**

We have been sent the attached information regarding Christmas events and celebrations and events at Lockmeadow in Maidstone, in case it is of interest to any of our families. Please find the poster attached to this letter.

### **Year 5/6 Residential Trip to Bowles**

Mrs Steer is leading this trip and held a virtual meeting yesterday to provide information and answer questions from parents. If you were unable to attend this meeting, please contact your school office who should be able to provide you with copies of the slides that were shared at the meeting.

In case of an emergency during the trip I can be contacted on 07599 801236. Please do not contact this number outside of school hours unless you have a family emergency and need to urgently collect your child who is on the trip.

Children cannot bring their own mobile phones on the trip.

Wishing you all enjoyable family weekends. I can be contacted at [exechead@aspire-kent.org.uk](mailto:exechead@aspire-kent.org.uk) during working office hours if you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Emma Hickling

Executive Headteacher

Aspire Federation

