



New Close Primary School  
An Acorn Education Trust School

Executive Headteacher: Mr S Porter  
Headteacher: Mrs L Kilminster

19<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians

As Christmas approaches, this is a good time to reflect on the changes, events and successes of the past two terms at New Close.

In September, we welcomed our new Head, Mrs Kilminster and her strong, energetic leadership was immediately evident. Building on sound foundations, she is moving the school forward, ably supported by an excellent team of teaching and non-teaching colleagues. Together they are providing the best outcomes for our pupils in a safe, caring and happy environment. I would like to thank them all for their professionalism and commitment.

Last Easter, we saw the opening of our new Nursery, which is going from strength to strength. Under the leadership of Mrs Turner and her team, it is fast becoming recognised as a model of good practice across the Acorn Academy.

During the past two terms, we have celebrated the many sporting successes of our pupils in a series of matches in competition with other Trust Primary Schools. We have also recognised the achievements of our young learners at class show-and-tell assemblies and weekly Friday assemblies, when our New Close values are much in evidence. It is clear that our pupils respect and uphold these values and are proud to be members of our inclusive, thriving community. Visitors to the school never fail to comment on the calm working atmosphere and the polite, friendly welcome they receive from our pupils.

Being part of the Acorn Academy Trust continues to bring many benefits to our school. As well as an extensive and ongoing programme of refurbishment and an updated IT system, we are very fortunate to have the support of an experienced Executive Head, Mr Stuart Porter, who oversees six of the Academy Primary Schools. He is an energetic advocate for our school, ensuring that the interests of New Close and its pupils are represented at Academy level meetings with the CEO, Sara Edwards. The strength of the Academy is in its promotion of a collegiate approach to education: schools retain their individuality whilst having the benefits of wider support from colleagues across the whole Academy. Specialist expertise is made available to enhance the curriculum and Head Teachers and Chairs of Council meet regularly with the CEO. Acorn Education Trust is by no means a disengaged, remote organisation: the CEO and Executive Leaders have detailed knowledge of every school and their support and involvement is guaranteed.

Continued overleaf

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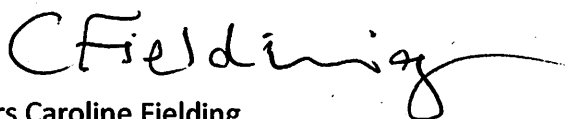
We have three new members on our Academy Council this year: Mrs Turner, Mrs Bannister and Mrs Jones join our strong team of Council Members and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their continuing work in support of Mrs Kilminster and New Close. Like all schools across the country, we are introducing changes following the introduction of the New Ofsted Framework. As a consequence, our Council meetings this year will focus on the implications for our pupils. The main impact will become evident in the curriculum we offer and the quality of education we provide. Under Mrs Kilminster's leadership, we need not be afraid of change – indeed, we should embrace it: the new ideas being put in place will ensure that high quality teaching and learning is at the heart of a re-invigorated and strengthened curriculum.

Change has also been in evidence amongst the staff at New Close: in September, Miss Dixon returned following maternity leave and we have welcomed Miss Smith, teaching Squirrel class. Mrs Pyke has joined the Nursery team and in January we will welcome another new teacher: Mrs Horn is taking over from Mrs Southby in Otter class. Many of you will already know that Mrs Southby is retiring from the teaching profession at the end of this term. Since her arrival at New Close the children have benefitted hugely from her expertise and enthusiasm. As our Literacy Lead teacher, she has shown great skill in encouraging and inspiring our pupils to become keen, independent readers. We wish her a very happy, fulfilling retirement.

The end of term is fast approaching and the school has been in festive mood. The children have enjoyed a varied programme of exciting events and it has been good to welcome so many parents and family members to share in the celebrations. I would like to thank you all once again for your continuing support of New Close and our school community.

With best wishes for a very merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Caroline Fielding  
*Chair of New Close Primary School Academy Council*