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Dear Parents/Carers,

There are a few staff changes that we need to update you on, as a lot has happened since this time last year.

Firstly, we have bid farewell to **Mrs Thorne**, who retired from her role as Teaching Assistant this Spring. Unfortunately, due to lockdown and a period of absence, it was not possible for the pupils or staff to say a proper goodbye to Mrs Thorne, but if any pupils or families would like to send messages, we would be happy to forward them on.

I'm sure you would like to join me in thanking Mrs Thorne for her significant contribution to Chesterton over more than 25 years, particularly her work in Lower School, her craft skills and her May Day expertise. We wish her all the best for her retirement.

As many of you will know, Chesterton School is growing, with the new classroom block and the extension to Maple Class meaning that we can expand from 20 to 30 children per year group (150 capacity to 210). Please be assured that this does not increase the number of pupils in each class, just the number of classes (5 to 7). From September, our numbers mean that we can run six classes for the first time in the school's history. These will be Maple (Reception), Beech (Year 1), Ash (Year 2), Chestnut (Year 3), Rowan (Year 4/5) and Oak (Year 5/6). When our numbers reach a certain level, likely to be in two or three years' time, we will add our seventh class (Hawthorn).

Our additional class means that a new teacher is required and I am pleased to say that we have appointed Sofia Baxter to join our teaching team from September. **Miss Baxter** will be continuing her teaching career with us, having worked in an 'Outstanding' school in Hampshire and moved to the area recently. Following a very impressive interview day, we are confident that she will fit in well to the school community and be a fantastic addition to the staff. When we announce class and teacher allocations on changeover day in July, we are hopeful that Miss Baxter is able to join us to meet her new class.

Our wonderful team of support staff is also growing and we have recruited a number of new **Teaching Assistants** over the past 12 months.



Miss Amie Faulkner joined the school in July 2020. **Miss Faulkner** has mostly been working with pupils in Maple, Rowan and Oak Class, whilst also supporting at Breakfast Club and Tree House. Rather embarrassingly, Miss Faulkner was a Year 4 pupil at King's Meadow School when I started my teaching career!

Mrs Vicki Tuffrey joined the school in September 2020 and has been working mostly in Beech Class. **Mrs Tuffrey** has also recently begun running a tennis club for Lower School pupils on a Friday after school.





Mrs Beth Bowkett joined the school in January 2021 and has been working mostly with our youngest pupils in Maple Class. **Mrs Bowkett** volunteered at Chesterton in the Autumn Term to consider a career change and we didn't want to let her go! She particularly enjoys outdoor learning with Mrs Rotherham on a Friday morning.

Mrs Heidi Herbert began working at the school on a part-time basis in March 2021, alongside volunteering at Ash Class Forest School sessions. **Mrs Herbert** has now worked with a number of different classes and has fitted in really well to the team. I am pleased to say that she has agreed to stay with us permanently.



Finally, we have just appointed another new member of the team, ready for September. Miss Amy Aston made a great impression on the interview panel, including our School Council duo (Esme Q and Harold) and joins us after completing a Psychology degree. **Miss Aston** has previously coached at Bicester Athletics Club and swum competitively for Bicester Blue Fins.

As you know, I have recently become a dad for the first time. I am pleased to report that my daughter, Ivy, is doing well and will hopefully be able to make an appearance at school before too long. I have been overwhelmed by the kindness of the whole school community, from numerous messages of congratulations, lovely gifts and plenty of interested discussions with the pupils at lunchtimes – thank you all.



I can also now report that I am not the only member of staff becoming a first-time parent this year...!

Miss Norman is expecting a baby, due in early October. We are all delighted for Debbie and James and wish them all the best for the coming months. The Year 6 children were particularly excited when they learnt the news earlier this week!

We will be making an additional appointment to cover Miss Norman's maternity leave, especially as she has so many different roles in the school!

Miss Phillips is also due to become a mum for the first time, with her baby expected about a month later! We also send Zoe and Jack huge congratulations and our best wishes for this exciting new chapter in their lives.

I am pleased to say that we have secured the services of Mrs Kelly Holden-White to cover Miss Phillips' maternity leave. **Mrs Holden-White** has already worked in the school, covering absence earlier this term. She is an experienced teacher who Mrs Salter and I have known for a number of years; we have the utmost confidence that she, supported by our excellent TAs, will ensure a seamless transition when she takes over the baton from Miss Phillips.

I hope you'll agree that, as we continue the journey out of lockdown, this is an extremely exciting time to be part of Chesterton School. Our staff team is as strong as ever and the wonderful new facilities that we now have should help us go from strength to strength over the coming years. We hope that it won't be too long before we can invite parents fully back 'in' to experience more of school life for yourselves again. In the meantime, please keep checking the school website for the latest photos or videos of what we've been up to.

Yours sincerely, Mr Horner