

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents

This year has been the most extraordinary year for us all – whilst 2020 has been full of challenges as we have all adapted to a new way of life, there has also been so much to be thankful for. So as we reach the end of term, it seemed fitting to write a very special letter of thanks.



### **Thank You to our amazing Children**

We cannot tell you how wonderful it was to fully re-open the school in September, following the National Lockdown. It is a joy to stand on the gates each morning and see the children arriving at school, smiling and happy. There are new 'rules' in school to keep us all covid-safe, meaning that at times school feels different – zones to play in, no assemblies and lots of handwashing! But the children have adjusted brilliantly, have demonstrated such great resilience this term and are still loving learning, are happy and are enjoying school. Special mention must go to those Nursery and Reception children who have joined Shepherd this term – they have settled in beautifully. We are incredibly proud of all the children. We look forward to welcoming them all back to school on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January, for a year full of fun learning!

### **Thank You to our whole Staff team**

We are always proud of our staff team, for their dedication to the children of Shepherd, but never more so than this year. They adapted their teaching to support children and families in Lockdown and have learnt to use Google Classroom brilliantly! Each and every member of staff has gone above and beyond what has been asked of them, whilst caring for their own families as well. Children across the school have enjoyed a term jam-packed with learning, but also with a huge focus on wellbeing - it has been particularly lovely to see the successful launch of Forest Schools and children enjoying regular outdoor activities in our school environment, carefully planned by our school staff. Thank you so much to every member of staff – those teaching directly in class and those working 'behind the scenes' as MSAs, office staff, cleaners and premises staff.

### **Thank you to our school Governing Body**

Thank you to our school Governing Body for your support this year – we have very much appreciated their support and understanding as we have navigated through the pandemic – special thanks to our Chair of Governors, Sarah McAllister, who has always been at the end of the phone to offer her support. We look forward to continuing to work with our governing body next year.

### **Thank You to our school PTA**

We have been very grateful to our school PTA committee for continuing to challenge themselves to run fundraising activities for the school, despite the new restrictions. It was lovely to see the children engaging so well with the Penny Wars and we know the children have had great fun playing Bingo this week! It has been really exciting to spend some of the PTA funds on further developing our Forest Schools provision – log seats, a canopy, an outdoor equipment shed and a log store. We look forward to these things arriving and being installed next half term.

### **Thank You Parents and Carers**

As parents of children ourselves, we understand and appreciate what it is like to send your children to school during this pandemic. So finally, we wanted to say thank you to you, our parents and carers – thank you for your understanding of our new rules (particularly those regarding arrival times at school, punctuality and the staggered pick up times) and thank you for all your tremendous support. There have been some very challenging times in school this year, but it has lifted our spirits to receive so many lovely emails, telephone calls and messages. It has been a privilege to have your family as part of our school community this year.

We hope that whatever Christmas means to you and your family, that you have a restful break and enjoy your celebrations.

We look forward to seeing you all in 2021!

With very best wishes,

Mrs Claire Foad  
Headteacher

Mrs Sarah Freuchen  
Deputy Head