



EXCELLENCE • LEARNING • LEADERSHIP

ST JOHN'S
SCHOOL

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SJS/EB

13 November 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

After completing my first half term as Head of St John's School, I felt it pertinent to write to you to share my initial thoughts and to share useful research which I feel needs attention.

Last half term, I visited more than 25 lessons, taught 2 lessons of Drama a week to Year 7, delivered 6 whole school assemblies and spoke to students during break times. I have been really pleased by what I have seen from students and staff and know this is a very good school indeed. One highlight has to be the Children in Need day which saw the whole school community unite for a common cause: the effort from students and staff was incredible and I am delighted to inform you that we raised nearly 1,300 euros as a result. Our students, your children, are a real asset to this school and I have been enthused by the level of courtesy, commitment and confidence I have seen from the vast majority of them so far this year. Where I have been particularly impressed, I have emailed parents/guardians to share this with you. Please do take time to praise your children if you get this email from me: they deserve it! As with any organisation and community, there are areas to be improved and I would like to bring one area to your attention: attendance.

Research* shows that moving schools can affect children's progress negatively by half a grade whilst parental deployment can affect children's progress negatively with an effect size of -0.16. This means your child may be vulnerable to underachievement and, as a school, we do all we can to provide appropriate guidance and intervention to support them. Our GCSE statistics suggest this is working as we have achieved a positive progress score for the past three years. However, poor attendance figures do not help your child. In fact, students with only 80% attendance lose about a year's worth of school learning. Currently the attendance figure for St John's School is below 95% with several children falling below 80%. Given the impact this can have on your child's progress, and in line with MOD policy, I am unable to authorise term time leave for holidays or any other unessential reason falling outside of the policy – no matter how good the experience might be. I appreciate your understanding in this matter and urge all parents to ensure attendance at school is high for your child wherever possible to ensure they do not get left behind.

As we lead up to Christmas, I look forward to meeting more of you during our Parents' Afternoons or at our many sporting and art events.

Yours faithfully,

Emma Bryson
Headteacher

* *Visible Learning*, John Hattie, 2009



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SCHOOLS FEDERATION