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Dear Parent/Carer

1st September 2021

Re: Moving forward in 2021-2022

I am writing to share with you our approach and strategy for educational recovery at Stanhope Barrington CofE Primary School. We have all been through an incredibly challenging 18 months but it is now time to move forward with a realistic and positive approach to educational recovery.

Education is the greatest gift we can give our children. Many people are referring to our children as the Covid generation which I don't think is particularly helpful or positive and labelling children is something we don't do at Stanhope Barrington. Our team are determined to ensure that our children's education and development as fully rounded little people who leave us fully prepared to face the world is not adversely affected just because they were in education during the pandemic.

We have always put their mental health and well-being at the centre of our response to the pandemic and this will continue to be the case.

I am therefore outlining below our 7 step plan for our Educational Recovery:

1. Focus on Early Years Provision

We have a number of children who, due to the pandemic, have missed opportunities to attend Toddler Groups; have missed attendance at Nursery and therefore we need to ensure that the fundamental building blocks of education are put in place as quickly as possible.

We have increased both staffing and 30 hour Nursery places within our unit which is growing beyond our expectations.

2. Improve support for mental health and well-being

We will continue to be mindful of the mental health of our children and also of our staff team. We now have two qualified Thrive Practitioners along with a qualified Mental Health First Aider. A number of our team have completed courses and professional development focussed on mental health.

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As a Thrive School, all staff have received training to ensure a consistent whole school approach with Thrive techniques used throughout our Learning Zones.

During the pandemic we have been using an area previously rented out to the SCAMPS nursery and to all intents and purposes, we have been squatting in an area designed for babies as our staffroom! We are therefore redesigning our staffroom as a 'Chill Out Zone' for staff. We are investing in new seating and equipment such as a kettle, toaster, microwave and will try to create a relaxed and welcoming environment in which staff can take a break and recharge their batteries. This is being funded by kind donations from parents who have sent monetary donations instead of gifts over the last 18 months and we cannot thank you enough! This will have a significantly positive impact on the mental health and well-being of our team.

We are also continually reviewing the workload of the team. Every task undertaken must add value to the lives of our children and we are constantly asking ourselves 'Why do we do this?'

3. Invest in our Team

We will be delivering whole team training in some areas, along with ensuring that every member of staff is given the opportunity to take part in individualised professional development.

We have an allocated budget for training and development and now that some of the restrictions are lifted, we look forward to working more closely with our sister schools within the MAT to share best practise.

4. Provide targeted support for children who need it

Throughout the Summer term, our team worked very hard to identify any gaps in children's learning. This has been done on an individual basis so that we can provide high-quality, focussed and pacy interventions where necessary. It is likely that the majority of children will take part in a 'catch up' intervention but this will be targeted and short term. For example, a child who is struggling with the column addition method in maths may attend two or three 10 minute sessions per week for just two weeks until they are confident with the method.

This approach is a huge amount of work and a logistical challenge but we believe that individualised intervention is the most effective way of ensuring children 'catch up'.

5. Expand Extra-Curricular provision

From 6th September 2021, our school has taken over the provision of after school clubs. We are very mindful that our children have missed out on this aspect of school life due to the pandemic. Providing a wide range of exciting clubs and experiences is our priority. We have appointed an After School Club Supervisor who will co-ordinate both After School Childcare and the provision of specialist clubs.

We begin the Autumn term by offering Art Club (for KS2), Cooking Club (for Year 1, 2 & 3) and Extreme Frisbee (open to all) in addition to our normal Childcare provision. See separate letter for specific details.

Children will no longer be kept in strict bubbles and will be able to play and socialise with their friends.

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We are also re-introducing educational visits to ensure that every single child enjoys the opportunity to take part in a visit each term.

6. Invest in School Technology

During the pandemic it has become increasingly obvious how important technology is. During the pandemic we invested in an on-line Early Years Learning Journal called Tapestry; we have implemented Seesaw – our online remote learning platform; we have invested in an additional 9 laptops and thanks to a very generous donation from a local company, we have installed more up to date desk top computers in each Learning Zone.

Despite this, we still need significant investment in technology in order to allow us to deliver a comprehensive Computing Curriculum. This is an area for our Grants and Funding Team to focus on this year.

7. Parental Engagement

We are really excited to be able to welcome parents back into school. This will be introduced carefully and will follow guidance and advice but we hope to be able to run our usual range of fund-raising events; welcome parents into school to see our Learning Zones in operation and offer parents the opportunity to come into school for meetings. We have a number of different parental engagement groups which parents can get involved in. We also have big plans to hold an Art Exhibition and other displays which we will be inviting parents to attend.

I am confident that the above 7 step plan will help us to ensure that our children, families and team are fully supported to be the best that we can be.

More specific information about aspects of this plan will be shared in separate letters but if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Cross

Head Teacher