



The Clere School

The Clere School
Earlstone Common
Burghclere
Newbury
RG20 9HP

Our Ref: RM/VB

28 March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you at the end of a long and exciting half term. As I come to the end of my first year after being appointed as Headteacher at The Clere I have been reflecting on my time at this great school. I was able to establish very quickly the DNA that runs through the school, and we have crystallised that into “The Clere Way” of Integrity, Community and Respect. These are values that I believe in passionately and lay at the heart of what makes good citizens and successful organisations.

I commented in my first letter to parents how impressed I was with how students made me feel welcome and asked after how I was. I also noted how many students thanked, unprompted, their teachers at the end of lessons. This is still very much the case at The Clere and it makes me proud of how many kind young people I get to work with on a daily basis. This was further reinforced last week when we hosted our Careers Fair in the Sports Hall. We had a wide range of employers and different education providers who set up stalls ready to engage with our students. In many other schools these events are only usually attended by Year 10 and 11 students, but we wanted to open up this opportunity to our whole community. Every student in school on that day was involved in the event and it was fantastic to see how our young people engaged with our guests. At the end of the day we asked the employers and education providers to fill out a feedback form and the responses were just phenomenal. Every single piece of feedback identified that the behaviour of all students was exemplary with one participant saying that they attended numerous school careers events and that our students were by far and away the best behaved they had encountered. Another stated that they had been at over 100 events like this in their career and this was the best organised with the most engaged students. I would like to offer my massive thanks to Mr Deasy for his organisation and the sterling work put in by the prefects, as ambassadors, for the event.

We have recently had our annual visit from our local authority inspection and advisory team who check on the progress that the school is making. It was pleasing to note the improvements that they have identified over the past year. They were able to see the things that we are doing as a learning community to support our young people as well as challenging us in the next steps we need to take moving forward. As with all our visitors they commended the students for what they are doing as well as the hard work that staff do every day. To help us even further we will be sending out, after Easter, a parental survey to ensure that we capture the important voice of parents.

With all schools it is important to celebrate those elements that also happen outside of the classroom. It has been a real pleasure to see our students involving themselves in the wider life of the school. There have been many recent notable highlights. I along with rest of the

audience loved the evening being transported to Narnia as our students performed in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. To see the fruits of Miss Smith and the student's dedication coming to life was a real high point. On the Drama front it was great to hear the excited conversations of our students returning from their theatre trip after watching a production of 'Blood Brothers'. Our students under the determined guidance of Miss King have continued to perform so well in their sporting endeavours and regularly taking "the win" against schools that are much bigger than ours as well as participating in the numerous extra-curricular sporting clubs. An event that our students and staff also took on with great enthusiasm was the "Lots of Socks" Day for raising awareness for Downs Syndrome. The amount of colourful and wacky combinations brought a real smile to my face as I'm sure it did for those who saw the pictures on our social media feeds.

An area that we constantly look to improve is communication. The school's investment in the EduLink system has been key in giving all stakeholders the one stop shop for communication and information. I would like to say a massive thank you to the parents who have embraced this and are using it to find out what they need to know, book parents' evenings and to liaise with the school. In terms of communication, I would like to thank you, as parents, in taking such an active interest in your children's education.

Our staff work very hard to do the best for all of our students and spend a lot of time in and out of school planning and preparing the best possible learning opportunities. When we are contacted, we will always endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible and certainly within 72 hours. If it is a safeguarding concern, then please use safeguardme@clere.school so we can take more immediate action. When we had the cyber-attack and I was sitting in my office over half term without access to emails it really brought home to me how often I feel that by pressing the "send button" it means that the person receiving it has immediately read my message and how frustrating it can be when waiting for a response. It will often be the case that staff will need to collect information to give those contacting them an informed response as well as focussing on their busy day of teaching. If you do not receive a response within a reasonable time frame, then please contact me through the admin email that is monitored by my PA and the office staff. I would also like to remind you that I run a Headteacher's Surgery on a Wednesday afternoon/evening. I put aside this time to make sure that I am available to see and speak with parents. Over this term I have really enjoyed meeting many of you at different parents' evenings and events and getting to know you.

This term has also seen our Year 11s getting ready for their GCSE's. They have completed their last set of mocks and we have seen our photography and art students taking their final exams. I have really been in awe to see their amazing art work and displaying the creative talent that they have. The Year 11s have a true sense of how important every day and every lesson is and this is something we are ensuring all of our students have. We have focussed on making sure that students move purposefully to the start of every lesson to get the most out of their learning. We are using EduLink to ensure that parents know when students are late to lesson and put in a lunchtime detention with myself if they are late on multiple occasions. It's easy to think that it's only 5 minutes late, but that would mean 30 minutes a

day and 2½ hours lost learning time a week. I would like to thank you in advance for supporting us and your young people by reinforcing this message.

To further our community we are looking to reinvigorate and relaunch our house system. This will give us the opportunity to celebrate and come together through healthy and enjoyable competition. All the praise points that our students have gained (and you can see on EduLink) will count towards the overall house competition as well as a range of other competitions and events. We will send out further updates on this after the Easter break.

As I said at the beginning of my letter The Clere is a very special place with a wonderful community and I am so happy to be a part of it with you. Have a safe and hopefully sunny Easter Break and I look forward to continuing our work together in the summer.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R Milner'.

Mr R Milner
Headteacher