



13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Dear families,

Thank you to those parents who were able to attend the meeting on Friday regarding our school becoming a 'No Outsiders' school after our launch on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November. I wanted to be able to talk to as many of you as possible about the scheme and why we will be implementing it in school.

'No Outsiders' is about equality and acceptance and encourages children to be respectful and considerate of all people regardless of their age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender. It's intended to support a school's ethos where children are taught to identify, respect and accept difference and develop confidence in who they are as they navigate their childhood recognising it's ok to be different to someone else, that everyone is welcome in school. That complements our vision here at Anston Hillcrest Primary.

On Mondays I will lead assemblies across school to the different year groups using a picture or story book which will encourage discussion about equality, acceptance and inclusion. I've found so far that the children love learning about the world around them- I want them to leave the assemblies feeling confident and happy about the positive events that are happening around the world. The purpose of the pictures and the stories used in class are that the teachers will share a picture book and talk about it. From 'Elmer' to 'You choose' and 'Planet Omar' all classes have assigned texts which they can read with their classes and talk about. There are no books specifically related to faith, disability, sexual orientation or anything else. Instead the scheme uses picture books with interesting characters and stories. In all the stories the characters overcome adversity and develop self confidence, building relationships and feeling accepted for who they are is a key theme. The lesson plans accompanying the books aim to reference wellbeing and mental health in an age appropriate way and encourage children to talk about the themes and the characters, asking questions and hopefully talking about them with you at home. This in itself is showing our children that they have a valued contribution to make- building their own positive mental health and giving them a 'voice'. All lessons, discussions and language used are age appropriate and sensitive to a wide range of views and backgrounds.

I'd really like you to come along to a 'No Outsiders' lesson and we'll hold an open lesson in the Summer term. We will be adding the books onto our website so you as parents know the books we are reading in the different classes. Our PTA kindly have fully funded this valuable resource enabling us to purchase the books which we will read to the children and these are on order- we await these with excitement, ready to get started!

For me, reading is the key to understanding the world and it's always been part of who I am as a teacher and now as a leader to promote reading as a way of navigating life. It's tough growing up in today's society as they're exposed to social media and news which they hear and don't always understand- talking with you as their parents is key but for some children it can be daunting and they might be conscious of sometimes upsetting you. Talking with their friends can lead to misinformation but in our school I would like it to become a place where children ask questions and be allowed to explore some of their thoughts. It's our job as teachers to support them and support you too.

Kind regards  
Kate Rayner  
Headteacher