

26 March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following the parent survey, I said that I would write to you all to update you on our plans to improve the learning environment as well as to update you on progress towards the formal transfer to United Learning.

First and foremost, in relation to the building and learning environment, there are a number of projects that are at various points of their individual timelines. Below is an update on each of the projects:

Astroturf

Work on the Astroturf is now complete with the formal opening ceremony taking place after school this Thursday. It is a wonderful facility that our children will get exclusive use of during the school day as well as benefitting many members of our local community in terms of first-rate pitches for hire.

Toilets

Our intention is to redesign and replace three sets of toilets in the school which are currently in the design, humanities and science blocks. I have had several meetings with a design company and have met with our head students to get their input on what students would like in terms of the designs and facilities. We are now at the stage where the layout and proposed facilities have been agreed, and we are waiting for some costed examples before we go to tender. Ideally, we would like to do all three sets during the summer holidays but it all depends on whether the design company and contractors can accommodate such a short timeline. At the very least we are hoping to have at least one set done ready for September but hopefully it will be more.

Screens in classrooms

One of the first things I did when I arrived at Montsaye was to look at the quality of the learning environment in the different classrooms across the school. Many of the projectors were old and nearing their life expectancy in terms of the clarity of the image projected. With this in mind, we managed to save enough money to put 12 new interactive screens into the classrooms that needed them the most. These have been gratefully received by the children and our intention is to do put a similar number of screens in again this summer, if not before.

Classroom Improvement

Prior to my arrival there was not a rolling plan for classroom improvement which is now in place. This started during the last half term break where 3 classrooms were completely repainted, new carpets installed, new lighting and new chairs put into the rooms. The transformation has made the classrooms a significantly nicer environment to learn and

the children who have lessons in those rooms have all commented on how much nicer they are. During future half terms and holidays, the site team will be working on classrooms to eventually bring all classrooms up to the same standard.

Main Kitchen

In relation to the main kitchen, a survey has been undertaken to look at the current equipment, most of which needs replacing and updating. The next step is to look at prioritising which bits of equipment to replace first and then look at quotes from different companies to ensure the best value for money.

Food pod for Year 7

As Year 7 parents and carers will know, Year 7 have their own space at break and lunchtime to support a smooth transition from primary school. They currently have to go to the café to buy food so we are currently in the process of securing some quotes to put a bespoke catering pod into the Year 7 area which will mean they can buy food in their own area.

Main Hall Improvements

Finally, our main hall space is very dated and as it is used for assemblies, open evenings, parents' evenings and various shows, we are looking at how we can make it a nicer space for all. The plans for what this looks like have not been finalised yet but as a starter for ten we will be looking at the floor, painting and some new collapsable multi-purpose seating for the area.

Formal Transfer to United Learning

We were hoping to have completed the formal transfer to United Learning by now but the change of government coupled with various meeting with the Department for Education have delayed things somewhat. This has been frustrating for all of us and hopefully we will see some movement soon. I do not have a firm date yet for the formal transfer but I promise you will be the first to know when this is confirmed. Regardless of awaiting the transfer, I have received unfaltering support from Chris Clyne (Regional Director); an army of subject advisors who have been supporting improvements in teaching and learning; as well as various other members of the central team who are always at the end of the phone to support with any complex issues. All of this has allowed us to continue the school's rapid improvement journey.

When the formal transfer takes place, we will be fully embracing the United Learning colour scheme and will also be moving to a new school logo. At the point of transfer, we will also move from 'The New Montsaye Way' to the 'The Montsaye Way' as it will have been more than 18 months by the time the transfer takes place. The pledges and values will remain the same as they at the heart of everything we do now.

With regards to the logo change, I know that will promote questions around changes to uniform, but I wanted to make it clear that any proposed changes to the uniform itself will not come into effect until September 2026 at the earliest. We will ensure that any change starts with the goal of making it as affordable as possible to parents and carers as well as making it easier to purchase than the current grey items of uniform.

Hopefully this has given you a clear update on my commitment to rapidly improving the learning environment for the children and staff of Montsaye Academy. I will look to share a further updates towards the end of the Summer term.



Yours faithfully,

Mr B Baines