



Thomas Mills

High School & Sixth Form

Headteacher: P J Hurst BA MA MBA NPQH

Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form
Saxtead Road, Framlingham, Suffolk, IP13 9HE

T: 01728 723493

E: inmail@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk
thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

Dear Parents,

6th March 2025

Headteacher's Update Letter 2024/2025 – Letter 9 (out of 9)

As always, I trust this letter finds you well. It's great that Spring seems to have arrived. More daylight is very welcome. Students have been able to spend social time outside which is always valued. A quick update on several matters.

Watching and Browsing Online – Internet Matters

Miss Armes, Deputy Headteacher, has shared with me the following helpful update from a safeguarding briefing which we think is of interest.

According to Ofcom, 90% of children are watching online videos and browsing the internet regularly. Children may love to stream videos and look up information, it's a fun way to learn and relax after all **but they must be guided**. The e-space is filled with inappropriate content and dangerous material. It is important that parents and even teachers, can steer young people towards the right places when online. Internet Matters has published a guide dedicated to supporting adults in setting digital boundaries for children, so that they can make smart choices and build healthy online habits. In the Internet Matters guide you'll find practical tips on managing content access, the use of safety controls, advice on setting boundaries and ways to educate children on how to stay secure online. If interested, please follow the link below:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/by-activity/watching-and-browsing-online-a-parents-guide/>

Cabaret Café (Part Deux) Chez Rousseau – Monday 17th March at 6.45pm

You should have already received an invitation from the Friends of Thomas Mills to the above event which promises to be an immersive evening of culture, drama and music. Tickets can be booked via Arbor at £10 per person. Please contact the school office if you would like more details.

Bag 2 School

We are again running a Bag2school collection on Thursday 3rd April. More details will follow but please put any unwanted items of clothing to one side. This is a good cause which not only reuses unwanted clothes but creates jobs in the re-distribution.

Recent School Events

I just want to place on record my thanks to the entire school community for their support with several school activities recently. It is this wider ethos which makes us a very special, distinctive school with many opportunities which are, I understand, no longer typical of many secondary school experiences. A few examples:

- The Lower School Production of 'Fantastic Mr Fox' last week was brilliant with some really polished and empathetic performances. (I can see we have many stars for the years ahead.)
- My thanks to all the staff involved and parental support for the ski trip which took place successfully over the half-term.
- Today is World Book Day and as ever we have many amazing activities linked to our Library. Miss Vale recently hosted some Librarian training, and it was great welcoming school librarians from across a wide area.
- We have enjoyed another wonderful Music Winners Competition.
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme recently enjoyed a successful training day, and the organisation are very positive about the Thomas Mills groups. My thanks to Mr Carless and the team for leading this so well.

These are just some examples of the extracurricular programme, and it is the ethos of the school that everyone gets involved. The rewards are amazing, not only with the activities but the positive relationships which transfer to the classroom too.

Request from the Friends of Thomas Mills for Support

If you've attended any of the events mentioned, you may well have supported the school by buying drinks at a bar run by the Friends of Thomas Mills - a dedicated group of parents and staff who have over the years raised much needed funds for the school. They are looking to bolster their numbers so if you are interested in knowing more about how you could help, please e-mail Jennifer Reid, our Friends committee Chair, at friendsoftmhs@thomasmills.suffolk.sch.uk

Vision and Values

I am working with a small team to re-shape our **vision** for the school. In the case of a school, the vision is the aspiration that we have for our students and possibly an overarching statement of where they should be when they leave.

We also want to look at our **values**. In this context these are our overarching principles that provide a moral compass for our setting. (This will be separate to our Charter of Values but will relate to them of course.)

At this stage we would welcome any brief thoughts about possible vision and values and have created a simple form for you to use. We would very much appreciate these before Wednesday 21st March. At various stages we will include all of our school community.

SURVEY LINK: <https://forms.office.com/e/iyajxp5aGV>

Consultation to Improve Ofsted Inspections

You may be aware from the media that the Government and Ofsted are proposing to change the way they inspect schools and therefore how they report. With the following link you will find a video from the Chief Inspector outlining the changes.

[Improving the way Ofsted inspects education - GOV.UK](#)

It is proposed that inspections will grade more areas and use a five-point scale. They will return to looking at **curriculum** and **teaching** for example (although teaching will be linked to its development). Other areas are more familiar, but it seems that **personal development** will reward schools supporting artistic, musical, sporting and cultural activities. I also welcome a consideration of **achievement** since outcomes are important. Other areas include **leadership and governance, behaviour and attitudes, attendance, inclusion** and the **Sixth Form**.

I have seen several different inspection frameworks over the years. In my view they are at their best when they provide clarity to all interested parties. I would be happier with more areas as this would help inspectors reach consistent decisions. For example, they could report separately on high quality teaching and professional development. Careers is also important in my view and worthy of a clear assessment, as is SEND provision.

Whatever happens they are an integral part of the educational landscape, and we will work accordingly. A new chapter awaits.

Summary

I return to the theme of Spring and the new beginnings. For me Spring signifies hope and that is such an important theme in today's world. I very much follow the news, but the key message is that we do the best we can. I can say that it is a privilege being part of a school that enjoys a strong sense of community. Next week we are looking forward to our Charity Day which is always so ably organised and enjoyed by the Sixth Form. The staff theme is 'clothes from the decade you are born in.' I will not elaborate any further.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



P J Hurst
Headteacher