

Harleston C.E. Primary Academy

School Lane, Harleston, Norfolk. IP20 9HG

Tel: (01379) 852302 / 853211

E-mail: office@harleston.stbenets.org

Website: www.harleston.stbenets.org



Interim Headteacher: Mrs M Foreman

21st October 2020

Dear all,

Well, this is my last day as interim headteacher at Harleston Primary Academy and it is a sad day for me since I have very much enjoyed my short stay with you all. I will be in school for the full week following the half term holiday working very closely with your new permanent headteacher, Hannah Holgate, as part of her induction to the school. Despite the oncoming Autumnal weather (more rain I believe...) I hope that Ms Holgate and I will be able to meet and greet you all at the start and end of each day for my final week in school. I will certainly be at my usual station, despite the mud!! (I am usually standing in the mud...)

The new half term, in just a few days, is such an exciting prospect for the school with lots of support coming from the St Benet's Multi Academy Trust so that the primary setting in Harleston can go from strength to strength.

St Benet's has organised a review of the school to be carried out between Tuesday 2nd November and Thursday 4th November and I will be supporting this process.

It is very sad that COVID-19 has tried to act as a barrier to our rapid path towards improvement, but despite all the slings and arrows that the awful virus threw at us from March onwards, the school and the wonderful community have moved from strength to strength. Throughout lockdown, COVID-school and the new school year, everyone has shown a true commitment to giving the children the best possible outcomes for their learning and social and emotional development. This has certainly been a case where the whole Harleston family has pulled together - simply because you all care for the future lives of your children.

Of course, we (as a school) are not perfect and there are times when we (as a school) get things wrong, but when this happens I always apologise and try as hard as I can to get things put right. I hope that over the last 10 months you have seen that many things have been put right.

Last week I wrote about how the 'honeymoon' period for children in the school had come to an end and how we would be fully implementing our behaviour policy so that everyone fully understood there would be consequences for poor behaviour choices as well as rewards for children who consistently display their best learning behaviours. So, this week, a child has been out of school for two days on a fixed term exclusion for persistent poor choices about their behaviour and to contrast this, on Tuesday, I got to enjoy sharing 'Hot Chocolate with the Headteacher' with a child from every class from nursery to year 6. This shows how much we balance consequences and rewards in school. Sadly, I could not sup the drinking chocolate and snack on the biscuits with our worthy class nominees because our COVID risk assessment did not allow me or the children to do this. But I do hope that the chosen children and their parents thoroughly enjoyed making the drinking chocolate and dunking the Penguin biscuits at home last night. I was proud of every child that came to share our meeting as there were brilliant reasons for their class teachers choosing them. When talking to the children about what returning to school this term meant to them, the overwhelming sentiment

expressed was how much they all loved being back in school with their friends. Of course, a few children told me that they enjoyed their maths lessons best - but I'm not sure I really believed them!! (Although I love teaching maths).

It would not be an update without a small reminder of expectations... so please remember that we have a full 30 minutes for you to enter and leave the site at the start and end of every day. Our biggest area of congestion is the year 3 classrooms' entrances so please remember to be considerate and space out to maintain social distancing out whilst waiting for your turn to drop off or collect your child - better still - don't expect to be in the front of the queue at either 8.30 a.m. or 3.00 p.m. On another note, please make sure you leave the school site as quickly as possible, especially at the end of each day and use the correct entrances and exits. Children should not be playing on the field or on the outdoor equipment at either the start or end of the day.

There is congestion at my exit gate (next to Daphne on the crossing) when lots of parents and children are walking along the path just after 3.00 p.m. Please continue to wait on the steps and on the path with lots of distance between you and the people in front of you.

I've heard of a few instances where people push into the queue to enter the school to stand with their 'friends'. This is rather sad. I'm sure that everyone of our parents can find the end of the queue rather than pushing in. Just remember that we shut the entry gates to the school site at 8.55 a.m. and the exit gates at 9.00 a.m. so please do not expect a long chat with your child's class teacher after 8.55 a.m. as they have to be in class and teaching children from 9.00 a.m.

The community frequently tells me that parking around the school is very difficult and when we have our buses and taxis arriving and leaving, major problems can arise. So - please -wherever possible walk to school. Make sure that if your children cycle or scoot to school, they are very considerate of everyone walking on the footpaths. If it is raining, use an umbrella rather than using your car, since as I frequently remind the children, you will not melt if you get wet!!!

Back to the positives:

It simply remains for me to wish everyone at Harleston the very best for the future. I hope to see many of you in the week following the half term holiday. It has been a great surprise to me to have already been given leaving presents!! I cannot express how amazing this is - something I have never experienced before in nearly 6 years of being an interim headteacher in schools across the country. Your generosity and appreciation reflect this wonderful community.

'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'
Joshua 1 v 9.

With my very best regards,



Mary Foreman
Interim Headteacher