



Bennet Canfield, Little Canfield, Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1YE

14 September 2017

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

It is my absolute privilege to have been appointed the new Headteacher at Takeley Primary School. I am looking forward to working with you all over time. After my two weeks in school, I am very aware that we have much to do, but we have a hardworking, dedicated and talented staff team, along with a fabulous group of children in which to help move Takeley forward.

The school came out of special measures in 2015 and became an academy school in early 2016, as part of the Multi-academy Trust with Hatfield Heath and Roseacres. In reality, despite having a long history, Takeley with its move to the new site in 2012, its significant change in staffing over recent years and a new 'National Curriculum' in 2014, is a 'new' school. Currently the school's national SATs results are not 'good'; in 2015 expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below national expectation at 44% (9% below national); this improved in 2016 to 56% (-5% below national). This 12% increase in attainment compared to the 8% improvement nationally in Key Stage 2 results (53% to 61%) does show that the school is beginning to add some value to children's progress. However, attainment results do not yet reflect the good teaching that has developed over more recent years and is more a legacy that led the school into Ofsted 'Special Measures', along with the much higher expectation from the new 2014 National Curriculum.

We now need to go through a period of stability in staffing. We need to further develop the school's appraisal, self-evaluation, curriculum, assessment and behaviour processes to enable a period of sustained improvement in the attainment of our children.

We need to create an inspiring curriculum that challenges and excites the children through a 'real-life' project based approach. A curriculum that clearly teaches the 2014 national curriculum and thoroughly tracks children's attainment and the progress they make on a regular and consistent basis.

Communication with you all needs to improve, but be manageable. The website is to become a key focus to enable you to access information when you need it. Newsletters will become a 'Head teacher's Blog'; dates, curriculum information; assessment information and the key policies will in time be updated so that we meet the requirements laid down by the government.

We have already begun to make a few changes:

- a) The school's vision of 'Learning and achieving together in a caring, healthy and inspiring community' is under review. It is of no great surprise that both teachers and children want 'enjoyment' to be included. Children were clear in wanting to be 'happy' and have 'fun' in their learning and felt it would help them achieve more.

- b) Class Assemblies do not best fit into the children's learning journey and we need to review when and why we invite parents into school to view and celebrate children's learning. Your role in being a 'real audience' in a more project based curriculum will need to be carefully planned. So invites to view children's work in an assembly rota will stop and in time be replaced by more strategically placed events.
- c) We are reviewing the school's behaviour policy. It is clear that staff have good positive relationships with their children, they nurture children well and catch them being good. However, too many teachers have said that there are no 'consequences' for children who show purposefully poor behaviour, and that greater guidance and follow-through is required. We need to embed a stepped approach to positive behaviour. A copy of the draft policy will be on the school website (a Parentmail will alert you to this). Please let us know your views by e-mail.
- d) Attendance will be reviewed half-termly and 'Alert' letters will be sent out if attendance or lateness falls below a certain threshold, so that you are not suddenly faced by a 'fixed-penalty' notice from the local authority.
- e) We need to annually seek 'stakeholder' views; parents, children, staff and governors to help evaluate how well we are doing and where we need to improve. The Essex Education Service's tool; www.seplus.org focuses on the 25 key characteristics of high performing schools and provides us with an objective standardised criteria linked to Ofsted to help support our drive for school improvement.

It has been great to meet many of you all informally, particularly at each year groups parents' meetings after school. Soon I will be inviting you to attend a more formal meeting where I can introduce myself and update you on matters and hopefully share a 'vision' for the future. If you do have any matters that you would like to discuss please do go to your child's class teacher first and book an appointment via the school office, we are all happy to help.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Andy Cosslett

Headteacher

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