

Shared Values - Shared Aspirations - Shared Achievements

18 July 2016

Dear Parent,

I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on some of the activities which the Governing Body of Ickleford Primary School has focussed on this past academic year.

Safeguarding – making sure that children are safe is our single greatest responsibility as Governors. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at the monthly meetings which I and the Vice-Chairman of Governors, Hugo Norton-Taylor, have with Mrs Dury and Mrs Wright, and also at the twice-termly full Governing Body meetings. Children can only learn effectively when they feel safe, and it's vital we provide a secure environment for them. It's for these reasons that we have supported the recent changes to the school premises, which bring us in to line with other schools. It's the right thing to do and reflects what the Department for Education and OFSTED expect. I hope you understand and support this.

Standards – as usual, significant attention rests on driving the educational performance of all children. We do this via review of attainment data at committee meetings, 'critical friend' challenge to the school staff, and by monitoring progress against the School Development Plan. The school contracts in to a Herts Improvement Partner – an ex-head teacher who provides an OFSTED-like review each term. Her assessment is that there is good progress being made in the key areas, but she continually challenges us to strive for even higher standards.

Budget – the current budget year has been the most challenging in living memory, but we have found savings in several areas so that we can maintain staffing at current levels. We have been helped by the money we have saved over many years in the School Fund. Our difficult financial position is the reason that we have not been able to make progress on redeveloping the old swimming pool area. I'm sure you share our frustration at this situation.

School visits – Governors see the school in action throughout the year and in different settings. This is a great way for us to review what is actually going on, and how the children are working. During our recent day visit we also spoke with Y6 and the School Council. What was striking was the confidence with which all the children spoke, and their willingness to come up with ideas to improve their education. Equally impressive was the sense of purpose we saw in all classes. The children are a credit to you and the school, and we are fortunate to have such excellent staff.

I would like to thank everyone in the school community for their hard work this year, and wish all who are leaving us at the end of term the very best for the future. I hope you all have a happy, restful summer break.

Kind regards,



Miles Maxwell,
Chair of Governors, Ickleford Primary School