

..... A Church of England School

December 2020

Dear Parent,

First, a belated welcome to parents and carers new to Ickleford Primary School – I hope your child has settled in well.

This has been quite an exceptional term. Having either the pandemic or the infrastructure works to contend with would have been a challenge. Dealing with both simultaneously could have ‘broken’ less effective schools. I want to commend the whole school community for the resilience it has shown during this time. The children do not appear to have been fazed by the disruption to normal school life. This is a credit to them and to you, too; it would have been easy and understandable for you to disseminate the inevitable stresses of 2020 to your child, but you’ve clearly shielded them from these as far as possible.

I’m sure you will all join me in acknowledging the role of school staff in providing a safe and secure environment. They have done this at some personal cost – putting themselves at greater risk of contracting Covid-19 (especially concerning for those with underlying health vulnerabilities) or transferring the infection to their loved ones at home and, in some cases, taking on additional responsibilities. The processes and procedures put in place to enable school to function have been robust, but much more important has been the empathy, kindness and support that staff give to our pupils. This cannot be measured in league tables, but is absolutely critical for our young people. I’m sure that this culture of care is one of the main reasons you chose Ickleford Primary School for your child, and the events of 2020 have shown the wisdom of your choice.

I want to assure you of two things from a Governing Board perspective. First, we completely support the approach that school leaders have taken with the full re-opening of school this term. Ensuring the mental wellbeing of pupils, easing them back into education (when some have had six-months’ absence) and identifying where the gaps in learning might be as a first step to plugging them most effectively has been eminently sensible.

Second, governors have been fulfilling as normal our responsibilities – mostly via Zoom – of holding school leaders to account, ensuring financial oversight, supporting the school’s mission and ethos, and making sure that safeguarding of pupils is robust. I am confident that we have not allowed any gaps to develop, and want to thank my colleagues on the Governing Board for their diligence in this.

This has been such a hard year for so many, but with the prospect of safe and effective vaccines now upon us, there is real hope of a return to a more-normal life in 2021. Until then, stay safe, and have a Happy Christmas.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miles Maxwell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Miles Maxwell,
Chair of Governors, Ickleford Primary School