



23.3.16

Dear Parents and Carers, Governors, Staff and Volunteers,

On 11th April we will welcome Mr. Moloney as our new Head. I will still be at Hipsburn for a further three weeks, allowing us time to discuss and hand over the running of the school. We both appreciate this time, allowing Mr Moloney to prioritise actions to prepare the school to become a Primary in September. When I became Head in 1995, there were 52 pupils, 2.7 teachers including me, and a part time secretary. There were no teaching assistants and the cook and caretaker were provided for us. At that time, the Local Authority planned to close a number of schools, and Hipsburn was one of them. My first task was to remain open!

Now, we are poised to become Hipsburn Primary School, with pupils aged 2-11 and a team of more than 20 skilled members of staff. I am absolutely confident that the school will thrive, with our caring and professional team energised by an enthusiastic, energetic new Head.

The school's success owes a great deal to the generous contributions of pupils, families, volunteers, governors and staff and there are some groups that I'd particularly like to thank.

Staff who pull together when the going gets tough, and have fun together when the sun shines are a joy to work with. We have been very fortunate to have such a team and I thank each and every one who has been part of Hipsburn. Our current team have really stepped up so all will be well during the transition when Mr. Moloney becomes familiar with the school.

Governors make a huge commitment, much of their work is unseen but the impact is great. We have been fortunate to have the support of many wise and generous governors. Amelia and Allison have embraced the role recently and



their care for the school is clear. Roger Styring and Dave Thomas made a commitment over many years that encouraged us to grow, and I am very grateful for their support.

The local community has given us wonderful support, enriching the experience of generations of children; the Appleby Trust have donated valuable resources every year, the Arts Festival have welcomed us, local historians have educated us and performers have inspired us. Fred Bettess, local historian, gave a wonderful legacy to the school when he gave us access to his books and maps, and his family kindly donated a significant fund at Barter Books. Mary and Peter Hollings have recently inspired children to enjoy living history and song. Volunteers have contributed so much; some with no prior association with the school - just a wish to help. There is so much we would not have achieved without volunteers bringing energy, enthusiasm and skills; the Wildlife project, arts projects, sports and literacy. All have made a real difference.

We also value our volunteers who quietly help out when we're stuck, doing the less glamorous jobs; at the moment we have a stalwart team of volunteer kitchen assistants serving lunches and filling the dishwasher.

In 2014, the Northumbrian Water team offered to 'give an hour' and actually gave us a newly painted school that will be weather proofed for many years. Families who work with us, tolerate our mistakes, challenge our aspirations and help us to achieve them are invaluable.

It has been a great privilege to work with so many children and watch them grow. Some families have been part of the school for years, some for generations and some have been here briefly and given generously while they were here.

So thank you all. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this community. I will miss you, but I'm absolutely convinced that the school is in safe hands and will thrive, and I wish you well.

Dot Charlton

