



26.2.16

Dear Parents and Carers,

Progress

Our Governing Body has been working exceptionally hard to ensure that plans for the future are secure. Earlier this week, planning permission was granted for our building works so this seems a good time to give an overview of plans and action as we prepare to become Hipsburn Primary School in September.

Headteacher

Kevin Moloney will start as Headteacher at the beginning of the summer term. He is currently very busy preparing to handover at his current school, but we keep in touch and he will join some of our strategic meetings this half term. There is a three week overlap in April, before my contract ends, and Governors have enabled Kevin and me to have a three week handover period. This is apparently unusual in education, but seems very sensible. There will be time for strategic meetings, handover information for SEND and safeguarding, and most importantly, children will see us working together, so there will be no abrupt change or gap. I will start to talk to the children about our new Head this week.

Other Staffing

The process of recruiting staff from schools within the Alnwick Partnership will be actioned this half term. The Governing body signed up to a protocol that allows staff in 'vulnerable' posts to be considered first, and if a suitable candidate cannot be appointed, adverts will then be posted as normal. We are recruiting an additional teacher for Key Stage 2, to start September 2016, with Mr. Moloney's involvement. Mrs. Currie will be leaving Hipsburn at the end of the spring term. This has been a hard decision, due to personal circumstances. We will miss her calm, caring and professional commitment, and wish her well. For the rest of the school year, we have asked Miss Jones to increase her hours to teach Bamburgh Class all week.

During Adele, our cook's absence, Irene Watson has cooked our meals, assisted recently by a trainee. Our trainee, Gemma, has been offered a permanent post, and we are very pleased for her, but now we need a temporary kitchen assistant again. We are



looking into various options, but in the meantime, if you think you could help, please contact Amanda Solomon in the office.

Premises Development

The Local Authority secured funding to ensure that First Schools in the Alnwick Partnership are fit for purpose as Primaries by September. For some schools with sufficient space, there is no additional building. The Local Authority has deemed that we need an additional classroom, group room and toilet, and our request for additional storage for PE equipment has also been agreed. The Local Authority, as our 'landlord' is responsible for ensuring additional buildings meet specific criteria relating to size, facilities, security and accessibility. This includes a classroom ratio based on 30 pupils per class, allowing 5 classrooms for up to 150 (once we are a fully functioning Primary with Years 5 and 6), plus our Preschool room. It is anticipated that the model of registration classes based on mixed year groups will be continued. Governors have rigorously investigated and accepted the proposals. This is, however, the first stage of premises development for Hipsburn Primary, and in the future, the school will need to consider fundraising for aspirational facilities. Our cabin and offices were funded from our own school budget, with fundraising and a loan.

Builders on Site

Planning permission has been granted for our building works and builders will start working at the north side of the school next Tuesday, 1st March. The staff car park will be used by builders and the whole building area will be behind fences. Therefore the door from Lindisfarne and Dunstanburgh Classes will not be used, and families from these classes will use the main office entrance. This entrance worked very well during the January storms, but please let us know if this causes any difficulties. More details will be sent to families of children in Lindisfarne and Dunstanburgh Classes today.

Curriculum

The Alnwick Partnership Primaries (Sept. 16) are now working together to develop the curriculum for English and maths for KS2. Mr Moloney is an experienced Year 6 teacher and we will soon have another teacher experienced in KS2.

Our current curriculum plans are secure and flexible, and will be reviewed and developed by our new leadership team during the summer. The Planning for Learning Policy and class plans are on the website.

This year we are trialling and evaluating a programme of enrichment, extra- curricular clubs, a range of sports coaching and dual sittings at lunchtime. Miss Haswell is currently running a computer educational games club for Y3 children during their lunch break.



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

During our handover period, Mr. Moloney will become responsible for SEND, meeting children and understanding their successes and needs. He is an experienced SEND co-ordinator. Please talk to your class teacher at the parent/teacher meetings if you have any specific enquiries.

Pupil Progress

Parents/carers are invited to discuss their child's progress in the week beginning Monday 14th March. Teachers will post appointments in foyers next Monday. Nationally, the focus in assessment has changed from achievement at national levels to progress Towards, Expected or in Depth (TED) within each new National Curriculum year. This is an aspirational curriculum with higher expectations and some assessment guidance was provided by the DfE in December. The tracker system we have developed meets these guidelines, but please bear with us while the new system becomes established.

Stakeholders' Review

Governors have been mindful of the stakeholders' feedback in January and will include this data when revising the School Development Plan. Work on this is underway and responsible Governors will work with Mr. Moloney, with a view to publishing by the end of April.

Contacting the Chair of Governors

Our Chair and Vice Chair of Governors stepped in at an exceptional time of change, decision making and action. Supported by many active members of the Governing Body, they are working hard to meet these challenges. However, in order to manage their (voluntary) work/life balance, if you wish to contact them, please go through the school office. For this reason, please do not use private emails or phones for school business. Governors are setting up a new Governors' e-mail account for families to use, and details will be available soon. Updated details of Governors, their responsibilities and their attendance at meetings will also be on our website soon.

We'd appreciate your help

During this exceptional period of change, there has been, and will be some disruption. However, teaching staff continue to focus clearly on learning, whilst Governors and I must focus on strategic issues. We're well on the way to being prepared for Hipsburn Primary School in September, with plans in place for a secure transition, supporting all of our children. Then, the school will be well placed to thrive.

Families can help by:

- Reassuring children by talking positively about the changes.
- Quietly raising any significant concerns with the class teacher in the first instance or with me, so we can reassure and support children.



- Volunteering to help e.g. de-cluttering cupboards, assisting in the kitchen, clearing and planting the pond, supporting learning, sharing skills.
- Volunteering to help Mr. Moloney and his staff with the Hipsburn Football Festival on the morning of Saturday 11th June (managing car parking, selling refreshments, organising 'school fair' activities).
- Volunteering to help Mr. Moloney and his staff with the Alnmouth Arts Festival on the weekend of 18th and 19th June (details to follow).
- Parking with extra care while staff also need to use the Alnmouth Football Club car park.
- Walking, cycling or scooting to school if possible.
- Ensuring that external and Early Years gates are always closed, especially while the office door is used by some children.
- Keeping children safe with dogs. Dogs are welcome if they are well mannered, on a lead and always beside a responsible adult.
- Starting to think of fundraising strategies for the future that you could help with.
- Taking spare sweatshirts from our huge stock of recycled clothes. These can still be used in the autumn, although the logo will change to Hipsburn Primary School. Our stock of recycled clothes without a logo will soon be given to charity shops, as we de-clutter.
- Putting suggestions of ways you could help in the Suggestions Box in the foyer.

World Book Day

And now some fun ...

Children and staff are invited to dress up as a character from a book of their choice on Thursday 3rd March, as part of our World Book Day celebrations.

Kind regards,

Dot Charlton

