



striving for excellence

Wentworth Primary School

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16th November 2016

Dear Parents

Once again another year passes and here I am communicating the work of the governing body and the key areas of the school's improvement over the course of the last year.

We have received our data for key stages 1 and 2 for the past year and have had the opportunity to scrutinize the analysis of our pupil outcomes and question our leadership team on the school's performance. In most years we have been able to compare outcomes with previous years but this year this is not possible because of government changes in assessment, which would have meant we were not comparing like with like. As you will know the old system of pupil's levels has gone and so this year we are looking at the pupils who reach and exceed expected standards in all of the different areas and how this relates to national performance. Once again I am very pleased to say that the school has acquitted itself very well and in many areas of performance we are in the top 10% of schools nationally. After careful analysis we have a clear plan as to which areas we can improve on and a big thanks must go to all staff for their hard work at a time of considerable change and of course to the parents/guardians for the support and encouragement they give to their children and to the school.

The biggest challenge over the last year has been the change in the Headship of the school. Jan Myers decided to retire after fifteen years of building a highly innovative and successful school with the pupils always a first priority. Having the interests of the school at heart Jan in making her decision gave us the maximum time to enable us to recruit a new Headteacher. We were aware of the difficulties of trying to find a successor to Jan and find someone who could move the school forward as successfully as Jan had done and contribute to education in the Maldon district. This was particularly concerning given the shortage of applicants nationally for Headship. Fortunately we were able to attract some very strong applicants and were very pleased to attract and appoint Dawn Dack who has a wealth of experience in Headship and in the wider field of education. Dawn knew the school well as she lives in Maldon and had faith in the school to send her two children to our school in the past. What has been most encouraging is the almost seamless transition from Jan to Dawn as headteacher and both put in a great deal of work to ensure this was the case, ably assisted by our Deputy Sue Waller and the Senior Leadership Team. We believe we can look forward with confidence to Dawn's leadership of the school.

Another area of success for the school has been in its sporting success and encouragement of all of the pupils to participate in sporting activities. Our sports teams have been highly successful and have represented the school with distinction. This has been made possible by the use of the Sports Premium funding the school receives and the decisions to use this funding to employ a specialist sports teacher Miss Nicholl and have Miss Spalding take responsibility for Physical Education. Keith Bannister takes a lead on this for the governing body and also for the area and has conducted an evaluation of the positive impact of the scheme and has reported on this to the governing body. We are also very fortunate to have a swimming pool which enables our pupils to progress very well with their swimming which I feel is vital as we all live so close to water. We receive no funding for our swimming pool and so it is a constant struggle for the school to pay for and maintain this excellent facility and we are grateful to all of those parents who make their swimming contributions.

Over the last year our initiative of offering our pupils the opportunity to learn Mandarin has received considerable attention locally and we have been visited by the Leader of Maldon District Council Miriam Lewis, our local MP John Whittingdale and a delegation of Chinese teachers. All were highly impressed with our pupils and their abilities in the language, some who have been studying it for the past four years. We are currently in the process of applying to acquire the prestigious Confucius School status and become a centre of excellence. To this end we are seeking ways of funding the expansion of this area of our activity to allow our students to continue with their studies of Mandarin after they have left us and longer term to provide some provision for the wider Maldon community. We have been fortunate to have been supported in this by some excellent Mandarin speakers and from Mrs Jones who leads on this for the school and recently returned from a visit to China. Our pupils who have left this year will be entering the labour market or higher education in 2023 and we hope that these skills will give them an advantage.

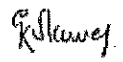
Other news of importance is that we have been able to continue with capital projects to improve the school and its learning environment. Unseen but of major importance is that over the summer we have had a new boiler installed which should hopefully reduce our heating cost but will also reduce our maintenance cost because our old boiler was on its last legs and expensive to run and maintain. Once again thanks must go to Jo Doran the School Business Manager and the office team for their work on this and ensuring that the school runs effectively and efficiently. On a more cautionary note the funding for education is now getting very tight with reductions in funding of up to 8% in real terms being forecast. This has meant very careful planning of finance by the school and careful monitoring of that spend by our Finance and Premises Committee ably led by Neil Hoskins.

Safeguarding our pupils is always a priority of the highest order for us and we were really pleased that so many parents turned out for very valuable session on E-Safety and hopefully we can have another one of these sessions to bring us all up to date with the ever changing current best practice and introduce this key area of safety to the parents who were unable to attend.

In conclusion we have had a busy and challenging year and do not expect the year ahead to be any different. I believe we are very fortunate to have a governing body with an excellent skills set who are all willing to give freely of their time to provide the support and challenge that contribute to making Wentworth a school that is successful and firmly rooted in its local community and working hard to achieve our mission of "Striving for Excellence".

As ever the governing body thank the parents for their continued support for the school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'G Skewes'.

Geoff Skewes.
Chair of the Governing Body.