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Headteacher: Mr Ian Hickman

Appleshaw News: Issue #15

19.7.18

Dear Parents, pupils, staff and Governors,

Tomorrow I will have come to the end of my 20th year as a teacher. The first class I taught at a large primary school of nearly 650 pupils in Hedge End were a Year 4 class of 8/9 year olds and will now be approaching their 30s! Some of them will have a vague recollection of their Year 4 teacher; some will look back on him with fondness, some with indifference and certainly some with disregard. What I do know is that by the end of my year I had never worked so hard in my life; I was absolutely exhausted. I also knew that some children had made brilliant progress; they had enjoyed my teaching style, they were motivated and clearly everything was clicking into place. Equally I was aware that some children hadn't done as well as I had hoped. Throughout the year I persevered, badgered, cajoled and encouraged but to no avail; at least that's how it seemed. I wonder now, 20 years on, what the significance of that year with me actually was? At the time I would have been one of the most important people in their short lives. I doubt many now can even remember my name.

As a teacher you carry around a great deal of guilt about the progress that children are or are not making and of course as a primary school teacher you become a very significant part of the life of each child in your class and often end up having to do a lot more than simply 'teach'. It is a mentally draining job with so many elements that need careful consideration. It is a job for a plate-spinner and if you can stop any plates falling during the year you will have done very well indeed.

We have a teacher here at Appleshaw who has just finished her first year. Miss Yelland has put her heart and soul into doing the best job she possibly can. And just like me after my first year she will be exhausted; she will be proud of the way in which she has helped children to make progress not just in the curriculum but also socially and emotionally. She will also no doubt be worrying about those children who perhaps haven't done as well as she hoped and will already be thinking about what she can do next year to put that right. After 20 years I have learnt that nothing changes in that regard. Each year there will be children who have made progress beyond your wildest dreams and others that seem to have moved along at a snail's pace. Of course you become more skilled – that's to be expected – but that nagging feeling that you could have done better never goes away.

As Headteacher of this school that is still how I feel at the end of each year. Delighted with how lots of things have gone but spending much more time worrying about what hasn't and what could be better. I will go into this summer break, like all the others, in reflective mood and planning to improve.

Congratulations Miss Yelland on completing your first year in teaching. You have earned a good rest!

Diary Dates for next term

3.9.18: Day Closure for staff training

4.9.18: School Starts for pupils in Years 1-6 (home visits for new Year R pupils will take place this week)

7.9.18: School walking to church to learn about it as an historic building

8.9.18: Ride and Stride event

9.9.18: Education Sunday – Benefice Service @ Kimpton Church

10.9.18: New Year R pupils start (mornings only)

10.9.18: Bikeability for Year 6

17.9.18: New Year R pupils start full time

1.10.18: Oak Class visiting the Lights theatre

8.10.18: Day Closure for Staff Training

11.10.18: Individual School Photos

22.10.18: Half Term

3.12.18: Day Closure for Staff Training

21.12.18: Last day of the Autumn Term

7.1.19: Pupils return to school for the spring term



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Leavers' Service

All parents are welcome to attend our leaver's service tomorrow at 1:45pm. The service, which will take place outside weather permitting, should finish at around 2:30pm. After the service children can be taken home. If you are unable to attend the service you can collect your child from school at the usual time of 3:25pm.

Annual Reports

Thank you for the bits and pieces of feedback we have had from parents regarding the end of year reports; it is not an easy document to get right. Some of the feedback has been around having some further clarity around the 'School Based Assessment' scores (we used a company called 'Rising Stars'). I tried to communicate in the letter that accompanied the reports that the tests that children in years 1-5 took were a tool that sits alongside teacher assessment. Teacher assessment is a term we use for the day-to-day monitoring (through marking, discussion and observation) that teachers do to gauge how well a pupil is doing against the expectations of the curriculum. A test is a single snapshot. We decided to include the test scores (in most cases as a percentage) because we felt it would give parents a little more information to sit alongside the teacher judgements. Perhaps what was missing was a little context; for example is 48% good, bad or indifferent? Additionally I don't think I made it clear about how challenging these tests were. Mrs Preece's Year 2 class sat them after they had done their statutory tests and she reported that the reading test in particular was much more difficult. Children, on the whole scored more strongly on the SATs than they did on the Rising Stars tests.

For reference, in the KS2 SATs test, a scaled score of 100 (i.e. the 'expected standard') needed 56% in reading, 54% in maths and 54% in the grammar test.

We do not get hung up on tests at this school and I would urge you not to do so either. They are necessary and they help to broaden the picture of attainment but they are not an end in themselves. Neither is a child's current Year group an end; it is just part of the journey of their learning. Most important are a willingness to improve (including being receptive to teacher feedback) and a preparedness to work hard: that's all. Please do keep that in mind and also that there are many families up and down the country, including one at this school, wishing that their child was coming home with any sort of test score at all.



In September I will be working with staff to further improve the clarity and timeliness of the information we provide to you about your child's attainment and progress.

Volunteers

Next term we will be asking for help with a couple of key projects. One of them is Oak Class' performance of The Tempest at the Lights Theatre in November. Any help with this project (costumes, props, staging etc.) would be most welcome. We have also signed up to a community project called 'The 215' which aims to commemorate the 215 names on the Andover War Memorial who lost their lives in WW1. We will be receiving four life-sized figures which will need to be suitably decorated in preparation for an installation at Vigo Park on the 10th November. If this is something you'd like to get involved with please let us know.

Could you run an after-school club? We know we have some gaps in our provision but don't have the staff to run everything that we'd like to but perhaps one or two of our community might like to run something? Two parents have run a very successful Spanish Club this year as an example.

A message from Revd. Sandra

On Education Sunday (9th September) our three primary schools and the parishes of Appleshaw, Kimpton, Thruxton, Fyfield and Shipton Bellinger are coming together to celebrate education in a special service at St Peter & St Paul Church, Kimpton. We want to be able to include and celebrate all levels of education, so whether you have children at pre-school, primary school, secondary school, or in higher or further education this is for you!

This is your invitation to this family friendly service which is open to all.



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APPLESHAW VILLAGE HALL: CARETAKER WANTED

Appleshaw Village Hall is looking for a flexible person for a weekend caretaker role on a self-employed basis for between 2 and 4 hours a week with an initial 3-month trial period.

For information, please contact Tim Seymour on 01264 773385 or 07887 774776, or melissa220@btinternet.com.

#AppleFEST3

Thank you to all of you who were able to support AppleFest last week. It was a very enjoyable evening of entertainment despite the poorly timed rain! The PTA pulled all the stops out as usual – thank you so much!

RIDE and STRIDE

Last September we helped to promote the work of the Historic Churches Trust and their 'Ride and Stride' event which helps to raise money to support our historic churches and chapels. We will be visiting Appleshaw Church on the afternoon of Friday 7th September as part of this event and raising awareness of the ride and stride event on Saturday 8th. You can find out more here: <http://www.rideandstrideuk.org/>

Reminders

1. The price of school dinners for children in Years 3-6 will increase to **£2.30**
2. I'm sure your thoughts will soon turn to uniform and school shoes for September (I've already seen a 'Back to School' advert!). The children are always turned out smartly in and out of school and I thank you for helping with this. My one request is that for PE the shorts should be of the style in the image in navy blue and that the t-shirt is of the round-neck style in the photo. Most pupils have this in any case. All local secondary schools are strict with their uniform policy including their PE kit and I want to see our pupils turned out as well for PE as they would be for their work in the classroom.
3. If anyone is thinking of getting their ears pierced then the beginning of the summer holidays is a good time to do it to allow sufficient time for healing before the new term starts. Remember ear rings should be removed for PE.



I hope you all have a super summer break and I look forward to seeing you on September 4th.

Kind regards,

Ian Hickman



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