



Headteacher Newsletter 13th March 2023

Dear pupils and parents,

Headteacher Drop-ins – Summer Term

Thank you to the many parents who gave up their time to come along to the Headteacher drop in sessions last half term. I will be holding these events every term and the next scheduled dates are:

- 08:15 – 09:00 Monday 17th April 2023 (bring your children along to school breakfast club if this helps but please book a free place in advance for staffing purposes if attending this meeting)
- 14:45 – 15.30 Thursday 20th April 2023 (please note children can stay at after school club until 3.30 for free if attending this meeting – but please book for numbers)

These are open drop-in sessions with no fixed agenda. They are not part of the formal consultation about federation as separate meetings will be held for consultation and update purposes.

Parents Evenings

This term's parents evenings are happening this week. You are invited to book in with your child's teacher for a slot. If you are unable to attend the times offered but still wish to attend – please contact your child's teacher to arrange a separate time with you that is mutually convenient.

School Updates

At the last Headteacher Drop-ins, some questions were asked about the school's priorities and what my focus has been since arriving. To date, my absolute priorities have been Safeguarding, Staffing and Curriculum Leadership.

Staffing

With many staff absences (and Miss Garland-Taylor's resignation) I have prioritised ensuring that all pupils are receiving a good quality of education. This cover was originally going to be provided by increased hours from Miss Scott and Mrs Slack, with Miss Scott covering Class 3 and Mrs Slack covering Class 1. Due to illness, Miss Scott was unable to complete this commitment and remains absent from school. At this point, having exhausted internal (known) cover, we decided to recruit a cover teacher to avoid having a series of different class teachers for Class 3. After a full selection process, we were delighted to welcome Miss Grant for Class 3 who has been recruited on a fixed term contract to provide ongoing cover for Class 3. She has a contract in place until at least the end of the school year and is being supported by the rest of the team and formally mentored by myself and Mrs Hanley. Mrs Hanley is a very experienced headteacher who some of you may know. Having recently retired, she has been very helpful in providing a good steer for Miss Grant whilst also adding some additional leadership capacity to school whilst I continue to cover two schools. The children have reported that they are enjoying their learning and have been instrumental in making both Miss Grant and Mrs Hanley feel very welcome in school.

Mrs Slack continues to lead the teaching in Class 1, teaching 4 days a week, joined by a very experienced class teacher, Sarah Farell. This cover arrangement will continue until Miss Scott returns to her substantive post.

Unfortunately, Miss Scott is not in a position yet to return to school to her teaching post but we are continuing to support her in her absence.

I met with Mr Petts last week as part of our ongoing absence management process. Mr Petts informed me that due to personal reasons, he has decided to resign his post at Grindleford Primary School with immediate effect and will not be returning to teach in school. Due to the nature of the teacher contract, his last official date of employment with school is 30th April 2023. I'm sure that this news will be very disappointing to many of our children and families who have known Mr Petts for the many years that he has been with us. His contribution to school has been very significant for many years. I'm sure that you will join me in wishing Mr Petts well for the future.



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I have spoken in person with the children in Class 3 ahead of sending this communication.

Where does this leave the school with regards to staffing?

We are in the very lucky position of having all the teaching staff in place that we need until the end of the year and potentially longer. As this is an ongoing situation, we will keep you updated further as things progress. However, please be assured that we have a strong, stable teaching staff in place with our teaching and TA staff. We also have a level of flexibility to shape the future staffing needs to meet the needs of the school in the future, whether that be through federation or via the appointment of a new, headteacher and at this stage, some flexibility to shape the staffing needs to the school is useful.

Safeguarding

This has been another priority for school. We have been reviewing and updating our internal procedures to ensure that school can demonstrate effective safeguarding for all pupils, with systems that are robust and effective. This is a clear expectation that has been laid out by the DfE and Ofsted.

We now have two trained staff in school who are fully qualified Designated Safeguarding Leads (myself and Holly Moore). This ensures that there is always someone trained on site or available locally to ensure urgent needs can be met.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

We are now focused on reviewing the school's curriculum offer to make sure that it remains relevant, exciting and appropriate for our pupils whilst meeting the current expectations placed on school by the Department for Education and Ofsted. With staff absences and changes, this has been a significant area of work and is a very important element of the current Ofsted Inspection Framework, where active and careful crafting of the curriculum and subject leadership is required. This is, however, an ongoing process and is something that all schools continue to work on throughout the annual teaching cycles.

Key areas of work have been:

- Update and review of the school website
- Curriculum mapping and developing subject leadership
- Teacher training and ongoing development
- Supporting children with SEN
- Premises update – refreshing areas of school and the gardens
- Clubs and extended hours cover – trying to bring back themed activities
- Developing Sports (returning to pre-pandemic offer) and external visits (Curriculum enrichment)
- English – Phonics, reading and writing
- Maths
- Science
- EYFS - updating the facilities including the outdoor area

As always a big thank you for your continued support.

Kate Gemmell (Executive Headteacher)