



Headteacher: Mrs Lindsay Robertson BA (Hons) NPQH

27th March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are all well after what has been difficult time with another rise in cases of Covid in our community. It has been a very difficult time for everyone and I hope that we see a reduction in the number of cases very soon. In the meantime we will continue washing our hands and taking as many precautions as we can.

Sadly, I have some staffing news to share with you all today. Schools gain and lose staff for many reasons and at times these reasons are beyond our control. Sadly, from Friday 1st April Mr Smith will be leaving us to take up a post at Together for Children (TfC). Mr Smith took the decision to resign from his post in order to explore the new opportunities presented to him at TfC as it is what he needs to do for his family at this time.

Mr Smith is an integral part of our school community and I am heart-broken that he is leaving as not only is he a much valued and respected member of staff but he brings so much fun and joy to our staff and children, both at breakfast club and in school, that we will find it difficult to envisage Willow Wood Primary School without him in it! He has worked extremely hard with both children in the school and those who have left and he will be remembered by all as someone who was able to support them in their learning but also have a laugh and a joke! We are extremely sad to see him leave but support Mr Smith in the next stage of his journey (but I hope that one day he will return to school and work with us again).

Mr Smith's role has been advertised and we expect the recruitment process to be completed in early April and a new member of staff to join us as soon after Easter as is possible. I am sure that as always you will make them very welcome and part of our community.

In addition to Mr Smith leaving there are some further changes to staffing that I need to make you aware of.

Miss Potelle was employed to cover first Mrs Kirkland and then Miss Bexley's maternity leaves. Miss Bexley gave birth to a beautiful baby girl last year and will be returning to work in school from June. However, Miss Potelle has secured a new role at St Oswald's RC Primary School in South Tyneside and will be leaving us in early May prior to Miss Bexley's return. Again, I am sure that you will join me in wishing Miss Potelle well in the next stage of her career and I am sure that she will go on to impact her new children's learning as she has your children's. Mrs Kirkland will be working in Year 1 with Miss

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Wright as we head towards the children completing their phonics assessments in June as she has previously taught Year 1 and is an expert in delivering our phonics scheme. Miss Mullen will oversee the transition as Key Stage 1 phase leader.

Miss Thompson is also leaving us at the end of April to work for South Tyneside Council. Miss Thompson has previously worked with children and families in various roles and she is returning to this career. Again, we wish her very well in her new role. Miss Thompson will continue in her role of Parent Governor so we will still see her in and around school.

Miss Staples in Nursery is also leaving us to take on a role with older children closer to her home. She also leaves us with our very best wishes and we are grateful to her for her hard work with the children in EYFS.

Miss Dixon has also decided to reduce her hours in school. I am so pleased that she has decided to stay with us for 3 days per week as she would be a great loss to Year 2 and I know the children and Miss Mullen would have missed her dreadfully. She will no longer be in school on a Thursday or Friday from April, but will be with us at the start of each week.

It may appear that we have a lot of people leaving school however many reasons factor into people's decisions to leave. These include higher salaries offered in sectors other than education, the rising costs of travel and fuel and family considerations. We would love to keep our staff community as stable as possible and on the whole we have as we welcome back staff from maternity leave etc. We have also strengthened the team further with the appointment of new lunchtime supervisors etc.

For all of the roles mentioned above, we have a recruitment process underway so will have the positions filled before the Easter holidays. We have some exciting applications and I am sure that the staff appointed will quickly become familiar to you and will bring a wealth of skills and experience to our classrooms. I look forward to introducing them to you in due course and am excited to see the impact they have on school as we continue our journey.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Robertson
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