



Cliffe (V.C.) Primary School
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Headteacher: Mrs S Hay

Wednesday, 20 April 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

It is a few months since my last letter to you and so time for an update!

As Governors we have been busy 'behind the scenes' monitoring the school and ensuring it makes the progress needed to be securely 'good'. We do this in a number of ways:

- Through visiting the school on a normal school day
- Through talking to children and parents
- By looking at children's work
- By looking at tracking data and monitoring the progress children are making
- By asking questions of staff
- By receiving reports from other professionals

We meet regularly to discuss progress and challenge the headteacher and staff to provide the best possible education for your children.

The progress we are seeing is all good and we are confident that the school is constantly improving in spite of the ever shifting landscape in education. There has always been change as education has always been a political football. In my experience in education, however, I have never seen so much change happening all at the same time. Headteachers and teachers in every school are grappling with life without levels, a new curriculum, new tests, a new Ofsted framework, academies, to name but a few. At the same time children must still be taught well and be happy at school. Stress levels of staff are not and should not be seen by parents or children but the extra workload cannot be underestimated.

As governors, we are also grappling with all the changes and trying to understand what they mean for children. Those of us outside of education find it even more difficult and so we fully understand that parents might feel less confident about their child's progress when a level no longer labels them. However, please be assured that our governor monitoring does show us that children are making good progress and standards are not slipping; rather, expectations are even higher!

As part of our monitoring today, we were privileged that it coincided with the last day of a week focused on British Values. It was wonderful to see children taking on the role of headteacher and class teachers! Claudia was very perceptive as she reviewed lessons in her role as headteacher. We observed a Y2 child teaching the class about dinosaurs. Apparently a shy child, he was confident to talk about a subject he knew well and held the attention of the whole class. In Y5/6 we were privileged to observe a lesson about the Zulu wars, again taught by a very competent and confident Y5 child. She had planned it well, prepared excellent resources and provided a worksheet on which the students could record their own research. One girl was keen to tell us what she had found out, obviously fascinated by the subject. Finally we saw the class

being divided into two groups and then a battle enactment took place in the playground. Every child was completely engaged. Similar activities were going on in the other two classes but we were unable to witness them. Apparently in Y3/4 the lesson was differentiated to 4 levels and a challenge was planned by the Y4 teacher! In YF/1 a small child taught a dance and continued with a phonics activity for the whole class. Children can constantly surprise us and we can easily underestimate what they are capable of! This was a day that will be remembered for all the right reasons and we all, as adults, need to remember that school should be just as much about having fun as learning.

I hope that you share our confidence in Cliffe Primary School. Please tell us what you think, good or bad, when you see us on 'gate duty'. Your opinions matter to us.

Yours sincerely,

Carole Middleton

Chair of Governors

On behalf of the Governing Body