



CRABTREE JUNIOR SCHOOL

CRABTREE LANE, HARPENDEN, AL5 5PU

HEADTEACHER

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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are all looking forward to the Summer holidays after another busy year at Crabtree Juniors. This last half term flies by with concerts, assemblies, leavers' parties, school trips, and open evenings. With my youngest having moved on to senior school last year I am a little removed from the day to day buzz from the children, but from a governor's vantage point I am certain they are all looking forward to, and very much deserving of, the break and the chance to recharge.

It was great to see so many parents and pupils at the recent open evening. I hope you all enjoyed the opportunity to browse all the fantastic classroom displays, to see the typical activities for your new school year and to take in the musical performances again. The open evenings only run so smoothly because of all our staff's and musical volunteers' out-of-hours hard work, and I am sure you will all join me in extending thanks to them for their efforts throughout the school year.

We are saying goodbye to several members of staff this year who have moved on to new adventures, both at new schools locally and much further afield. I joined a staff farewell lunch recently and it was great to see the bonds between members of staff whether they have been at Crabtree for two or 20 years. We offer our best wishes and our thanks to quite a roll call who have made significant contributions to the school: Rob Bishop, Tim Clifford, Pamela Doran, Suzanne Gaines, Sylvie Pinder-White, Josh Pollard, and Emily Renier. They are replaced by a full complement of teaching and support staff, who I hope you had a chance to meet at the open evening: Megan Bath, Molly Coyne, Sally Gillespie, Katie Reimann, and Carole White.

They join a very strong staff and strong systems that ensure all the children reach their expectations. We had another fantastic set of SATs results this year, testament to the hard work of all members of staff and, equally importantly, your children. The Year 6 team are at the coal face in helping your children achieve those results, but everyone plays their part. We can see that come through in the assessment data that governors review from the rest of the school, but also in how confidently the children participated in the music concert, show off their French in assemblies, compete in sports, embrace all the trips and visits, etc.

I would also like to thank you all, and the PA, for all your fundraising work and support across both schools over the last year. We are excited by the plans for the School Grounds Project and the progress being made there, and it is great to see the playground totalizer displays filling up. A big thank you to everyone who has supported PA events, run their own sponsored activities and are making voluntary contributions via our Virgin Giving page. Please do keep up the hard work. I'm planning to run a couple of marathons next Spring, so if anyone has yet to find a fundraising activity that fits then I'd be more than happy to have a running partner or two!

We are fortunate to have parents and carers so engaged in both supporting the school and your children at home. You challenge us to always do better and we wouldn't want it any other way. Thank you to the many of you who completed this year's parent survey. A presentation of the results is available on the governors' section of the school website. Overall the results were very positive with the large majority of parents responding well to the values, ethos and overall educational experience that the school provides: over 95% of you feel your child is happy and well looked after at Crabtree, and all



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said your child feels safe here. The feedback is always highly valued and helps identify areas for further development or where your experiences of what we are doing do not match up with what we were trying to achieve.

The governors consider carefully any questions we raise in the survey where more than 10% of you disagree with the idea. At the risk of focusing on the negatives, areas that we will look to address include:

- Homework: the school will be reviewing the homework policy and approach in September. After two years of the new curriculum this is a good time to take stock of how homework supports your child's progress.
- The school provides well for all abilities: the school will develop some material in September to provide examples of how we support children right across the spectrum of abilities, and to highlight how a typical "learning journey" evolves. Educational progress is not a straight line (good progress one term can be followed by what could look like stagnation the next), but the school does meet the targets set by our external education partners regarding overall progress over the four years and is proud of the pupil's success and achievements. After an extensive external review, we were also recently re-awarded our Inclusion Quality Mark. This is absolutely not an area for complacency and is an area where we continually look for improvement and are constantly held to account.
- Consultation evenings and communications about your child's progress: several useful comments were received on this topic and how we can help you get the most out of the consultation sessions. From next year, we plan to send out the reports before the consultation sessions to give you a chance to identify the key issues you would like to focus on.

I've mentioned "we the governors" a few times here and I can't close without thanking the rest of the governing body for all their hard work this year. In September, we will be recruiting for new parent governors. If you can make a little time during the day each term I can highly recommend it as a rewarding role that gives you a real insight into how the school functions and an opportunity to help shape where the school puts its priorities. It's not about being individually responsible for the success of the school and all about providing the support and challenge to make sure the school does its best by our children and our community.

And so I would like to close by wishing all those leaving Crabtree a wonderful onward journey. We wish the children in Elm and Elder much success and happiness in their new secondary schools next term and hope their experience at Crabtree has been an enjoyable and rewarding one. Our thanks go to our excellent and dedicated staff team and our wonderful pupils and parents and I wish you all a fantastic summer break.

Very best wishes



Phil Kendall