

Farthinghoe Primary School
Head Teacher Report for Farthinghoe Parish Council
March 2018

This report provides villagers with an update on the work the school has been carrying out in order to maintain our 'Outstanding status'. To drive further school improvements, a key piece of work at the start of the year has been for us to define our school values.

Farthinghoe.....where all children are valued and given the opportunity to thrive!

We are....

A Community

Unique

Caring

Resilient and able to grasp every opportunity to learn.

There have been two changes in staffing this year, the appointment of a new Deputy Head Teacher, Sharon Turner and Wendy Bowen, a teaching assistant working principally with children in Year 3 and 4. These members of staff have been welcomed into our staff team and are having a positive impact on the workings of the school.

Governors are now actively pursuing conversion of the school to Academy status. This is the most important area of school development. We have an exciting opportunity to become part of one of the highest regarded Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) in the area. We believe this would be a positive move for our school; providing security, opportunity and sustainability for the future education of our pupils.

Since we previously considered academy status in 2013 (but didn't convert) the context around us has changed. More schools locally have converted – half of state primary schools in Northamptonshire are now academies, and the same is true of primary schools within a 5 mile radius of our school. Reductions in funding for local authorities mean that central support services which we might previously have called on are now no longer available, or come at a cost. Upcoming funding changes being implemented by the Government will also impact on our income. The Governing Body of Farthinghoe Primary School therefore unanimously believes that the time is right to make a change. A lot of work has been done in looking at all the options available to us and this is, without doubt, the best one for our school. We have therefore resolved that we should pursue Academy status, as a member of The Warriner Multi Academy Trust.

Each school within The Warriner Multi Academy Trust retains its unique character whilst still having the opportunity to make a distinctive contribution to the MAT. Conversion to Academy status will be seamless from a pupil and parent perspective, with the day to day running of the school remaining unchanged. We will not change our ethos, our school uniform or our admissions criteria. All children attending the school and all staff employed here at the time of conversion will continue in the school. We will continue to have our own local governing body, including elected parents and staff, with the strong support and guidance of the Directors of the MAT.

All our classes have been fascinated by our topics this year-

- Our Village Our World
- The Second World War
- Ernest Shackleton
- Frozen Lands

To further support the progress children have made in reading, we have purchased a new set of fiction books. We have been able to do this because of donations from our generous 'School Ties' group. Currently the children are taking part in a reading challenge that not only involves extreme reading but also visiting the library.

The children are very excited about our 'new look playground': it has already been used in Maths and PE and is a great addition to the school. Sport has been key this year with a visit to the 'Snozone' to start 2018. The children were supported by an external tennis coach in the Autumn term. A gymnastic coach has been working with KS1 and KS2 and both classes have built on the skills they developed last year when the WADE coach came into school. Mr Elson, Mr Hancock and Mr Johnston helped put in a new container (PE store) at the village hall. A big thank you must go to this group as it has taken a long time to plan and action.

We now have our own blog on the school website. This has enabled the children in year 5 and 6 to record key events from the school week. Please do look at the activities that take place at the school. Road safety continues to be of high importance and in the Autumn term Mick Morris (Parish Councillor) came into school to talk to the children and they were able to share their work from road safety week. On behalf of the school I would like to thank the Parish council for their work on promoting safe driving in the village.

We are so fortunate to live in such a beautiful rural community and to have the opportunity of visiting a farm. All classes visit Greatworth farm three times a year and are able to see at first hand the changes in the seasons and how this impacts the land and livestock. We even have our own school sheep.

In the Summer term we would like to focus on Science and Maths. We will be creating opportunities for the children to use Maths outside in our outdoor classroom and the children across the school will be taking part in the **Crest Awards Scheme**- the British Science Association's flagship programme. The scheme provides Science enrichment activities to inspire and engage 5-11 year olds.

Farthinghoe Primary School is lucky to be part of such a supportive village community. We remain a very popular school and currently have 45 children at the school. Our unique character and our small class sizes enable us to offer a high adult to child ratio delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

Thank you for your continued support.

Wendy Whitehouse
Head teacher