



# Leading Our School

## A Newsletter from the Leadership

Issue 6 - July 2013

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### A Successful School Year

We are pleased with the way that the school has moved forward this year and we hope you share a sense of pride in what we have all achieved together. The first milestone saw the school being removed from an Ofsted category of concern in November, with a re-visit expected in May 2014. The Ofsted report contained many positive and encouraging comments and we have used the report to help focus the relentless programme of improvements since. Each step sees Grove Road move closer to being the school we want it to be.

Every day we see further improvements in the quality of work the children are producing and in their attitudes to learning. The qual-

ity of teaching has continued to improve with differentiation and challenge now far more consistent. The addition of Kate Kellner as Deputy Head has further supported the on-going training and development of staff.

Our Joint Annual Review Visit in March showed clearly that the school is continuing to improve—see article on page 2.

We have also put in place an ongoing programme of refurbishment to ensure that our environments for learning reflect our high expectations.

We are currently collating the responses to the 2013 Parent Survey to gauge your perspective on the improvements to date. Last

year's survey highlighted the need for improvements to homework and behaviour and we responded by focusing on these during the year. Home Learning has been transformed and further reviewed following consultation with parents and children.

Behaviour is now good with much that is outstanding. Pupils tell us they are happy in school and feel listened to.

The staff and governors will continue to use feedback from Ofsted and the Local Authority as well as parents and pupils to shape the next exciting chapter of school improvement as we aim to take the school from good to outstanding. Watch this space!

Leading Our School is a twice yearly email publication produced by the Governing Body and the school Leadership Team.

If you change your email address, please let the Office know asap to ensure that you continue receiving emails from school. You can email [admin@groveroad.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@groveroad.herts.sch.uk) or call in next time you are at school.

### Celebrating our 2013 SATs results

It's been a positive year for pupil progress: looking at our Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs results and the outcome of the Year 1 phonics screening, the majority of our results this year have exceeded last year. Our pupils have worked incredibly hard and we are very proud of all of them.

The SATs results for Year 6 have given us our first Level 6s for Maths – very well

done to those pupils, the papers were extremely challenging!

We have also seen an increased number of pupils attaining Level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths this year; in fact 100% of children in Year 6 achieved a Level 4+ in Reading and 98% in Writing! Maths is up on last year to 86% at Level 4+, with 44% at Level 5+ and 9% at Level 6.

The phonics screening shows that the percentage of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics assessment has increased from 61% in 2012 to 88% in 2013, showing evidence of the improvements in our phonics provision.

Congratulations to pupils and staff for all their hard work and we look forward to next year with confidence.

"Grove Road Primary is a good school. This judgement is based on clear evidence of improvement since the inspection."

*Pat McAteer*

*Hertfordshire Improvement Partner and Head of Primary School Effectiveness, Herts County Council*

*March 2013*



### Essential Toolkit for a TA:

- Flexibility
- Ability to remain calm under pressure
- Negotiation Skills
- Sense of Humour
- Empathy

### Pat's Wish List:

- More hours in the day!

## Continued improvement sees school now rated "good"

A continued focus on improvement within the school has resulted in it receiving an overall "good" rating in its Joint Annual Review (JARV) Inspection carried out in March.

Pat McAteer, our designated Hertfordshire Improvement Partner, undertook the inspection assisted by Sharon Sanderson, Kate Kellner and Julian Crane (Chair of Governors).

This robust inspection follows a similar format to an Ofsted inspection and tests the school's own evaluation of its progress and performance. Pat McAteer observed lessons, looked at books, reviewed the learning environment and examined the school's data and targets.

The results were really posi-

tive with the school not just receiving a "good" grading overall, but achieving this level in every individual category too, showing that improvement is consistent across the board. Here are some of the highlights from the report:

### Achievement

Based on achieving the agreed targets "it is very clear from the school's detailed tracking data that progress is now good."

### Teaching

"There is much [teaching] that is good and some that is outstanding. The proportion of good and outstanding lessons continues to grow."

### Behaviour and Safety

"Pupils' behaviour around

the school is outstanding. They care for each other and feel safe at school."

### Leadership and Management

"The impact of the work of the new Headteacher, and, since her recent arrival, the Deputy is outstanding. The two form a formidable team and have the drive and ambition to see the school become good and then outstanding. Middle leadership is developing....The governors are outstanding in equal measure for their support and challenge of the school."

### Overall Effectiveness

"Grove Road Primary is a good school. This judgement is based on clear evidence of improvement since the last inspection."

## Focus on Leadership: Pat Greenhall, Senior Teaching Assistant

Pat is an experienced Teaching Assistant who has been working at Grove Road for over 10 years. As Senior Teaching Assistant, Pat runs the weekly meetings for all TAs (Teaching Assistants) and takes responsibility for communications with the Senior Team as well as organising cover for staff who might be out on courses.

A typical day for Pat:

**Before School:** Pat arrives before 7.30 am (well before her timetable begins), puts on the coffee and checks on her team and the teachers.

**Morning:** Pat is based in the class providing a mixture of general and more specific

support for individual pupils. Pat makes assessments for the teacher and supports pupils to boost their confidence and encourage good attitudes to learning. Every pupil, no matter what their ability, benefits from the additional support and adult interaction that her presence in the classroom provides.

**Lunchtime:** Like other TAs, approximately twice a week, Pat spends lunchtime on the playground, providing valuable continuity between playtime and the normal school day.

**Afternoon:** Pat runs a programme of 1:1 interventions in Key Stage 2 to sup-

port and accelerate literacy skills. Pat uses her assessment of the children to inform her next steps and liaises with class teachers to ensure the skills being developed link with activities and expectations in the classroom. Pat encourages the children to self-assess and take ownership over their progress. The impact on the confidence as well as the development of the handwriting and spelling for children in these sessions is marked.

**After School:** Pat will find time to talk through the weekly planning with the class teacher and catch up with any other general tasks.

## Hearing the pupil voice

To give pupils the opportunity to share their opinions about changes in the school this year, on 5<sup>th</sup> July three of the school governors and Miss Kellner held sessions with children from Years 3 to 6. The questions asked focused on the behaviour policy, house system, marking of books and home learning. Pupils consistently report feeling happy and well supported in school.

All the children understand the revised behaviour policy; they know how the behaviour ladder works and find it an effective way of self-managing their behaviour. The children feel that behaviour at playtimes has improved and they enjoy the mixed-age use of playgrounds.

The introduction of the

house forums has really been embraced by the children – they like the fact that their views are sought and that they are involved in some of the decisions being made.

Marking now better informs children about how they are doing: There is a clear understanding of the pink and green marking system. Pupils commented that they now know what to do to improve their work, as well as what they have done well.

Feedback on Home Learning was also overwhelmingly positive. The children enjoy the range and choice on the grids – some said they opt for the creative options first, others said that they liked to alternate what they did!

The morning was very positive overall; the children showed that they clearly enjoy coming into school. They also feel that they could approach any member of the staff if they were worried or concerned about anything. They have given us some interesting suggestions to think about and we will be building some of these in over the next term!

The governors were most impressed by the quality of discussion and insight the children showed. Their mature attitude to discussing their learning and suggestions such as ways to ensure that parents see the nominations in the 'Book of Celebration' were a pleasure to listen to.



## How they enjoyed their first taste of leadership - comments from our outgoing House Captains

All the House Captains have really enjoyed the challenge of running the forums and said they learnt lots of new skills like organisation and time keeping. They valued the opportunity to be involved in school decisions, e.g. which school playground equipment to purchase.

They really enjoyed putting ideas forward for things like sports day and fundraising events and liked that they had a say on what the money should be spent on.

One of the key things they got from the role was growing in confidence which will stand them in good stead

for the future.

They have certainly set the bar high for the incoming House Captains and we wish them every success in



the future. Next year's House Captains have already been elected and will start in their new roles in September. We hope they enjoy the experience.

### Comments:

"I take pride in helping the younger ones at playtime."

"I've become more independent which helps the move to secondary school."

"Small children come up to us for help."

"I enjoyed running the forums."

"I've gained confidence."

"I liked working together."

## Get in Touch

Do you have something you would like to discuss further or would like us to include in future issues of this newsletter? Please contact us on:

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*If you don't wish to email, please call the school office on 01442 822056 and leave a message. We will call you back as soon as possible.*

## Governor News

At the end of this academic year we say goodbye to two governors, Neil Smith and Kathryn Pezet. Neil has been a parent governor for 4 years and has been a member of the Community and Communications Committee. He has been very visible and enthusiastic in his support for the school and we thank him for his contributions. Kathryn has been a governor for 10 years and has been a committee chair for most of this time. Initially a parent governor, she has latterly served as a community governor and has been involved in numerous projects and initiatives including writing the school prospectus, redesigning the website, recruiting our new Head and Deputy Head and producing this newsletter. She has now passed on the position of Chair of the Community and Communications Committee to Paula Rawlinson.

## Do you have something to give?

Our lively and challenging Governing Body is always on the look out for enthusiastic members to join the team. We need people from all backgrounds to build a balanced set of skills, so please don't worry if you're not an accountant! From September there will be a vacancy for a parent governor and a community governor. If you think you can spare some time and would like to find out more about what is involved and how you could contribute, please contact: [governors@groveroad.herts.sch.uk](mailto:governors@groveroad.herts.sch.uk) or leave a message with the office and someone will call you.

## Governors' Creative Summer Holiday Challenge

## Tring in Pictures



The 2013 holiday challenge comes from the governors. They will be judging and awarding house points to each entry for creativity, participation and originality. They are also planning to select some of the very best entries to create a calendar.

The challenge is open to all years and the task is the same; to capture an image of Tring, either as a photograph, drawing, painting or collage or any combination of these art forms. You can also use electronic devices to enhance your image if you so wish. All finished

entries must be submitted in hard copy (we cannot accept emails) and it must be A4 in size. The closing date for entries is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

Full details and a submission form will be sent out in a letter during the last week of term and will also be available on the website in the home learning section.

Entries can be made in one of four categories:

**1. Working Tring** – pictures that capture the busy working life of Tring.

**2. Historic Tring** – pictures that capture the age and history of Tring and its buildings.

**3. Living Tring** – pictures that capture the flowers, animals, scenery or agriculture in Tring.

**4. Community Tring** – pictures that capture the busy and thriving community in Tring.

*Let your imagination and creative skills run wild. We can't wait to see your pictures!*

Good luck and we hope you all have a lovely summer.