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Issue 2

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is the second newsletter from the newly appointed IEB at St Mark's C of E Primary School. It is important to us that you are updated with the changes that have been made over the last few weeks to improve the learning opportunities for your child. Our formal Governing Board meeting was held on 28th October and the minutes of Part 1 will be published very soon on the school website. It is good to know that many of you view these and take an immense interest in the future of the school.

The school team have been working very closely with the IEB to maximise the school resources, both human and material to impact on learning outcomes. We would like to thank everyone in the school for working in partnership with us and especially pass on a big thank you to the pupils who have spoken to us on an informal basis about their time in school. Consequently, we have found evidence that there are significant improvements being made in many areas of learning and behaviour.

Last half term teachers and support staff participated in training on Safeguarding, Behaviour Management, Special Needs education and Mathematics. There have been several class organisational changes and these have helped to secure single age classes wherever possible and ensure that Acorn children have been integrated back into their classes with their peers. Staff have been present in the playground before school to answer any queries or concerns about the changes and of course Mrs Harding is also available. Mr Dixon from CDAT the Academy group has visited the school to see the changes in operation and commented on how calm and focussed the learning environment felt.

Mrs Harding and Mr Henderson have been undertaking regular learning walks around the school to monitor the quality of teaching and learning for your child. They have also monitored behaviour and there has been positive feedback from pupils. Here are some of the comments they made:

"Children are improving their learning attitudes – in my class people are working together and helping each other"

"The ladder helps because we people don't want to get to red"

"I can get on better with my work – there's no distractions"

"My behaviour has definitely improved and the ladder helps"

"I don't want a text to go home to say I've been on red"

"The Platinum text is really good – my mum loves it"

“School feels calmer”

“If someone gets told off I think they now think that people won’t like them as much”

“Parents find everything out now”

“All adults are firmer”

“We’ll get a better education now”

It’s pleasing to listen to pupils’ opinions on the recent changes.

The entrance to the school has been refreshed and we want to continue to promote the Christian identity of the school. Teachers will be visiting other settings to see good practice in developing school displays and the Christian message. We look forward to Christmas as an opportunity to really focus on this.

It is important for us to inform you about the school staffing to date. Mrs Whitehead continues to be absent and we send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery. Her responsibilities have been taken over by Mrs Harding who is now appointed as Acting Head Teacher. Mrs Hartley the School Business Manager will be taking up a new position in Manchester and her responsibilities will be taken over by the new temporary appointment of Mrs Hill, who is extremely experienced in school business management. As a Governing Body we would like to thank Mrs Hartley for her dedication to the school for over nine years and recognise that many of you, as carers, will have met her in your time at our school and appreciate her services. We wish her well in her new venture.

Finally, you need to be aware of our focus for this second half term. The school has adopted a new mathematics scheme called Power Maths and in late November, as Governors, we will be monitoring the impact of this scheme on pupils’ learning. We will be involving ourselves in Mathematics lessons, looking at pupil work books, talking to a wide range of pupils and meeting with the Mathematics Subject Leader. We will also be regular visitors to the school to participate in Christmas celebrations. From these visits we can also monitor the continuing improvement in pupil behaviour and therefore learning.

Thank you for supporting the school at this time of change.

Carol Williams

Chair of Interim Executive Board