

**Witnesham Primary School -Report to the Parish Council
AGM
Wednesday 19th April 2017**

I am pleased to write a report on the activities of the school over the last year.

As of today we have 105 pupils on our register – which means that our school is at maximum PAN. We continue to accommodate 4 mixed aged classes with some additional teaching areas for smaller group support but as always space is limited with the possibility of us losing our Class 5 teaching area when the old Equipment Maintenance Unit is demolished.

We saw the retirement of Mrs Joy Chambers at the end of the last academic year and the appointment of a newly qualified teacher Miss Tabcart. Our staff reflects a good balance of younger members with us more experienced teachers (I won't say old!) allowing new initiatives and experience to enhance the curriculum.

Last October Ofsted inspected our school almost 5 years to the day since the previous inspection. Despite many changes to the Ofsted Framework our school remains a 'good' school with our supportive parents, astute governors and well behaved children.

One area in particular was recognised by Ofsted and that was the love of reading; this was reflected in the standard of reading that our children achieve in national tests.

I had a letter recently from Nick Gibb the Minister of State for School Standards in which he says,

“Dear Mrs Hubbard-Whitehead

I would like to congratulate you, your staff and your pupils for the very high standard that pupils in Witnesham Primary School have achieved in reading in the 2016 key stage 2 assessments.

Your school's results show that 100 percent of your pupils reached or exceeded the expected standard in reading at the end of key stage 2, this means that your school is in the top 1% of primary schools in England for achievement in reading.

Thank you for your hard work and professionalism in producing such high standards and congratulations again to you and your staff for all you have achieved.”

I am very proud to say that we have a wonderful team of reading Mums who come into school on a regular basis to support children with their reading and reading activities.

Education is never very far away from the Headlines; we have felt the impact of cuts in real terms to our budget with increases in the cost of insurances, fuel, staff salaries, support service costs to name but a few. But having financially astute Governors and an excellent Federation Bursar we are still able to provide a high quality of education for our children despite Suffolk remaining as one of the lowest funded councils in the country.

Governors have for some time now been exploring the best options for the future of our school both to improve the educational opportunities and experience for pupils, but also to ensure future sustainability. This has included the option of joining a local Multi Academy Trust. A MAT is a group of schools working together outside of the control of the Local Authority, who collaborate with each other for the benefit of the whole. Of course Witnesham and Otley Primaries have already been working this way for many years and a MAT is a natural extension of our already very successful Federation.

Our 15 Y6 pupils will be moving to their new schools in July – as always we will be feeding into a number of High Schools which this year are Debenham, Farlingaye, Stowmarket High, Northgate, The Ipswich High School and Claydon. All pupils will take advantage of the induction visits that the High Schools organise.

We have just heard that we will be receiving a full year group – 15 pupils - of new Reception children for this coming September. As a school we were oversubscribed once again with 23 families putting Witnesham Primary as their first choice of school for their child.

I will finish with a quote from our Ofsted Report:
‘One of the many comments from parents was that Witnesham School has nurtured our children to love school and to feel confident about themselves – our inspection evidence confirms this to be so’.

Jan Hubbard-Whitehead - Headteacher