



## **Blewbury Endowed C of E Primary School**

Westbrook Street, Blewbury, Didcot, Oxon. OX11 9QB

Telephone: (01235) 850411

**Interim Headteacher:** Miss Becky Costello BA Hons

**Chair of Interim Executive Board:** Mr. Kevin Moyes

**Inspiring Minds Through Outstanding Opportunities**

*Appreciation, Community, Forgiveness and Perseverance*

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Dear Blewbury School Community Members,

We hope you've all had a great start to the new term – or to the Autumn more generally if you're a community member not quite directly linked to the school year in that way! You might recall that following the Spring Ofsted inspection the school had a new panel of governors appointed – an interim executive board, or IEB to give it its formal title. Our job as an IEB is to help drive improvement to get the school back on track, as quickly as possible, supporting and challenging the leadership.

The IEB can't do this on its own... it is a job for the whole community: teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, volunteers, parents, cooks, cleaners, village friends and more. Already lots of things have been happening – in a really good way – so we thought you'd like an update. For those of you not able to attend the community meeting on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September we are writing to update you on the main issues that were addressed at that meeting.

The school remains on track to move from Oxfordshire County Council's control and convert to an Academy. This is probably going to happen in early December, but there's a lot of paperwork, so we'll keep you updated.

The school is joining a "Multi Academy Trust" or a "MAT" called the Oxfordshire Diocesan Schools Trust (or ODST). Representatives of it, and a governor and a head from one of its current stable of schools came to the meeting to tell us more. ODST is a large and successful multi-academy trust with 32 academy schools. It's split up into "hubs" and Blewbury will be joining the Southern Arc ODST hub of schools. This includes South Moreton and the Hendreds, Grove, Kidmore End, Northbourne in Didcot, and Fir Tree Junior School and St Nicholas Infants School, which are both in Wallingford. Joining this network enables new opportunities for support and training from the other schools and the central MAT team.

Prior to the date of actual incorporation the school is already receiving much support from ODST in relation to staff development opportunities, and help with the legal processes involved in becoming an academy. The meeting last week heard from the Headteacher and Chair of Governors from Kidmore End Church of England Primary School, which is already a member of the Southern Arc ODST Hub. They shared their very positive experience of joining ODST two years ago and were able to illustrate this with the benefits to their pupils and staff. They talked about how their school had retained all of its former character whilst being given access to highly supportive advice and expertise through the ODST staff. They have been supported through both their transition to becoming an academy, and in building up the quality of teaching and learning within their school. There was a question about whether the incoming academy status will lead to a change in the Church ethos of the school. The ODST representatives stressed that this would not be the case and reassured everyone that the ethos of the school will be under the control of the governors just as it is now, with no interference from ODST.

Ahead of Blewbury School joining ODST though, there's a vast amount going on in the school itself – not least an inhumanly impressive effort from Miss Becky Costello – the Interim Headteacher and her team – to produce a new curriculum over the summer, which promises to engage and inspire learning across the school.



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You can find details of this new curriculum on the school [website](#)... take a look as there is a lot of other great stuff on there too, such as advice on how to help your children learn, and a wealth of information about the school.

Those who are interested can also take a look at the minutes of our IEB meetings. They are posted on the [website](#) each month – with the most recent being from July's meeting. A quick read will give you a sense of the sort of questions we're raising behind the scenes to scrutinise and hold school leadership team to account.

Our most recent IEB meeting was at the start of term, and quite an important issue came up, with which parents can give us a big help (we did say that everyone has a role in this). **FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME** – excuse the bold type – in case you are skim reading this, this should make it stand out! The school needs this not to be happening because it impacts significantly on the learning of children - As a parent, you can prepare your child for a lifetime of success by making regular school attendance a priority. We know you'll want to help with this.

Just like a lot of parents and friends of the school have been helping with all sorts of things over the summer. **A MASSIVE THANK-YOU to everyone for that support, and for the great feedback on improvements in the school.**

Numerous visitors to the school have commented on the changes – in a good way. Not least the dramatic improvements in pupil behaviour and conduct. It is clear that staff morale is on the up too – so do feel free to boost that further by telling teachers and staff if you like the things they are doing. As well as that you could consider writing to the IEB, so we know you are pleased too. Or if you have concerns about anything, we can listen to that feedback too... though in the first instance – if appropriate, raise it with a teacher or the Head.

Speaking of feedback, Ofsted returned a couple of weeks ago for a "monitoring visit." Its commentary on the change it witnessed will be with us very soon, and will be shared once it has been finalised.

There will be more meetings for you – hopefully at least once every term, in addition to all of the updates being supplied through the weekly school newsletters and (greatly improved) school website.

Please contact us if you have further questions or comments arising from this update, as we are always keen to hear from the wider school community about what is happening in our highly valued village school.

The IEB is very pleased with the progress which is being made in school and can confirm that the school is on track and hitting the agreed milestones detailed in the school development plan (which has been set to map our journey to good and beyond).

It has been said that 'it takes a whole village to educate a child' and we are really keen to have the full support of the Blewbury community as we offer our pupils the best possible educational experiences that can be provided for them.

Best Wishes,

**The Interim Executive Board**