

Hawthorn Community Primary School

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Headteachers' Review – Summer 2018

It only seems a short time ago that I was writing the annual review for last summer – time has flown by so quickly! Our school continues to be a happy place, where the children generally feel safe and secure. The great majority of our children are caring, enthusiastic, well-motivated, well-behaved and responsible.

This year has been as busy and eventful, and hopefully you will agree, as successful as others. We have reviewed our curriculum, the organisation of the school and the educational experience for the children and have implemented a number of necessary changes whilst maintaining the traditional values and celebrations that are so much a part of Hawthorn. We have continued to provide your children with a broad and varied curriculum – something we believe is important for every child in primary education, but during this year have extended our extra-curricular opportunities. I still believe that Hawthorn is a special place where children have the opportunity to thrive in a supportive and caring atmosphere and where the staff work hard to maintain the school ethos and provide opportunities for all children to be successful and reach their full potential.

Each term hosts its own unique celebrations and events and children across the school have enjoyed a wide variety of opportunities to support their learning, including off-site educational visits and visitors into the school – both of which help to extend the children's learning and inspire their enthusiasm. Such events are the things that the children remember most about their school days and we hope to continue to bring learning to life in this way during the next academic year.

During the summer term some of our Key Stage 2 children had the opportunity to go on a residential trip to the Isle of Wight where they had a wonderful experience. Such visits allow children to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and the chance to learn new skills in a different setting, and we have already made plans for a similar visit for the year 5 and 6 children during the next academic year.

Judgements about school are often based on statistics and particularly about the results obtained by the children in their end of Key Stage SATs in English and Maths, rather than looking at the school experience as a whole. We will of course continue to work hard to prepare the children in the best way that we can for their end of key stage SATs, as this is how we will be judged by OFSTED; but we are also mindful of the values that we hold dear which are not so easily measured by statistics, but which we feel are equally as important.

We were very pleased to introduce hot meals into school at the start of this year, and although this was initially just for our EYFS and KS1 children, it was wonderful to extend this to our KS2 children after Christmas. We have also worked hard to develop the playground area following the closure and removal of our Playschool over last summer. Although we were very sorry to lose this facility, the children have really appreciated the extra space in the playground, particularly following the redevelopment work that was undertaken by volunteers from Siemens during the May half term break.

This year we have again been part of the Kettering Schools Sports Partnership, and have tried to take part in as many tournaments and events as possible. Every child in Key Stage 2 has had the opportunity to participate in at least one of these events, and it is lovely to hear about how the children always compete enthusiastically, and with a great sense of fair play and teamwork. We hope that next year the children will continue to be provided with these sporting opportunities and that they will continue to represent our school so well. This year we have also introduced the Golden Mile initiative into school and this is something that the children have really embraced – working hard each week to try to better their own individual performance. Again it has been lovely to hear about how supportive of each other the children are and how keen they are to celebrate, not only their own successes but also the achievements of other members of their class. This is one of the things that makes Hawthorn such a special place.

We have also had a busy year on the performing arts front, with the usual Christmas festivities both in school and at local churches, but also with our first end of year performance by our Key stage 1 children and a lovely leavers assembly delivered by our year 6 children. For the first year we held a 'Celebration of Hawthorn's Musical Talent' during the last week of term, where our two choirs were able to entertain us and there were performances by musical groups and soloists. During the year some of the children have participated in the Kettering and District Eisteddfod, either as soloists or in group performances and our choir has performed at many venues locally and was also invited to attend the 'Music for Youth' event in Birmingham once again. Our year 4 children had the opportunity to take part in a 10-week samba drumming programme delivered by NMPAT, and all of the children performed in either our EYFS and KS1 May Day celebrations or the KS2 Midsummer Dancing event, where Mrs Dix's 'Hawthorn Horrors' were once again in attendance.

During this year we have seen a number of staff changes: some staff have left the school to take on new roles and others have joined the Hawthorn team. We welcomed Miss Peden at the start of the academic year who took on a teaching role in Pears class; and we have also been joined by a number of new teaching assistants – Miss Marshall, Mrs Harriman and Mrs Singodia who have become valued members of the team; and two new lunchtime supervisors – Mrs Brudenell and Mrs Michael. Miss Shipley was welcomed back from her maternity leave after the Christmas break and rejoined Cherries class, and we have also worked with a number of regular supply teachers throughout the year – Mrs Deady, Mrs LeTouche Mayers and Mrs Brookes.

A number of staff have left us this year to take on new roles – Mrs Pritchard, our school bursar left to move up to Lancashire; a number of our teaching assistants, Mrs Reynolds, Mrs Bains and Mrs Nevett have either moved on to new roles or are leaving us at the end of this term; Mrs Stone will be leaving her role as the KS2 lunch server and a cleaner at the end of term; and Miss Threadgold will be leaving her post as a lunchtime supervisor, although she will continue to be involved with our breakfast and after school club. We have also said temporary 'goodbyes' to Mrs Corney and Mrs Syree, who are both currently on maternity leave and who we look forward to welcoming back to school during the next academic year. We are also looking forward to seeing Mrs Park back in school in September, following her long-term absence.

I would like to thank all of my colleagues for their on-going hard work, support and enthusiasm. Hawthorn continues to be a happy school and this is because of the team within it and their hard work and dedication. I do not usually single out individuals here, as every member of staff has an important role to play in ensuring that Hawthorn continues to be a happy place to work and learn; but I would like to say special 'thank yous' to a number of people. To Mrs Aitken in our school office who has been doing the job of two people since the departure of Mrs Pritchard; to Mrs Billingham who has been balancing the role of Deputy Headteacher with being a class teacher in Cherries class for the whole of this year; and to Miss York, our SENDCo, who has stepped into the breach in Rowans class to cover for the long-term absence of their teacher; thank you all for your commitment and hard work during this year.

Although this year we are not expecting any new teachers to join our staff in September, the departure of other support staff means that we will be welcoming a number of new members to the Hawthorn team. Mrs Jo Marshall will become our new school bursar – some of you may have met her already as she has been into school on a number of occasions since the departure of Mrs Pritchard to keep things 'ticking over'; and Miss Sarah Bellamy and Miss Lauren Bell will be joining our upper key stage 2 team as teaching assistants.

The Breakfast, After School Club and Holiday Playscheme continues to provide 'wrap around care' for those parents who need it. I would like to thank Mrs O'Key, our Leader and all of her staff for the hard work that they put into making the setting so successful. They provide a valuable service for the parents of children in our school and in the wider community.

Our 'Parents and Friends Association' have had another very busy year providing additional opportunities for the children such as fun nights and film evenings and making a valuable financial contribution to the school by allowing us to purchase those little extras that make the children's learning more memorable. I would like to thank the group for their continued financial support and enthusiasm in trying to make Hawthorn a better place for the children. A group like this however, cannot continue to be successful without new people coming forward to offer their time and support. The PFA AGM will take place on 10th October, please come along to find out more about the group and how you can help to keep their valuable work going.

The Parent Forum Group also continues to meet on a termly basis, working to support school improvement, not through fund-raising, but by giving up their time, enthusiasm and experience to promote the development of teaching and learning and to improve the educational experience for children at the school. It was through their efforts that we have introduced the Golden Mile; but they have considered ways to improve problems with parking around the school; and have also discussed homework, home-school communication, how the school manages children's attendance and the school's behaviour policy. Again, this is another group that needs your support to operate effectively and I know that the group would appreciate the input of more parents, so please watch out in the new academic year for details of their next meeting.

I am also grateful to the members of the Governing Body, who have continued to provide support and challenge to the school. Although we have not received the anticipated HMI visits which were promised after our last OFSTED Inspection, the school and Governors have continued to work hard to address the issues that were raised at this time, and we look forward to the next OFSTED visit to show how the school has improved.

The end of the academic year is always tinged with sadness, as it marks the 'end of the line' for some children as they will be moving on to new schools. This year 45 children from year 6 will be leaving us to begin the next stage of their education. I believe that they are well-prepared for this step and I am grateful for their contribution to Hawthorn over the last 7 years. I hope that they have some happy memories of their time spent at the school and that they will come back to see us to tell us how they are getting on at their new schools.

In September 42 children will be joining us in our two Reception classes and they are destined to leave the school in July 2025. I am sure that there will be many changes in education between now and then, but if Hawthorn can continue to produce children who are happy, well-motivated and enthusiastic in their learning, then it will have done its job well!

Finally, I would like to thank you as parents and carers for your continued support during this year. Hawthorn is a 'community' school and everyone in this community has a vital part to play in ensuring that the school is a happy and successful place. It is particularly important that there is a strong partnership between the school and home, so that we can all work together to ensure that Hawthorn provides our children with the opportunities to thrive and achieve their full potential, whether that be academically, in the creative arts or on the sporting front.

I hope that the sun continues to shine on us during the break and that you enjoy a restful summer, and I look forward to welcoming most of you back in September, ready to begin another Hawthorn Year.



Julie Clubley Headteacher