



*'working and growing together'*

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Headteacher: Mrs Susan Harrison  
Acting Headteacher: Mr Paul Quarry

15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents / carers,

Well, this year certainly appears to have started as last year ended and yesterday threw another challenge for us to deal with in a great deal of snow in a very short space of time. We apologise for the inconvenience of having to close yesterday at extremely short notice and remain closed today. Unfortunately, some staff had to abandon cars on the way home and for some, their usual 20-30 minute journeys to work took 3 – 4 hours. These factors, along with the experiences of driving home by other members of staff and predicted freezing temperatures overnight led us to believe we had no real option but for school to remain closed. The fact that we now are able to offer remote learning means that we were still able to continue educating despite the closure. Thank you for your understanding with regards to this.

This week, I realise that you have also had to contend with the sad news about Mrs Harrison. I think it only fitting that this week's newsletter is mainly dedicated to her and acknowledges the dedication she gave to the wonderful school that your children attend within the community I know she cares so much about.

#### **MESSAGE FROM MATTHEW HOLLAND (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS)**

It is with great sadness that the Governing Board has had to accept, due to ill health, the resignation of Mrs Harrison. She has been a part of Fitzwilliam for as long as many will remember, first as a newly qualified teacher and then as Head Teacher.

It will be a big loss to the school community saying farewell to such an outstanding leader. Mrs Harrison has led the school in an exemplary manner constantly driving improvement for the children who attend Fitzwilliam Primary School. She has overseen successfully the biggest change in the school's history - academisation to join the Inspire Multi Academy Trust.

The Governing Body would like to sincerely thank Mrs Harrison for her outstanding leadership and 28 years of dedicated service to Fitzwilliam.

Mrs Harrison will be sadly missed as a valued colleague, supportive friend and inspirational leader. The Governing Board would like to wish Mrs Harrison a long and happy retirement and once again thank her for her exemplary service to Fitzwilliam.

The Governing Board would also like to thank the Inspire Multi Academy Trust for the support they have offered and continue to offer both Mrs Harrison and school over the past year. From Ofsted Inspections to global pandemics they are always there to help, advise and support school.

The search to find a successor will be an arduous task, someone to continue Mrs Harrison's legacy of always striving for continued improvement. We hope to have more information on this before the half term break. Please be reassured Mr Quarry will continue in his role as acting headteacher until a successor is appointed.

#### **MRS HARRISON - A MESSAGE FROM MR QUARRY**

I can only imagine that the news in the letter sent out on Tuesday caused great sadness for you all as it did for us as a staff. For many of us in school, Mrs Harrison has been a mainstay. She dedicated every day of her working life to the community and school of Fitzwilliam from the day she started teaching. Her talents and skills, not only for teaching but also for being a leader, were recognised early and she became the Deputy-Headteacher of school early in her career. This is the role she held when I first met her when I attended my interview at Fitzwilliam back in April of 1999. Having left the interview convinced I would not get the job, partly because the other candidates seemed far more knowledgeable and impressive than me and partly because of my badly fitting suit that made me look more like a banker than a teacher, I was surprised to find that I was offered the job. I of course accepted. I like to think that one of the panel who saw some of my potential during that interview was Mrs Harrison. I am sure it was because for the next twenty years she proved, and still proves, to be a fantastic mentor to me, always



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championing, supporting and showing faith in me. No matter what the new strategy or idea I wanted to try in the classroom or as a way of leading my subjects, she always showed an unwavering belief in what I said and wanted to achieve. This is the very same way she treated your children on a daily basis, day in and day out for 28 years. Dedication in the truest sense of the word.

Fairly early in my career, Mrs Harrison was deservedly appointed Headteacher and given the opportunity to lead the school forwards and have a greater influence on the vision and ethos of Fitzwilliam Primary School. Shortly after this, I was appointed to the role of Deputy-Headteacher and again able to benefit from the leadership skills that she possesses.

Mrs Harrison inherited a successful school but through her leadership she has left school in a far greater position than when she took over the role of Headteacher. Many of the normal day-to-day procedures and aspects of school life that help your children to thrive and keep them physically and mentally safe, she put in place. She always communicated clearly what she wanted and expected from us as a staff and gave us the confidence to deliver this in the classroom and around the school.

She also gave your children a voice. She created and led a school council which listened to their ideas and showed them that their opinions are as important and highly valued as the 'grown-ups'. This led to changes in school dinners, PE kit, football nets being provided and even the colour of the toilets! More recently, she appointed children to become ambassadors for subjects and they would be trusted to explore the school for evidence of their subject, take photos of work and displays and speak with the teachers leading their subjects. Again, she showed faith and belief in their ability to do this and let them have a go. Children respond greatly when they are given responsibility and Mrs Harrison gave them this in bucket loads. They became school councillors, some children even developed the skills to chair the meetings themselves. They became merit leaders, supervising their teams in assemblies, this then progressed to the oldest children in school collecting and leading younger children to these whole school event. They became play leaders, ensuring that children outside always had appropriate equipment and someone to play with. They became anti-bullying ambassadors who would promote friendship and positive messages around school. We had office administrators, children leading visitors on tours of school and librarians too. We even had panels of children trusted to interview teachers and the children have been fantastic at all of these jobs. To do so though, they needed to be given the opportunities and Mrs Harrison created these for them. She even continued this for some in their adulthood. On our staff now, we have past pupils in roles as teachers, teaching assistants, office administrators and premises managers. Opportunities given and belief in ability at the heart of these decisions again.

As she mentioned in her letter to you all, Mrs Harrison spent all 28 years of her career at Fitzwilliam Primary School. She has led school successfully through numerous OFSTED inspections, never quite achieving the Outstanding grade from OFSTED but everyone in our school feels that under her leadership we have created an outstanding school (even if OFSTED haven't agreed yet) – I know that many of you reading this agree. She also led us through academisation. During this process, she visited and held discussions with several different Multi-Academy Trusts and it would have been easy to join one of the bigger names in terms of academies. However, Mrs Harrison was determined that we would only become an academy when we found the right trust for the school and the children within it. She was passionate about joining a trust that would allow school to keep the very things that made us successful but that would support us and drive us forwards to become even better. She found that in the Inspire Multi-Academy Trust and they were as keen to work with Mrs Harrison as she was to work with them – that is due to the reputation that she had as one of the most respected headteachers in the area.

Mrs Harrison is not the only staff member to have started their careers at Fitzwilliam and still be here. Myself and Mr Downes both fall into the same category but there are also many others amongst the school staff – too many to name. Whilst I cannot speak on their behalves, one of the questions I often get asked is why I am still at the same school that I began teaching at all those years ago. The main reason for that is working for Mrs Harrison and being part of the staff team she had built – it is unique and I know I would not find that anywhere else. I know many of the staff who have joined the school and also never left also feel this way. This staff team has been carefully created by Mrs Harrison over time to achieve the best for the children



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of Fitzwilliam and it is a credit to her that even in her absence, over the past year, we have all been able to pull together and use the skills and knowledge that she has instilled in us to ensure that school continues to run as smoothly as possible – no matter what has been thrown at us (and there have been a fair few things in the last twelve months). I do know that more than anything, she would have wanted to be at the forefront, leading school through this most challenging of years and it has been incredibly difficult for her not being able to play an active role throughout this time but I also know she has been thinking of school and everyone involved with it wishing she could help us more and lead us again – she would have loved the challenge and especially creating the timetables and rotas.

Having given so much of her life to the families of Fitzwilliam and helping others achieve their goals and aspirations, now she has been forced, by illness, to end her successful career early and must focus on herself for a change, making sure that she continues to receive the treatment and rehabilitation that she needs. We will remain in close contact with Mrs Harrison and let her know how school and your children are getting on. For all of you who have forwarded messages to me for her, these have been passed on and I know she will appreciate your kind words and thanks. If any of you want to send any messages please do and I will forward these also. I think it is telling, that some of these messages are from parents who were once pupils at our school and still say that she is the best teacher and Headteacher they ever had. She certainly was the best 'boss' I have had but leaves school as friend more than a colleague, not just to me but all of the staff, and it has saddened us all greatly that she has needed to leave her post.

It is an impossible task summing up the significant contribution and positive influence that Mrs Harrison has made to the school, the staff, pupils and families within it and the community of Fitzwilliam itself. I hope these words come close to doing her justice.

Paul Quarry  
(Mrs Harrison's proud Deputy)

#### **OTHER NEWS**

#### **FSM VOUCHERS**

We sent a letter out to parents and carers the other day regarding FSM vouchers. Just to clarify that the voucher scheme starts again on Monday but this is the first day we will be able to try to log on to the portal and order vouchers. With the problems encountered last time, we are expecting that this will mean the vouchers themselves will not be issued on Monday itself. In fact, schools will be allowed access to the portal on a staggered basis so it may be Wednesday before we can order these vouchers. We would ask for patience with this because it is run and managed by Edenred, not ourselves. We are currently under increased pressure to make and reply to an unprecedented number of calls and e:mails so please refrain from contacting us regarding FSM and instead keep an eye out for our communications via e:mail, text or Twitter. We will keep you updated as we ourselves get information and hope that the transition to the voucher system is much smoother than last lockdown.

#### **REMOTE LEARNING AND REQUEST FOR PAPER PACKS**

In the past week, we have seen an increase in the number of parents and carers requesting paper packs of resources to support remote learning. The increased demand for these is causing issues in school now so we would ask that you only ask for these if you absolutely need them and are unable to access the remote learning online.

We are unable to produce paper packs of resources for all lessons for the week ahead early in the week. The reason for this is that teachers may not have all resources ready for Friday's lessons, for example, on a Monday or Tuesday with the demands of the ways they are needing to work currently. This is more achievable to have the pack of resources ready for collection on a Friday but means that pupils will be working a week behind those in school which is not ideal.



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If children are able to access Seesaw and Teams, they should be able to see the work set by the teacher and then try their best to complete, without the paper packs.

If you need more exercise books and or resources such as pencils and pens, please contact school and we will be happy to provide these for you to help you and your children. **You do have the right to request paper packs but we would urge you only to do so where you are unable to access the remote learning at all.** Where this is the case, we are working hard to distribute our devices to families to help you and we also will be able to loan routers and dongles, as well as register you for extra free data for mobile devices if these would help you to gain the access to our remote learning package in place.

We have already taken into account responses to the surveys we sent out earlier in the term and are ordered accordingly but if you do require routers, dongles or data packages for your mobile devices, please contact the school office to make them aware and we can apply on your behalf. This does need to be done through school.

### Safeguarding

Please be aware of how long children spend on devices during the holidays and monitor their use.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/need-help>

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/schools-esafety/primary/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/tiktok/>

### Other useful links:

<https://parentinfo.org> - resources and guidance for parents on a wealth of subjects

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/> - guidance about popular apps, games and networks children may be accessing

<https://www.starwakefield.org.uk/> - resources and support to help deal with bereavement

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/> - resources to help with mental health and wellbeing

<https://youngminds.org.uk/> - Young Minds

<https://wf-i-can.co.uk/> - Online resources for children and young people in Wakefield with mental health and wellbeing

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/> - NSPCC

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/> - website for safer sleep for babies

[www.iconcope.org](http://www.iconcope.org) – website offering support around normal infant crying and how to cope / manage this

### Useful Numbers

**YOUNG MINDS PARENTS HELPLINE:** 0808 8025544

**CHILD LINE** - Help for adults concerned about a child call us on 0808 800 5000

**CHILD LINE** - Help for children and young people call Childline on 0800 1111

**NHS** - For urgent medical help – use the NHS 111 online service, or call 111 if you're unable to get help online.

**NHS** - For life-threatening emergencies – call 999 for an ambulance.

**POLICE** – 101 for non-emergencies or 999 in an emergency

**REFUGE** – Call 0808 2000 247 for support from the National Domestic Abuse Helpline

**NORMANTON FOOD BANK** - 01924 895634 or 07307 189851



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### COVID19 Symptoms At Home Flow Chart

