



BARWELL INFANT SCHOOL



Thursday 17th December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Childminders,

As you know from Miss Moreton's letters, I shall be leaving Brilliant Barwell Infant School at the end of this term. Due to the staggered timings and separate gates, it's been very strange not seeing most of you this term and, before I leave, I just wanted to take the chance to say a few words.

I came to Barwell Infant School over six years ago after my sister (who was working here as a dinner lady and whose own children had attended the school) rang me and insisted that I apply for the Deputy Headteacher post. She described what a loving and caring school it is, what good people the families are, and how the staff are true to the motto "Children First!" She was right on all counts – and it has been a pleasure to become part of your community.

Life at Barwell Infants has certainly never been dull, and I shall look back over my time here with lots of fond memories. One of my proudest moments has to be the last Ofsted inspection that I undertook with Mrs Carey. Prior to visiting, the inspectors had formed a judgement of our school based on data alone – a judgement which Team Barwell did not agree with. After two gruelling days, the inspectors agreed that their initial judgements had been harsh; and praised us for our wonderful, nurturing approach – an approach that recognises that every child is uniquely talented, and puts their wellbeing at the centre of all decisions. The inspectors concluded by praising Mrs Carey and I for our in-depth knowledge and understanding of the families we serve, and our tenacity and determination in fighting to achieve the right outcomes for our children, families and staff. This has always been my goal, and I am proud of what Team Barwell have achieved during my time here.

My tenacity and determination were certainly put to the test last year. After unexpectedly finding myself in the role of Acting Headteacher, I soon found myself leading the school in a global pandemic. I will always be thankful for the commitment, dedication and compassion of our team during this time; and for the many (almost daily) messages of support that I received from parents. I may have been keeping the school going at that time, but it's true to say that you were keeping me going.

Looking back, it has been an absolute pleasure to teach your children over the last six years. They are kind, brave, adventurous and hilarious – all in equal measure. Your children have always been the school's greatest asset, and it has been a privilege to help them and to watch them learn and grow. I feel so lucky that I have been able to play a small part in their lives; and I know that they will all go on to achieve so much more in the future. Many of your children know from my assemblies that I'm the 'nosiest parker around' and I'll be sure to look out for their future achievements.

My final thank you has to go to my own family: Rob, Martha and Maxwell; who have supported me and shared me so selflessly with my Barwell Infant family. I really couldn't do what I do without them.

Now, after many years of telling children to be brave and start a new adventure, it's time for me to take my own advice! I hope that you all enjoy your Christmas break, and I hope that 2021 is a better year for all of us.

Take care of yourselves and each other,

Mrs Whittaker
Deputy Headteacher

