



## Newsletter 3

24<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Dear parents and carers,**

I hope this newsletter finds you well. Time has rushed by very quickly since our last newsletter and many actions have taken place which have impacted positively on Southfield and our journey towards becoming a securely strong and high-performing school. So that you know about our progress and understand more about some of the changes we have made, this newsletter has been dedicated to school improvement and the hard work that's been going on behind the scenes. Thank you to all those parents, aunties, uncles and grandparents who have noticed the changes, listened to the children's feedback and have stopped us to tell us that they have been pleased.

Please remember: my door is always open, and I'd very much welcome a face-to-face conversation to listen to any concerns or positive feedback you'd like to share about our school.

Here's wishing you a fantastic weekend together.  
**With best wishes, Aaron Griffiths - Acting Head Teacher**

### School Improvement at Southfield

We are absolutely committed to making Southfield a securely good school. To do this, we know that your children's achievement and progress needs to be improved and to do that, we need to develop the quality of teaching and the way in which leaders and managers carry out their jobs. Together, we have been refining and learning new skills and developing our knowledge to make this happen. This is helping us to raise standards in each of the eight classrooms in our school. Please note, an overview of our **School Improvement Plan** is available on the front page of our website.

#### • Empowered leaders

- Every week, Mrs Williams (Deputy Head), Mrs Tkocz (Assistant Head and English leader) Mrs O' Sullivan (Assistant Head and Special Needs leader) and I visit classrooms. As Southfield's leadership team, we monitor and evaluate the quality of adults' teaching and the impact of it on children's learning. We provide feedback and organise training for those who need it. A few parents have asked about our use of supply teachers. Sometimes, teachers need to be released from the classroom to learn new things, attend training or work alongside someone else to learn something new. We always do our best to invite known supply teachers back to Southfield.
- Our work is quality assured by our School Improvement Partner, who shares his evaluations and ideas for doing things even better with our governors and staff.

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- Acting on the advice of Ofsted, our governors commissioned an external review of their practice. They are working towards an action plan which was developed by a national lead for governance who works on behalf of the Department for Education. To build capacity, some of the governors from Eastrop are working alongside governors from Southfield which mirrors what we are doing with the two staff teams.
- **Data and assessment**
  - Your children's achievement is one of our top priorities. So that teachers can plan precisely for all groups of children in their classes, a new system for tracking progress has been introduced and we are now working in teams to moderate (check the standard) of learning across the children's books. Where leaders identify aspects that could be strengthened, they provide feedback to teachers to help them improve. Subsequently, leaders re-visit classes and hold meetings with teachers to check on their development.
- **The maths curriculum**
  - We've been working with an externally qualified consultant who has been helping us to audit our maths curriculum. We've prioritised this because the children's progress in mathematics over the last few years has not been good enough. The consultant has taught exemplar lessons for teachers to observe, supported teachers with their weekly planning, suggested a bank of new resources for us to access and use with the children and supported our maths leader to devise an ambitious action plan for improvement. In January, the two staff teams from Eastrop and Southfield will focus on this aspect of the curriculum during the Teacher Development (TD) day.
- **Managing Performance**
  - All teachers now have performance targets which are linked to the School Improvement Plan. Each of us has three targets to work on over the next year, one of which is related directly to improving the children's achievement and progress. Governors have held me to account for this and have checked my work as the head teacher against national guidance. Teachers have also been given the opportunity to discuss and book training that is specific to their needs and in our weekly staff meetings, this is shared with colleagues.
- **Cross-curricular learning**
  - We know that primary-aged children learn best when subjects are joined up and connections can be made. We also know that high quality books can enthuse and excite us all. We've been working collaboratively to plan lessons which start from great books and lead the children into all aspects of the primary curriculum. In the spring term (January 2018 onwards) we are introducing 'wow days' at the start of a new topic to hook the children into learning and 'celebration days' towards the end of the topic to acknowledge the progress the children have made. We recognise that parents and carers would like to be



more involved in school life. As a result, you will be invited into school to celebrate with us and see your children's progress across the curriculum.

- **Developing Writing**

- We engaged the support of a locally successful Subject Leader for Education (SLE) who has been working with us to carry out learning walks (visiting classrooms), book looks (analysing the standards reached by the children in their books) and discussions about how our curriculum enables the children to write at length, with confidence. Within our new, cross-subject approach, we will be planning for many more opportunities for the children to write and we will celebrate this on new displays that will be positioned around the school.

- **New Website**

- We have been working really hard with Greenhouse Schools Online to design a brand new website, one which reflects the layout used at Eastrop. The governors, leadership team and I have agreed the final design template and we are now working on content. We are aiming to launch our website in the new year and will keep you informed of our progress in future newsletters.

Hopefully, after reading this newsletter, you will see that there is a lot of hard work going on behind the scenes to make Southfield a securely good school. Ultimately, we want all of these actions to result in Southfield being an exciting environment in which children are eager to learn, happy to explore, feel confident to try new things and make lots of progress.

**In terms of our immediate next steps:**

- Governors are finalising their plans for recruiting to the head teacher vacancy and will be in touch very soon with their agreed plan.
- Governors are writing a termly newsletter to keep you up to date with their work, actions and impact on standards.
- Southfield and Eastrop are working collaboratively to make our 'wrap around' offer to families (breakfast and after school clubs) even better.
- We will continue to develop the projects described in this newsletter and spend time checking on their overall quality and impact on teaching and learning.

I look forward to seeing you over the next few weeks before we finish school at the end of Term 2 on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 1.15pm. A separate letter will follow about our arrangements for Christmas at the start of next week.

If you have any questions or comments about the information I have shared, please don't hesitate to get in contact.

**With best wishes, Aaron Griffiths | Acting Head Teacher**

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