

Headteacher's Welcome 2020-2021

On behalf of all the pupils, staff and governors I would like to welcome you to St Thomas' Leesfield Church of England Primary School.

I have been 'passed the baton' so to speak from our wonderful now ex-Head, Mrs Ireland, who retired at the end of the academic year 2019-20 after thirty-three years in teaching, twenty as a Head and twelve leading our lovely school. If you are already part of our school family, you will know that I have been the part-time head together with Mrs Ireland for the past four years so I am not new to the role. I am extremely honoured to be the next full-time Headteacher at Leesfield as I am fortunate to come to school each day to be surrounded by fantastically talented children, hard-working and dedicated staff together with very supportive governors and parents/families.

It is the new academic year of 2020-2021 and St Thomas' Leesfield CE School staff are ready to welcome all our children back for another fun-filled and motivational year of learning. We look forward to seeing all Leesfield children again, grown up a year group, and we send a very special welcome to our new Reception children.

As we are all aware, the last academic year did not go to plan due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent closure of school from Monday 23rd March 2020 apart from a very small number (around thirty) key worker and vulnerable children. We did also manage a partial re-opening of school from the beginning of June for our then Year 1 and Year 6 children taking the number attending to over ninety on a daily basis.

It has been a difficult and challenging time for all but we are so happy to re-open school fully from Wednesday 2nd September 2020 as we have missed all the children very much. We know that there will be worries and concerns which is understandable especially for the children and families who have not been able to access formal learning in school since March 2020. Rest assured that we have all worked very hard to make sure our school community is as safe as possible. Please communicate with staff as needed if you have any issues so that we can deal with them as soon as possible.

An integral part of our school ethos is our positive relationships with families. We always work closely together to ensure that any concerns are taken seriously and dealt with swiftly.

On the final day of 2019-20 we said goodbye to the Y6 children attending school (around twenty at that point) at their special, socially distanced Leavers and Prize Giving Service. It was not our usual format by far, but we made every effort to make it memorable and distinctive as our eldest children in school deserved. It was lovely to be able to sit back and enjoy listening to success stories and happy memories of seven years of growth and achievement for some and only a shorter but successful Leesfield time for others.

Our school continues with its topic-based approach as it is very motivational and covers all areas of the curriculum to ensure a broad and balanced learning approach. We have always been proud of our curriculum intent, implementation and impact and are continuing to build on this in the coming year. We recognise that there will be gaps in age-related learning throughout school due to the pandemic and the subsequent interruption to school-based lessons. We will be working hard to assess and fill the missing areas in your child's education as well as re-visiting prior learning. The children and staff will soon get back into well-established routines and we will continue to keep the expectations high at our school. Thank you for all your hard work with home learning, you have done a great job under very difficult circumstances.

We have two new members of staff from September 2020, Mr Leigh (Y4 Class Teacher) and Miss Mongan (Reception, Y3 and Y4 additional Class Teacher). All our staff are enthusiastic, capable and caring practitioners and we very much look forward to working with your child/children. The Leadership Team remains the same as the previous year minus Mrs Ireland with the wonderful Mrs Ragan and Mr Whittaker as Assistant Heads. We all look forward to continuing to lead the vision for our school along with our conscientious Governing body who always ensure that we are challenged and supported.

Over the summer holidays we have been busy with general maintenance of our school areas and have also put in place government guidelines to ensure that our school is as safe as possible with regards to COVID-19.

Our school will continue to work in collaboration with eight other schools as part of the Dovestone Learning Partnership from which your children will have further shared opportunities for academic study and extra-curricular activities. We hope that we can return to face-to-face collaboration in the very near future but await the Government's guidance as and when it is safe to do so.

We want happy and motivated learners at our school so please contact us via your child's planner, send an email or telephone school if you have any queries. At the moment, we are restricting visitors inside the school grounds and buildings to limit the chances of transmission of the virus. We like to 'nip things in the bud' and pride ourselves on a quick, informal, friendly and understanding response.

Our motto for all at Leesfield is 'To Be the Best We Can in the Sight of God'.

We wish a happy and successful year for all our children and staff.

Take care

Mrs Paula Glynn