



THAKEHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL
Rock Road
Storrington
West Sussex
RH20 3AA

Headteacher: Mr L. McDonald
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs E. Hopkins
SENCOs: Mr L. McDonald & Mrs R. Stender

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Web: <http://www.thakehamps.co.uk>

'Small School, Big Opportunities, Great Achievements'

Thursday 20th July 2023

The 'New' Thakeham Primary School and "THANK YOU!"

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your support

A genuine and heartfelt, "thank you" from the team here at Thakeham for all your support this academic year. From reading at home with your child (at least) three times a week, to helping with school trips, to attending Parent Evenings, it all makes a difference. Thank you very much.

This has been a wonderful and varied academic year. I am so proud of the children. Thakeham pupils are uniquely kind and hardworking. I hope that each one of them goes home for the summer break knowing that they have impressed us! I am excited to see them grow even more next academic year.

A personal "Thank You" from me

I would also like to say, "thank you" to you on behalf of myself too. As I come to the end of my first full year as Headteacher of Thakeham Primary School, I am filled with so much gratitude. You have all been so welcoming, so kind and so helpful. It has really meant the world to me. It has been a lifelong dream of mine to become a Headteacher and it is such a privilege to be able to fulfil that dream here at Thakeham.

The 'new' Thakeham Primary School

I would now like to take a moment to talk you through some of our upcoming plans. These are so exciting and will ensure our support and provision for pupils goes from strength to strength.

As I am sure you will know, Thakeham has been through a complicated period over the last few years: the school contended with the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic; the previous Headteacher left part-way through the academic year; the previous SENCO left part-way through the academic year; we have had various staffing changes; and the education sector in general is under a wide variety of pressures. Throughout all of this, the school Team have been nothing but excellent and ensured your pupils are cared for and supported as well as they always have been. However, now is as good a time as any to begin a new journey. With that in mind, here are some of the things we will be doing.





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1] New slogan, mission statement, vision, 5-year plan and values

Our newly formed Governing Body have been working hard in the background this academic year on a new, ambitious strategy for the school; one that will propel Thakeham forward at speed and ensure we become County-renowned for excellence in all areas – more so than we already are! Mr Tom Gray is the FGB's Chair and he is ably supported by Mrs Karen Bridle as Vice-Chair. They will be approaching the Community in the new academic year to engage with you and launch a new slogan, mission statement, vision, set of values and exciting five-year strategic plan. As Headteacher, I have been working with them on it and I am looking forward to seeing it all come to fruition.

2] New whole-school curriculum

Across this academic year, the teaching team have worked incredibly hard on a brand new curriculum. We have over-hauled all aspects of it from topic themes to how we assess children. Our key driver: excellence in all areas.

Throughout this year, we have been engaged in and readily accepting support from West Sussex County Council. Their last inspection of the school commented that, 'the quality of teaching in EYFS is strong and pupils in Key Stage 2 engage in well chosen, focused tasks that allow pupils to move on with their learning in a steady and progressive manner.'

From EYFS through to Year 6, your children have been working through our brand new curriculum this year and they tell us they love it! In basic terms, we are seeing the impact too. The majority of our end of year pupil results are either in line or far above the National Average for England.

3] New SEND team

We have spent this academic year putting together a new SEND and Inclusion Team. As part of this, we have completely over-hauled all of our systems and support mechanisms to make our offer for pupils even better than it already was. The new team is comprised of Mrs Stender as the main SENCO, myself as a Co-SENCO (responsible for SEMH, dyslexia and some EHCP provision) and Mrs Bowbrick as our Deputy SENCO. We hope that those of you who have worked with us this year have noticed the positive changes.

We have also been awarded the honour of becoming a Thoughtful School. This is a partnership between West Sussex County Council and the NHS whereby the NHS base a team of degree-level trained Mental Health Specialists in a school. Their job is to provide outreach for a variety of mental





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health needs to pupils in the local area. Alongside Storrington Primary School, we will be the Thoughtful School bases for the Horsham area. This will launch in September.

4] New Key Stage 1 curriculum and provision

Throughout this academic year, we have been engaged in a research-led endeavour to refine and develop our provision for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 so that it is even better than it already is. With this in mind, we will be switching to a new way of teaching in September based around the Continuous Provision model. This is something similar to what you may see in the Early Years and will mean that we can provide an acutely pupil-centred approach with a specific focus on not only being nurturing but also academic excellence. Pupils in Oak Class may have mentioned to you that they have swapped rooms with those in Elder Class this week. This is all part of this project and also linked to what is written below.

5] Building and site improvement works

This year we have been given the better part of half a million pounds to improve our site. For a school of our size and budget category, this is a truly game-changing moment.

Alongside myself and the school's Senior Leadership Team, the Governing Body has begun the process of consulting to see what improvements can be made. All of what we do will be centred around our offer for the pupils. At this early stage, I am hesitant to confirm the full extent of the building work we will be carrying out. However, I can confirm that the current plan is to have all improvements complete by September 2024. Please note, it will not involve an expansion of the school. We will remain a half-form school of 105 pupils.

However, I am in a position to confirm that the FGB has approved the building of a new rear playground and outside classroom. Linked to the moving of Key Stage 1 into what is currently Elder and assuming there are no significant delays, then from the Autumn pupils:

- In years 1 and 2 will have access to a new play area at the rear of the school with a water wall, mud-kitchen, pagoda and canopy, sandpit, water trays and small playground.
- All pupils will have access to a new outdoor classroom at the rear of the school with a stage, outdoor seating and canopy. This will be the perfect space to hold music lessons, presentations or simply teach a lesson outside in the fresh air!





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Once again, thank you for all the support this year. The children do notice and it means a lot to them. If you have any questions, you can email me at head@thakehamps.co.uk. In the meantime, I wish you all a wonderful summer holiday and we look forward to seeing everyone back Tuesday September 5th.

Kind regards,

Will McDonald
Headteacher

