



FLORENCE MELLY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

DETERMINATION. RESILIENCE. EMPOWERMENT. APPRECIATION. MOTIVATION & SAFETY



Thursday 30th April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware, our Headteacher, Mr Heaton had decided to retire from teaching at the start of the Easter break however, the circumstances surrounding our school being designated as a Hub school for the city, meant that he decided to work on to ensure that the transition was as smooth as possible and so he will officially leave us on April 30th.

Mr Heaton has been a talismanic figure for our school. As part of the Governing Body originally involved in his recruitment four years ago, we were all impressed by his knowledge of the education system, skills and experience but what stood out most of all was his enthusiasm, commitment and passion for Florence Melly and the community we serve. It is that passion that has driven the unrivalled success that the school has achieved during his tenure.

As a native of our community, born and brought up on Cherry Lane and a former pupil of our school, from day one he has worked tirelessly to instil in all of our governors, teachers and pupils that the life chances of everybody associated with our school should only be dictated by their ambition, motivation and tenacity. As a proud Evertonian, he has lived the club's motto of 'Nothing but the best will do' by each and every pupil in our school. Demanding their best of them and accepting nothing less than everybody else's best on their behalf.

Mr Heaton's experience of education over the last 40 years has seen him work across the country and internationally. He has seen what has been successful in some of the most deprived communities in inner London, rural Cumbria, in Europe and North America, has worked at individual school level, local authority level and Government level and wanted to bring all of that experience and opportunity to bear where it all started for him. Anybody that has had the privilege of working closely with Ken over these last few years will know that the Florence Melly job has been deeply personal for him. The investment in our school library, the educational visits and trips, the debating society, the technology developments, the blazers for year 6 have all been part of a wider idea to prove to our children that they are special and can achieve anything they aspire to.

Our links to outside organisations have also been intrinsic to Mr Heaton's commitment to showing our children the opportunities that exist for them in the wider world. As somebody who is in school quite often, I'm always taken aback by the activities taking place. Our pupils have gone to Parliament and had their MP in school to take questions from our School Council, we've had developers from Disney come to school to look at ways in which we develop our literacy skills, we've had scientists launching rockets over our school building, musicians, authors, dancers and poets all with the aim of sparking excitement and ambition within our children. The school's relationship with both Everton and Liverpool Football Clubs has seen every child involved in activities with coaches or players from both clubs and in many cases it has resulted in children attending matches and even welcoming the teams into the ground. Even when the Reds win, it's always consolation to Ken that at least some of our children were there to cheer them on!

Although our school is a Community primary school, Mr Heaton has always ensured that our school is a sanctuary for people of any faith or none at all. Explaining and embracing all faiths, backgrounds, beliefs and cultures has been central in his view that all pupils are treated with respect and fairness with the right to feel valued and safe. In all of the wonderful comments in our Ofsted inspection last year, I know one of those that particularly stood out for him was when the

chief inspector wrote 'all of the children feel safe and loved in their school'. In this endeavour I know how much he has valued the support and friendship of Tom Allen and Jean Flood as members of our Governing Body in fostering this environment.

The successes that have been achieved during Ken's headship have been very much about creating in our school a modern, pupil led approach to learning but as this is his alma mater, the opportunity to celebrate the school's 90th anniversary in 2018 was grasped with a verve that will last long in the memory. At a time like this, when we're forced to be apart, times like that sustain us and reassure us that better days not only lay ahead but are worth waiting for. The planning for our school's anniversary was led by our dear friend and much missed Deputy Headteacher, Miss Robinson. Though none of us knew the full extent of her illness at that time, working as closely as they did, Mr Heaton understood how important that week was to Miss Robinson and did whatever he could to make it memorable, even at one staged televised! In many ways, that week had nothing to do with attainment and standards but it did illustrate the compassion, loyalty and kinship that is the heartbeat of any successful team.

In talking about all of the things that Mr Heaton has brought to our school, it would be overly modest not to reflect upon our Ofsted inspection in Summer 2018. As you may remember, the school had received two consecutive judgements indicating that we 'Require Improvement'. A third, similar judgement may have led to the fundamental existence of the school being brought into question with in all likelihood, our status as a community primary school being removed and control passed from the City of Liverpool to a nominated Academy Trust. The stakes really were that high. Although, we'd prepared as best as we could, until the inspection happens you never really know how it's going to go. As you no doubt remember, the judgement of the Ofsted team was that the school no longer 'Requires Improvement' but was 'Outstanding'. Quite apart from my delight for Ken and the entire team, I'll always remember the look on the face of our School Improvement Partner from Liverpool City Council who looked at me and fellow Governors and said, 'Wow. That just doesn't happen!'.

But it did happen and so quite rightly and properly Mr Heaton now leaves us with a legacy he can be delighted with and we can both be grateful for as well as being optimistic for the future. A school outstanding in every sense, a team committed to providing a safe, respectful and loving environment for our children, a school community's esteem replenished and renewed and an organisation energised by our school's DREAMS, not weighed down by the expectations of them.

As a Governing Body, we wanted our farewell and thanks to Mr Heaton to be far different to a few words in a message out to parents but when it is safe to do so he, his wife Barbara and their children will be welcomed back to school so that we can all say our goodbyes in person. For now, it is both my duty and privilege to offer the most sincerest of thanks on behalf of the Governing Body and wider school community of Florence Melly Community Primary School for his boundless endeavour, endless hours, commitment and dedication over these last years. We wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement. It is nearly 60 years since Mrs Heaton took the short walk from Cherry Lane, over Queens Drive and delivered a much younger Ken into the safe keeping of Florence Melly School. After a 40 year career of service to children across the country, across our city and culminating back where it all began, I'm sure Hetty is very proud indeed.

Yours sincerely

Janet Matthews - Chair of Governors.



IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT!