



Grand Avenue Primary & Nursery School

Grand Avenue
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Monday, 11th December 2023

Dear parent / carer

After the very best 16 years of my 43-year career in teaching, it is time for me to step away and hand over this amazing school to another very lucky person from April 2024. This means that the co-headship will finish after the Easter break and the governors are in the process of finding a new full time headteacher for Grand Avenue Primary & Nursery School.

Today our school is unrecognisable from the one I took over in 2007. In terms of the site, it has undergone a complete rebuild which forced me to relocate the nursery five times in five years before extending it! The old infant school has been completely remodelled into 'The Annex' to support the expansion to three forms of entry. We have also undergone significant re landscaping of the outside areas with the addition of allotments, adventure zones, wild areas and a variety of apparatus. We have also completely refurbished the swimming pool so it can now be used all year round and which remains the envy of many schools in Kingston. Most recently we have of course, completed the Stem Room and Studio.

Aside from the facilities, there has been the introduction of a whole new National Curriculum, new teaching styles and strategies, and new assessment regimes including the additions of statutory testing for Reception, Year 1 and Year 4 as well as the removal of the statutory test at the end of Year 2! We have struggled through two financial crises due to significant real term budget cuts (and we are still working within the latest - relying significantly on the generosity of our parents to raise funds and help us in school). There have been 4 different Ofsted frameworks and I have lost count of how many education secretaries there have been. They all had their slightly different quirks and ideas on what we should be doing in schools - it seemed like a bit of a revolving door at times! We have weathered the pandemic and the strikes, extremes in weather and all the curve-balls that come along. Nevertheless, we have learnt from each and every challenge and the school continues to flourish.

I am so proud to say that Grand Avenue Primary & Nursery School has been able to continue to thrive because all stakeholders - the whole staff team, governors and the supportive parent body - have maintained a constant and unremitting focus on the safety, well-being and education of our children.

I have been blessed with such a passionate and hard-working staff team who pull together, come what may, and an extremely supportive parent body who, quite rightly, expect a lot from us but also give so much back, both financially and through their time.



Enjoying Learning - Exceeding Expectations



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But, it is the children that I will miss the most - they are such a joy. The children are open, enthusiastic, interested and interesting; in fact they are GRAND! Whenever things have felt they might overwhelm me, I have just popped into a classroom or two and soaked up the buzz of the children excited about their learning; or walked along the corridors to be greeted with a genuinely warm wave and a 'hello Mrs Barrington'. Yes, I will really miss the children; if you see me out and about whilst enjoying my retirement, do not forget to wave and say hello - please!

It has truly been an honour and a privilege to serve this school community and I thank you for allowing me the courtesy to lead Grand Avenue Primary & Nursery School. The school now has an outstanding reputation as a happy, caring and fully inclusive school and I am proud to be able to say that I leave it in a good place but with a clear path to further development.

I wish you all every future happiness.

Kind regards

Margaret Barrington
Co-Headteacher



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