



Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

### **New Head Teacher for September**

I'm delighted to announce that we have recruited a new, permanent Head Teacher for our school, who will start this September. Natasha Chiswell is an experienced leader – she is currently Head Teacher at Aldbury Primary School, previous to that she held leadership positions at The Reddings Primary School, Hemel Hempstead. Several governors were involved in the interview day, supported by the Trust central team.

We're grateful that Mrs Mathison will continue to lead the school next term. Natasha will spend time with Mrs Mathison for a full handover before starting.

This term we also welcomed a new governor, Tracey McMahon. You can see who is on the Thomas Whitehead governing body, and what we are responsible for, here [www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.co.uk/governors/](http://www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.co.uk/governors/)

### **How did we know that progress was made this term?**

The Governors had three opportunities to check on progress. An independent education adviser, who is also a retired head, visited at the end of February and reported back to the Board on steps made against our Post Ofsted Action plan (which you can read here [www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.co.uk/school-development-plan/](http://www.thomaswhiteheadceacademy.co.uk/school-development-plan/)).

In March, the Trust's Education Director and a School Improvement Partner from Central Beds Council spent a day with pupils and staff focusing on reading and writing, phonics, maths and geography. They provided us with a further assessment on progress.

Finally this month we saw the school in action ourselves during Governor Visit week. We sat with pupils in their classes, discussed teaching and resources with staff, and looked at children's workbooks. Our particular focus this time was on Talk 4 Write, which is helping children's reading and writing, a key area for improvement identified by Ofsted.

We have been really encouraged by the enthusiastic take up of Talk 4 Write, the developments in the curriculum, and the improvements in reading. We are thankful for our passionate staff team who have worked very hard this term, and especially for our Teaching Assistants who have been invaluable, particularly during staff shortages due to COVID. We are very proud of the children, who have shown they can articulate their learning, and are engaged and ready to be challenged to learn more.

### **How is the Trust helping?**

In addition to progress assessments from the Trust Education Director and help to recruit our new Head Teacher, the IT central team has this term secured the school 15 new laptops. Staff and Governors have also benefitted from Trust training, and shared best practice from other schools in the Trust. We also benefit from ongoing central team support and expertise on staffing and finance.



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**ST ALBANS**  
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

## Thomas Whitehead CE Academy

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Headteacher: Mrs S Mathison

Assistant Headteacher: Mr D Roderick

Assistant Headteacher: Miss D Mitra

### What is next?

We know that our vision of becoming a Good school will be a marathon, not a sprint. The progress we have seen so far are small steps against the Action plan, and more change and improvement will be expected next term, to be able to show a measurable impact on children's learning.

The priorities remain the same: to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management of the school, to improve the quality of assessment, to improve reading, to deliver a well-planned curriculum, and improve the quality of education in our Early Years classes.

The governing body will continue to hold the Head Teacher and senior leadership team to account on these priorities, through Board meetings, external assessments and our termly visit weeks.

### We value your feedback.

We look forward to seeing the feedback from the Parent Forum meeting being organised by Mrs Mathison. To contact the governing board, please send your email (marked for the attention of the Chair of Governors) to [office@twa.dsamat.co.uk](mailto:office@twa.dsamat.co.uk)

Finally, our thanks to you, our parents and carers, for encouraging your children in their reading and for supporting the school through these times of change.

We wish you all a happy Easter.

Jenny Jenkins, Interim Chair of Governors



*Believing and achieving together*