



Highwood Primary School

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Promoting Resilience, Achieving Potential

Cathy Cox – Interim Headteacher

Friday 23 June 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with great sadness that I am writing to inform you of the passing of Mrs Della Allen following a short battle with cancer in the early hours of Friday 23 June.

Since taking on the Headship of Highwood Primary School in September 2012, Mrs Allen worked tirelessly to ensure that the children of the Highwood community have been provided with a high quality education within an inclusive and nurturing environment. Her ambitious and inspiring leadership ensured that the achievement and progress of all children has been rigorously monitored, the staff team have benefitted from high quality professional development and training and innovative ideas and systems have ensured that the school has been equipped to deliver the challenges of the ever changing curriculum and demands put on to schools in the last few years.

Mrs Allen was always highly ambitious for Highwood and her work as a Hertfordshire Improvement Partner in other local schools meant that Highwood has been at the forefront of educational improvements recommended by Herts for Learning and a place other schools have looked to for examples of good practice.

In July 2013, within a year of becoming Headteacher, Mrs Allen led the school through an OFSTED inspection which graded the school as 'Good.' This was a significant achievement for a school where standards and provision were falling well below this prior to her appointment.

She always expected both staff and children to utilise and enjoy the beautiful building and grounds we are lucky enough to have at Highwood. The flood and significant building issues that this uncovered have been a highly challenging time for all involved but Mrs Allen felt particularly strongly about this and battled tirelessly to ensure that the children's education and the morale and well-being of the staff were affected as little as possible. Firstly she organised alternative venues to accommodate the children last July, followed by a summer break that was entirely consumed by making sure that the Portakabin Village was set up and the project to refurbish the building was underway as soon as possible. During the Autumn and Spring terms the children continued to receive a high quality education despite being in mobile classrooms and she ensured innovations such as the provision of P.E. at Woodside Leisure Centre were put in place.



Mrs Allen will be greatly missed by all her colleagues at Highwood and the legacy of her innovative leadership will remain with all of us as we continue to strive to provide the best for the children of this community. She put together a fantastic staff team who will support each other through this difficult time and who will continue their work and their lives enhanced by having worked with her.

I know that all of us are thinking of her family, and most particularly of her husband Paul, at this very difficult time and wish to send our heartfelt condolences but also our gratitude for allowing us the privilege of having Mrs Allen as Headteacher at Highwood.

Personally I have lost both a colleague and a friend. I came to work at Highwood specifically to work with her and I will continue to strive for the best for the Highwood children going forwards.

Kind regards,

Cathy Cox
Interim Headteacher