



**Abbots Ripton Church of England Primary School**  
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**Consultant Headteacher : Mrs Claire Matthews**  
**Assistant Headteacher : Mrs Lorna Blackhurst**

16<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Dear Staff, Parents and Carers,

I thought I'd write to you all to give you an update from the Governing Body, and let you know how things are going with regard to our Headteacher appointment.

Firstly, can I say a huge (if slightly late!) welcome to all of our new families. We really hope that you and your children are enjoying being part of the Abbots Ripton family. We are absolutely delighted at how well and how quickly our new Foundation children have settled in to school life. Their transition into primary school seems to have gone well, and in the New Year we would like to ask our Foundation parents and carers, via a questionnaire, how well you think this process has gone, and whether you think there's anything that we could do differently next year. We would also welcome feedback from all our parents and carers, and from our staff team, on how you think things are going at Abbots Ripton, and your thoughts for the future. Please look out for our questionnaire very early in the new term, and please do fill it in, as your opinions are very important to the Governing Body.

Speaking of the future, we are working very hard on our Headteacher recruitment strategy. We continue with our view that becoming an academy is not our highest priority at this time, leaving us with two main options. Firstly, we are looking at the potential for the appointment of a full-time Headteacher for our school, following a traditional leadership model which has worked for our school previously. An alternative could be to join forces with a second similar primary school under a Federation model, with a single Executive Headteacher and a senior leadership structure within each school. Under the first model, due to our small size and our budget, we would most likely appoint someone to their first Headship, but would have our own full time, dedicated Headteacher. The second model becomes more attractive for a much more experienced Headteacher, but of course means that we would have to 'share' them. What is clear to us is that under Claire Matthews' leadership our school is developing, improving and moving forward at an incredible rate, and that the decision we make cannot allow this to slow down. We're working closely with the Local Authority and the Diocese of Ely, and hope to be able to advertise the role in January. In the interim, I'm delighted to say that Mrs Matthews has agreed to stay as our Headteacher until the end of the Summer Term – thank you Claire.

Thank you to the staff team at the school, who have pulled together with new colleagues to continue to create a fabulous learning environment for all our children. I'd also like to thank our fantastic STARS team for everything they have achieved over the last term for our school through some fantastic fundraising events. Thank you to everyone who supports the team and comes to the events. And finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Governing Body who give so generously of their time to support Claire and I, and to say how pleased we are that Bella Tapp will be rejoining us in the New Year.

I hope that you all have a wonderful Christmas break and a very Happy New Year, and I'm sure you'll join me in wishing the school every success in 2017!

Very best wishes,

*Robin*

Dr Robin Price

Chair of Governors



*Together with God's help we: grow in Faith Learn for Life and Achieve our best.*