

Friday 14th February 2025

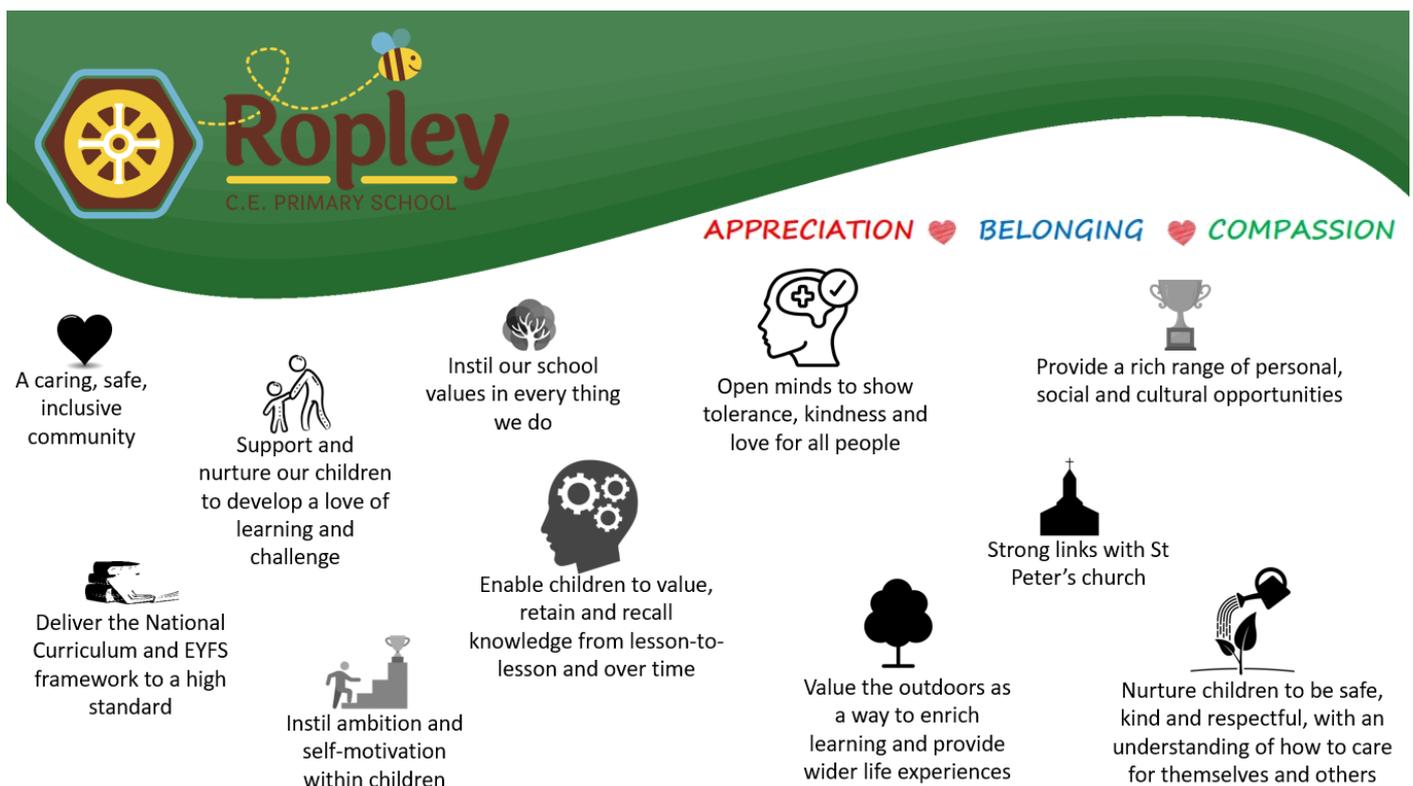
Dear Parents/Carers,

6 Months In!

Today marks half way through the school year and I thought this would be a good time to reflect back on the year so far. It has been lovely to welcome our Bumblebee children and families into the school; they certainly appear to have settled in well and are now confident and enthusiastic learners. It has also been great to welcome a number of children and families from different year groups. The village of Ropley is certainly unique and I have been particularly struck by the supportive nature in which everyone supports each other. The old phrase, it takes a village to raise a child is certainly still seen in action in this part of the world.

This is a truly inclusive school and the staff work tirelessly to ensure all children are successful both academically and as well-rounded individuals. Laughter echoes down corridors, children enjoy spending time with their friends and staff, and there is a strong ethos of supporting each other. Academic rigour is becoming a greater focus whilst ensuring children access a high-quality broad and balanced curriculum. Safeguarding and pastoral support continues to develop as the school strives for every child to persevere, be more resilient and empathetic towards others.

As a staff team we have been trying to refine and clearly articulate what Ropley Church of England Primary School is all about. Below gives you an idea of where we are at so far:



Ropley
C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

APPRECIATION ♥ **BELONGING** ♥ **COMPASSION**

-  A caring, safe, inclusive community
-  Support and nurture our children to develop a love of learning and challenge
-  Instil our school values in every thing we do
-  Open minds to show tolerance, kindness and love for all people
-  Provide a rich range of personal, social and cultural opportunities
-  Deliver the National Curriculum and EYFS framework to a high standard
-  Instil ambition and self-motivation within children
-  Enable children to value, retain and recall knowledge from lesson-to-lesson and over time
-  Strong links with St Peter's church
-  Value the outdoors as a way to enrich learning and provide wider life experiences
-  Nurture children to be safe, kind and respectful, with an understanding of how to care for themselves and others

Below we have identified some of the areas the school is developing throughout this year and into the future.

Sporting Opportunities



Increased opportunities for sporting events and fixtures

This year the school has worked hard to increase the number of sport opportunities. We have enjoyed a swimming gala, several football matches, a cross country tournament and a variety of specialised festivals for the younger children. Ropley CofE Primary School is now a member of the 'Alton Cluster' which means we will have access to a greater number of sporting opportunities next academic year (and in the summer term!) – watch this space!

Music Opportunities

The school is currently looking at grants to improve our music offering. From September, our music curriculum will include ukuleles, recorders, boom whackers and a variety of percussion instruments. This will be supplemented with ongoing peripatetic lessons and a school choir which we hope to develop further.

Class Structure for Next Year

After a lot of hard work, we are delighted to announce that we will be moving to seven classes in September with **NO MIXED AGE TEACHING!** This is fabulous news for the children as it means class sizes across the older children will reduce from 35 to 27. It also means the curriculum can be more tailored to individual year groups and we can now have a streamlined approach of progression from Year R through to Year 6. There are huge advantages to this in different subjects: for example, British history from next year will be taught in chronological order giving the children a far deeper understanding of chronology. We will be providing more details about this in the summer term but we hope you agree that this is a great step forward for the school to support children both pastorally and academically.

Trips, Events and Enrichments

Some of you will be aware that the school is adjusting the process for trips next year. One change will be the pantomime which is not going to be on offer next year. FROGS and the school paid over £4000 this year for the pantomime trip, and whilst both performances were a lovely experience for the children, we feel it is not the best use of school funds or parent fundraising. The pantomime will return in the future but it will fall under an optional trip offer. Instead, all children from next year can look forward to two curriculum related trips, at least one workshop in school and a whole school visit in the summer. In September, you will receive letters about all school trips to help spread the cost for parents.

There will also be some optional visits which will not fall under the curriculum. For example, this might be an outing to watch Vitality Blast (Twenty-Twenty) cricket at the Utilita Bowl, a day's kayaking and canoeing in Botley or taking part in the Big Sing at the O2. There will be different offerings each year and the pantomime will come under this.

I hope the developments outlined sound exciting but I wanted to reassure parents that whilst a new headteacher always brings some change to a school, the heart and essence of what makes Ropley CofE Primary a fantastic school still remains. The staff at the school, the parents and of course, the children, help to make this school a special and unique place. As the headteacher I will not always get things right: I am human after all, but I will continue to reflect to ensure we offer the very best for all of our pupils. I look forward to the next six months and continuing to work with our great community.

I hope the children have a lovely half term break.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Mills', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Daniel Mills