



20.7.18

Dear Staff, Parents and Carers including our SPA and Governors,

I am speechless. As a person who always goes way over allotted time when leading assemblies and who also writes ten page newsletters, I find myself lost for words - both verbal and written. I attended my leaving assembly yesterday. When I returned to my office, after a little while, I opened the card which contained a gift. Thank you simply doesn't cover it. I feel overwhelmed. I just cannot believe how generous you have been to me.

Now I've started to write I might have to carry on...

As I leave the school today I also write to say that I wish you a peaceful, restful and safe summer break.

The 2018/19 academic year will be an exciting one. I will not be returning to Muswell Hill Primary School for fairs, performances or events even though there will be a temptation to do so. Much as I will want to, I also want the new Senior Leadership Team to have the chance to maintain what is good here and make change where they feel it necessary.

I really believe, despite my substantial bias, that this school is fantastically unique. The children are unbelievably special. Every member of staff leaving this year has talked in their own leavers' assemblies of the children's impeccable behaviour, their manners, their sense of fun and their desire to learn. This is a great place to work.

The Staff Parent Association [SPA] have not only accomplished improvements throughout the school that we simply could not have dreamed of without their help, they have been such fun to work with! I must mention Lorraine, the Chair of the SPA. Lorraine, along with her team, has selflessly donated hours of her time for this school. Plus, she has done it with a great big smile! Lorraine works with a creative and dynamic team. Janet and Lisa have been a huge part of that and are also stepping down; they will be sorely missed. Whilst they step aside the SPA will, just like the school, continue to be something we all will be immensely proud of.

Talking of volunteers, the Governing Body here at MHPS are the most cohesive and forward-thinking GB I have had the privilege of working for in my time in education. Difficult, sometimes near-impossible decisions have to be made at times when running a school. The last few years have seen swingeing cuts to the education sector in combination with massive increases in standards and expectations. Our Governors have supported and worked with us to navigate through those very tricky waters and, to mix my metaphors, to walk a very precarious tight rope. Our Governor Team have worked with the Senior Leadership Team to set a clear strategic direction for the school. There are many, many Governors over the years to thank – far too many to name each of them. My thanks to the confidantes, the listeners, the 'there when you need someone-ers', the 'give up their time each week-ers', the



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visionaries, the advisors, the 'celebrate when we do well-ers' and the 'help when we didn't do as well as we might-ers.' You know who you are! Thank you.

Simon Wantman has been our Chair for three years. A Governor's role is often misunderstood or even overlooked but the role is utterly vital to a Headteacher. Simon is a rainmaker. He makes things happen, he affects positive change, he brokers key deals, he is decisive, he acts in the very best interests of the children of this school. He has made immeasurable difference. He delights in the successes but far more importantly, he does not go missing at the height of the pressure.

To the staff team, and I mean you all, everyone who works so hard for the school – teachers; teaching/learning support assistants; SMSAs; office, kitchen, site, sports and cleaning staff – you are multitalented: dynamic, focused, purposeful and passionate. You really care about every single child and you go the extra mile.

As a team we have tried to do things the right way – we gained results by being creative. We didn't allow the arts, for example, to slip at the expense of Mathematics or English.

I must thank Helen who has been my loyal Deputy and friend for the last five years. Helen is the glue that holds this staff team together. Whilst Helen is not leaving she is stepping down from her role after 20 successful years. Helen is a role-model for children and for staff. She cares deeply, she is calm, she listens and she works unbelievably hard. My thanks also to my wonderful Senior Leadership Team who I will miss dearly: Gillian, David, Liz and Rosie who sadly left six months ago. I have loved working with you. I meant every word I said in my cards to you so you know already what I think of you.

If I haven't mentioned you by name please do not feel undervalued or that I haven't recognised what you have done. I have but I can't write another ten pages!

I hope that you will agree that we have worked as a team, as a community, in the best interests of our children because we care about them so much.

Thank you once again for your kindness. For the final time, goodbye!

James Wiltshire

Headteacher

