



Our ref: AEG/RSE

20 June 2014

Dear Parents

I have decided to take the unusual step of writing to you just a few weeks before my usual letter which will appear in the Hinchbrooke Herald towards the end of term.

I have been concerned about the amount of mis-information, rumour and gossip that has found its way back to my ears in recent weeks, concerning recruitment and staffing, and so I thought it best to set the record straight and to allay any concerns.

The recruitment round of interviews largely comes to an end after 31<sup>st</sup> May, which is the cut-off date for teachers employed in schools to resign if they wish to move to a new school in September. After that time vacancies have to be filled by teachers not currently employed under a contract; that is, agency staff, those who have retired, or any newly qualified teachers who have not already got a position.

We have made some excellent appointments during this process. We have in fact been able to over-staff Science, a notoriously difficult area for recruitment, due to the national shortage of suitably qualified teachers, particularly in Physics and Chemistry. This will enable us to run Science for years 10 and 11 in 7 sets instead of 6, making these set sizes slightly smaller. We have also put in additional leadership capacity into this area by moving Alistair Dewar from year 10 to a post in Science.

Whilst it is perhaps unfair to single out individuals, I am particularly pleased that the two key vacancies that have arisen due to the well-deserved promotion of Vicky Horlock to an Assistant Headship and the retirement of John Norris (Assistant Headteacher and Director of Sixth Form), have been filled with top quality people. Mr Andrew Bennett is our new Head of Maths who has already started with us after the May half term holiday and, to replace Mr Norris, who has served the school for 36 years, we have appointed Charlie Fordham from Long Road Sixth Form College. Charlie read English at Trinity College Cambridge, is an outstanding teacher and brings a wealth of experience to this very important position. These appointments will ensure that we continue to make progress in these critical areas of the school.

There are 20 staff out of a total of 140 teachers who are leaving in the Summer. Five of these are retiring, two have come to the end of a short term contract which is not being renewed, three have chosen to move to the Independent sector and four have gained promoted posts in the State sector. This has emerged over recent months as the national recruitment cycle has taken place. I am sure that many parents understand how this works, but I was incredulous to hear a rumour that they had 'all resigned en masse', with the implication being that they don't like the way the school is going! Nothing could be further from the truth. Schools always have people coming up to retirement and always have good staff who seek promotion. Sadly, not everyone can gain promotion internally, and all teachers have personal considerations and private lives to lead as well as their professional ones and these inevitably impact on their decisions about their careers.

Whilst I understand that students and parents are disappointed if a 'favourite' teacher leaves, especially in the middle of a GCSE or A level course, overall, as long as the calibre of the recruited staff at least matches the calibre of the outgoing staff, or preferably it is better, then the school will

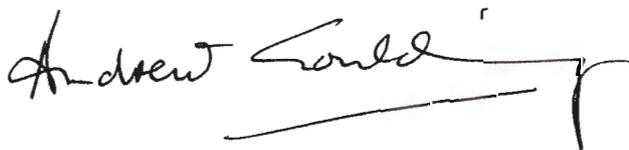
continue to improve. We have very robust recruitment processes and I believe our new recruits will do us proud. There are 8 newly qualified teachers who will bring enthusiasm and youth and we have a good stock of experienced and forward thinking leaders throughout the school who are fully committed to making the changes necessary to improve the school.

Whilst writing, I would also like to point out that not everything you read in the Hunts Post is to be believed! There was a lot of mis-information recently about staff leaving and I think the figure quoted was '12 left at Christmas with one person walking out in February.' This is complete nonsense and, though several people urged me to write and correct this at the time, I do not believe it is right to be conducting our business through the local newspaper. In fact, and for the record, five staff left at Christmas, one of whom retired. I tried to persuade him to stay to the end of the year but I'm afraid his wife's opinion carried more sway than mine, and so he left at Christmas! As for the person who was supposed to have walked out, this was in fact a member of staff who decided when her maternity leave expired, that she would like to remain at home with her baby.

In short, there is no reason at all to be concerned about recruitment at Hinchingsbrooke. We are in good shape and the staffing complement for September will help us to move forward on our journey to improve the school. It is not a quick fix and I cannot promise perfection overnight, but I can reassure you that we are moving in the right direction and that we have some excellent staff fully committed to the cause.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Goulding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

**Andrew Goulding**

**Principal**