

Dear reader,

It has been a great pleasure to meet so many of you at parents' evenings and events. I am really pleased to hear just how positive and supportive you are of the work we do here at Nether Stowe, especially the way in which we are able to combine the pursuit of academic standards and the development of a broader set of skills in music, leadership and drama.

In the four weeks that I have been at Nether Stowe I have been holding conversations with all our stakeholders such as teachers, primary school colleagues and local agencies. The emphasis has been on; what do we do well? and what could we do better? I would like to invite you to contribute to this process of self review by attending a meeting on the 16th March at 7.30 pm. It is important that I gain everyone's perspective on the relative strengths of the school, so please do come along and contribute

It has certainly been a very busy half term. I would like to thank all the staff, pupils and governors for making me feel so very welcome and helping me to find my way around. We have appointed Director of Specialism who will ensure that the ethos of our specialism pervades our work and raises standards across the school. (name) will also take responsibility for the enrichment and community work, following on the great work done by Mrs Williams.

We have also launched a Headteachers Commendation which will be awarded to pupils who have made an outstanding effort or exceptional achievement. The first awards have been presented to Emily Nelson, Emily Capewell, Katie Farrelly, Kyra Ironside and Gemma Austin.

Some of our departments have started to review their own work, checking that marking, teaching, planning and pupils work is to the highest of standards. An important part of this process is asking the pupils for their opinions. When the British cycling team won so many gold medals at the Olympics they put it down to making a thousand tiny improvements, each one of which was seemingly unimportant. This is what we are aiming to do; make small changes that will together make a big difference.

On behalf of the school and governors I would like to extend our commiserations to everyone who has been touched by the recent tragic event in our community. We do have access to a range of support services and if you are concerned about your child, please don't hesitate to speak to Mrs Hall. We have, and will, continue to work with the agencies such as the police and youth service as they support the community.

Ruth Poppleton
Headteacher