



September 2021

Dear Interested Parent

Letter from the Headteacher: A few words about Swaythling Primary School

These are extraordinary times. Most areas of life are very different to the way we knew them eighteen months ago. Some things, however, are unchanged- and one of those is the importance of choosing the right school for your child.

We are incredibly proud of our school, and unlike last year, we are able to show it to you! That said, we have taken a very cautious approach to the Covid-19 pandemic, and are being very careful about how we welcome visitors into our school. If you contact the office info@swaythlingprimary.org we can make an appointment for you to come in, meet us, and see our school.

We understand how incredibly important this decision is for you and your child. It may be that you don't want to, or can't come in to the school. If this is the case, here is some additional information.

1. If high SATS results are the most important priority for you, we are probably not the right school. We are incredibly ambitious for all of our children, and our results are very good, but not at the expense of proper, broad, rich and engaging primary learning. As well as great teaching in English and Maths, our children have equally wonderful teaching in Music and French, experience live theatre, take part in plays (even at Christmas in Year 6), enjoy cultural events and learn to get along with people from all walks of life. There are no SATS or league tables in Music, French, or PE (thank goodness), so people generally don't realise what incredible teaching our children get.
2. We are a small school- one class of 30 pupils per year group- so only 210 children in the whole school. However, the building dates back to 1910, when class sizes were 60. This means that our rooms are spacious, airy and well-ventilated- most have doors leading out onto the front lawn. The floor to ceiling height is over 4 metres. The corridor is 3.5 metres wide. The Reception classroom is enormous (it was previously two classrooms that have been knocked into one. We have a new Library! Our playground is massive. We have more space for the children to play than many schools with twice as many children. The same is true of the Hall. If I show you around, there is a better than 50:50 chance that you will tell me that it reminds you of the school you went to.
3. Being a small school means that we know our children and families in a way that just isn't possible in a larger school. This is why we describe ourselves as a village school, even though we are in a big city. When problems do occur, we can sort them out really quickly, because we have the relationships that make it possible. We have a very active parents' association (FOSS- Friends of Swaythling School), who do a brilliant job running



summer fetes, Christmas fayres, paying for theatre groups etc. They will also make you a cup of tea at parents' evening.

4. The comment that most visitors make is about how calm it is. That's true. OFSTED noted when they visited in March 2020 (I know! I couldn't believe it either.) *"Pupils' attitudes to learning are strong because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms allows pupils to work without interruption."* However, we are also a very inclusive school, and like all schools we have some children with real difficulties who sometimes have a bad day. Occasionally they shout rude words, crawl under the table or walk out of the classroom. We deal with them exceptionally well.
5. You know your child better than anyone. This school won't be the right one for everyone. I am a parent of two boys. If I didn't live thirty miles away, this would have been the perfect school for one of them, but possibly not the other.

I hope to have the opportunity to show you around the school myself. I'm incredibly proud of it, the people who work here, and the children who learn here. If you want to get in touch, it's best to email, or phone in the mornings. I'd love the opportunity to tell you more and answer any questions that you might have.

Best regards

John Draper, Headteacher