



**The Firs**

**Lower School**

**'Working together  
to achieve our best.'**



# Letter from the Headteacher

Dear Parents

The school governors, staff and I welcome your child/ren to the Firs Lower School and hope it will be the start of a happy and successful school career.

The Firs Lower School admits pupils from 4 – 9 years of age, with pupils entering the 4+ unit in the September after their fourth birthday. It is the first phase in the three-tier system of Lower, Middle and Upper Schools. These early years are a crucial stage in a child's education, and it is essential that young children should enjoy their introduction to school and feel secure in the environment provided. The Firs Lower School is a happy, lively school with a dedicated staff who value and care for children as individuals. We believe a child's education is a partnership between home and school and welcome parental support and involvement. Children, staff and parents all work hard together to make the school a success and an important part of the community.

We aim to educate the whole child, to encourage lively and creative minds, to foster social skills and an understanding of the needs of other people. We aim to develop pupils physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually and personally within a multicultural society and to give each pupil the opportunity to develop his/her own potential within the school's curriculum, bearing in mind the fact that all children have individual needs.

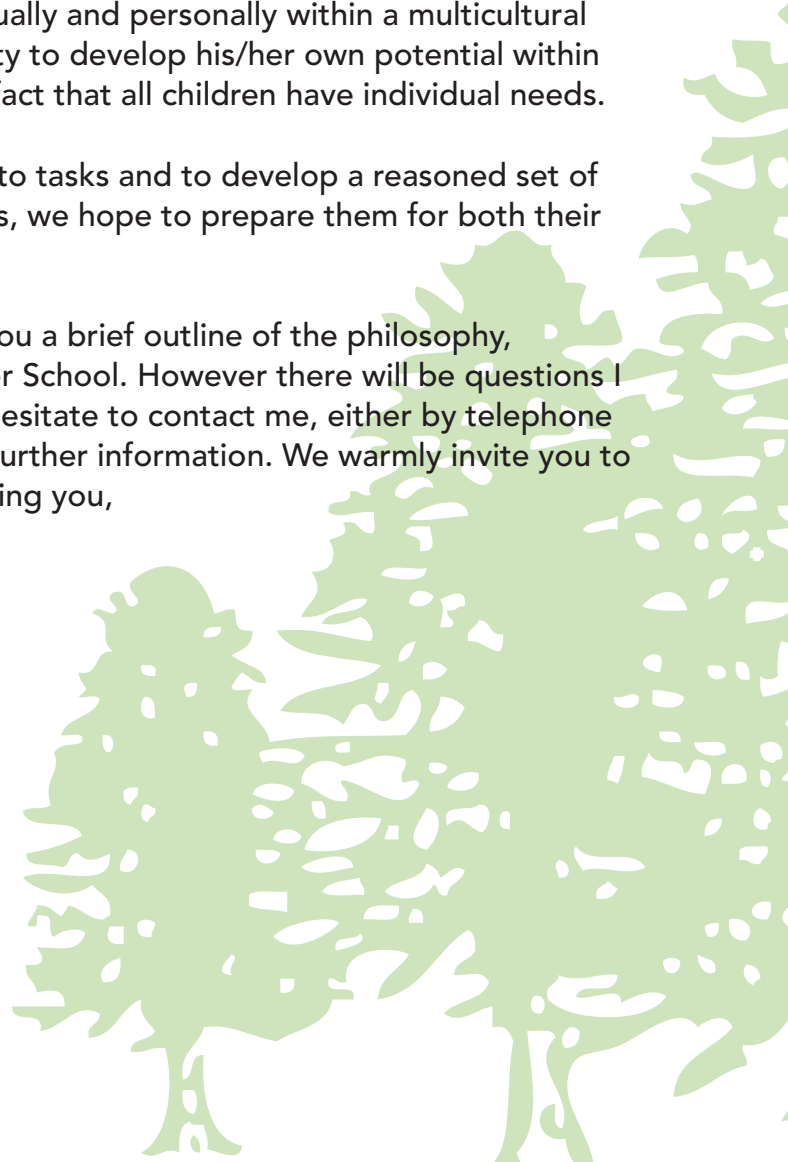
The children are taught to apply themselves to tasks and to develop a reasoned set of attitudes, values, and beliefs. By these means, we hope to prepare them for both their future education and life.

This prospectus has been compiled to give you a brief outline of the philosophy, curriculum and organisation of The Firs Lower School. However there will be questions I am sure you will want to ask. Please do not hesitate to contact me, either by telephone or personally at the school if you would like further information. We warmly invite you to visit the school and we look forward to meeting you,

Yours sincerely

*Adam J.G. Campbell*

Headteacher



## School Values

‘Working  
together to  
achieve our  
best.’

This is what we want to **CREATE** for our school:

**Caring** and welcoming for everyone

**Responsibility** to play our part in the team

**Engaging** and communicating positively with the whole community

**Aspire** to persevere and do our best

**Teaching** that is fun and helps us learn.

**Every** child taking pride in their learning all their life

And we remember our **ABC...**

**Ask** for help if you have a problem with your work or with your friends

**Best** work and best behaviour

**Care** courtesy and consideration



# School Values

Derived from  
our 6 Value  
Statements,  
the Firs has  
agreed a set  
of aims which  
embody our  
vision for  
the school's  
future:



## **Caring** and welcoming for everyone

- To create a safe, caring, inclusive and nurturing environment where everyone feels happy, secure, valued and encouraged and in which all stakeholders feel they can ask for help.
- To encourage everyone in school to be friendly, approachable and respectful in the way they interact with other stakeholders.
- To help children acquire a set of moral values and an awareness of the importance of being honest and being sensitive to those around them, so that they show care, courtesy and consideration for others, treating them as they would wish to be treated themselves.
- To challenge and tackle positively, any form of bullying.
- To make a strong commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity, tackling racial discrimination and promoting good race relations.
- To encourage positive, tolerant attitudes, and respect for the needs, traditions, beliefs and cultures of others.
- To develop the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in a range of physical activities and enjoy them as part of a healthy lifestyle.

## **Responsibility** to play our part in the team

- To create an environment where everyone (children and adults) strive to do their best in all fields of endeavour.
- To maintain and build upon the high standards and reputation that the school has earned.
- To ensure the future financial security of the school, through sound fiscal management and by following statutory and agreed budgetary practices.
- To make the most effective use of staff, continually looking for new and more productive ways of working to ensure: a healthy work-life balance; staff who are happy and motivated; enhanced learning experiences for children.
- To develop the knowledge and skills of all staff through the appropriate and effective use of continuing professional development.

# School Values

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- To develop and maintain the school site, so it meets all the future needs of learners and provides all stakeholders with an effective, stimulating and attractive learning environment.
- To ensure all pupils take a pride in their smart appearance and good behaviour.

## **Engaging** and communicating positively with the whole community

- To encourage in all stakeholders, a sense of teamwork: being an important and valued part of the school community and feeling satisfaction and
- To actively encourage all stakeholders to embrace the school's values and aims.
- To communicate successfully with all stakeholders so they have all the information they need at the right time.
- To forge close and productive relationships between home, school and the local community.
- To make a positive contribution to the Redborne Schools' Partnership and to successfully access the benefits it offers to The Firs.
- To encourage children to be actively involved in the life of the school and in the wider local, national and global communities to which they belong.

## **Aspire** to persevere and do our best

- To develop a climate where all pupils aspire to achieve and aim for excellence.
- To give any necessary support and encouragement to help children overcome any difficulties they experience, so that all can achieve the very best they are capable of.
- To recognise and reward achievement, to encourage and inspire future effort.

# School Values



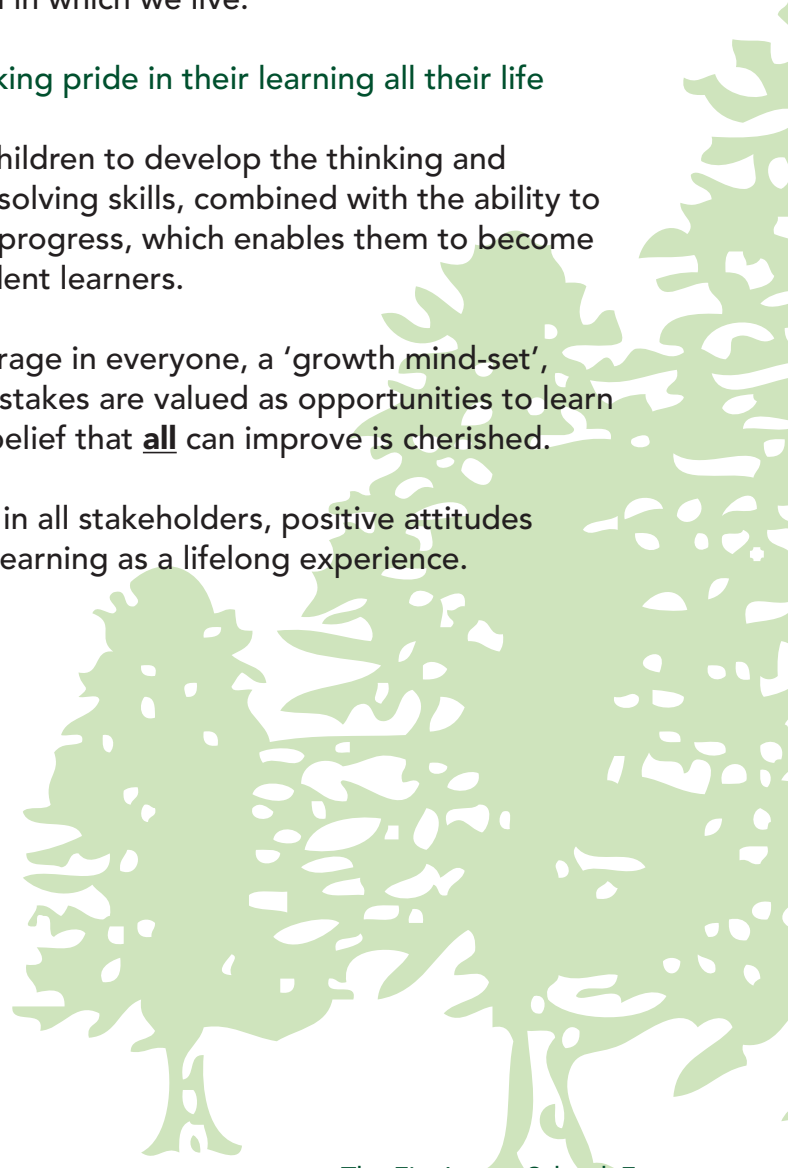
## Teaching that is fun and helps us learn

- To provide a broad, balanced and appropriately differentiated curriculum that excites and stimulates young minds and actively engages them in their learning.
- To enable children to make rapid progress, through high quality teaching, with effective and positive feedback, which ensures that the next learning steps are clearly understood.
- To foster the children's interest in, respect for and involvement with the environment, developing ideas to care for and improve it.
- To arouse children's curiosity, awe and wonder about the world in which we live.



## Every child taking pride in their learning all their life

- To help children to develop the thinking and problem solving skills, combined with the ability to evaluate progress, which enables them to become independent learners.
- To encourage in everyone, a 'growth mind-set', where mistakes are valued as opportunities to learn and the belief that **all** can improve is cherished.
- To foster in all stakeholders, positive attitudes towards learning as a lifelong experience.



# About our School



The Firs Lower School is one of two lower schools serving the Georgian market town of Ampthill. It is a purpose built single storey school, situated in a delightful wooded setting. It occupies a large open site which it shares with Alameda Middle school and is also adjacent to The Firs Woodland (a local nature conservation area).



The school has a once-a-year intake in September, of children who have reached the age of 4 years. The 4+ unit is a large self-contained unit with its own secure outside play area.

The main school has 8 classrooms, various group rooms and a hall which is also used as a dining room. There are two separate playground areas for infant and junior children and a large playing field.



In addition, in 'The Hollows' Building, the school has a spacious 30 place computer suite and a large multi purpose room, which considerably enhances the delivery of the curriculum in areas such as drama and music.

'The Hollows' Building also houses our very successful Kids' Club which provides high quality care for children before and after school.



## School Organisation

The school provides education for pupils of both sexes and all abilities for the ages of four to nine.

The school is organised into classes, usually by age. Within the class, at various times of the day, children may be working independently, as part of a group or with the whole class.

Our highest priority in the organisation of the school is to ensure that we create a safe, caring and stimulating environment where children can thrive in their learning.



# Teaching and Learning



We believe  
in creating  
a learning  
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a 'growth  
mindset'

Teaching and learning is the business of the whole school. We believe in the concept of lifelong learning. All members of the school community, adults and children are learning and developing and we strongly promote a learning environment which caters for the needs of all learners.

We aim to make learning a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to achieve well and lead happy and rewarding lives.

We believe in listening to our stakeholders and conduct regular surveys of the views of pupils and parents. Below are some of the thoughts about The Firs, expressed recently:

*'It is a great reflection on the teachers that both my children love going to school (Year 2, 4 Parent)*

*'The school is a very caring environment' (Year 1, 4 Parent)*

*'Excellent teaching – both in terms of academic and pastoral development' (Year 4 Parent)*

*'She doesn't 'like' school she 'loves' school – what more could you want' (Year 4 Parent)*

*'I love going to school....it's fun to learn...it's a happy place (Year 3 pupil)*

*'I find school fun and I learn a lot' (Year 4 pupil)*

*'I learn loads and my brain gets bigger all the time' (Year 4 pupil)*

*'It helps you if you get a mistake and learn from it' (Year 4 pupil)*

We believe in creating a learning environment which encourages each child to develop a 'growth mindset'. This encompasses the belief we want all our children to develop, that we can learn from mistakes, that we should persevere and do our best in the certainty that everyone can improve and achieve.



# Teaching and Learning



## Forest Schools

Forest Schools is an innovative educational approach to outdoor learning in the natural environment. The philosophy of Forest Schools is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences.



We use the Forest School activities as a means to build independence and self-esteem in children whilst fostering their ability to work successfully with others. Topics covered are cross-curricular learning about the natural environment but also building on and developing children's learning in many other areas of the curriculum.

## Helping your child at home

Any help you can give your child at home is of incalculable benefit to their learning. To that end we make every effort to provide the support you need to assist with this process:

Every term a 'What are we learning?' sheet is sent home to give you an overview of the learning programme your child will be following.

In addition, the school learning platform accessible from our website gives parents more access to information including school newsletters and a home page for each year group which tells parents more about what their child is learning in school.

At parent / teacher consultation meetings, you will be informed about the literacy, numeracy and personal target your child is currently working on, so you know what to focus on when helping them at home.

During your child's time at The Firs, phonics work, spellings to learn, maths and other homework will be sent home for children to complete at home. This, along with the reading books sent home for you to share with your child, are key activities that will enable you to support and enhance your child's learning.

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# Teaching and Learning



## Foundation Stage

To ensure that children get the best possible start to their time at The Firs, children in our reception class follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS). All providers are required by the government to use the EYFS, to ensure that whatever setting parents choose, they can be confident that their child will receive a quality experience that supports their development and learning.



There are 7 areas of learning in the EYFS curriculum. All the areas are important and inter-connected. 3 areas are particularly crucial for stimulating children's curiosity, developing their personal and social skills and encouraging an enthusiasm for learning. These 3 'prime' areas are:-

Communication and Language	Children improve their ability when communicating, speaking and listening in a rich language environment.
Physical Development	Children are given opportunities to be active and to improve their skills of co-ordination, control and movement. They will also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Children are supported to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, respect for others, social skills and a positive disposition to learn. Children are encouraged to have a positive 'growth mind-set' and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The school will also support children in 4 'specific' areas, through which the 3 'prime' areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:-

Literacy	Children will be encouraged to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to stimulate their interest.
Mathematics	Children will be given opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
Understanding the World	Children are supported to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, respect for others, social skills and a positive disposition to learn. Children are encouraged to have a positive 'growth mind-set' and to have confidence in their own abilities.
Expressive Arts and Design	Children are enabled to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play and design technology.

For further information look on the Department for Education (DFE) website and search for EYFS.

# Teaching and Learning



## English

The development of English is fundamental in all areas of the curriculum and therefore is given high priority. The purpose of language is communication, therefore the child must learn to speak clearly, listen attentively, read fluently with good comprehension and write legibly with clarity of thought.

Speaking and listening skills are taught specifically in English sessions and given prominence and time in all other lessons. It is valued and taught as the foundation skill for communication and for literacy.

Reading – we aim to teach children to become fluent independent readers and to develop a love of literature and books. Children learn to decode text through following a structured or ‘synthetic’ approach to the teaching of phonics. The school uses the Read Write Inc. scheme which provides the school with a well-thought programme, which has proven to be highly successful in schools across the country.

We use a combination of well known reading schemes to provide children with a range of interesting reading matter. All children are involved in regular guided group reading sessions which are the most effective way of developing children’s reading skills. The school has a well-stocked library and classroom book-corners. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the process of reading with their children and books are regularly taken home to be enjoyed together.

Writing – by giving children the opportunity to write in a range of different genres with a keen awareness of their audience, we aim to make the children competent, confident and enthusiastic writers. This will enable them to use the written word fluently and flexibly.

Spelling – all children are expected to undertake the learning of spellings as part of their homework in addition to the teaching sessions in school during the week.

Handwriting – formal handwriting lessons are given at all levels in the school to improve legibility, neatness and presentation.

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# Teaching and Learning



We believe  
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technological  
society

## Maths

We aim to provide opportunities for all children to experience and acquire the key mathematical concepts, skills and language, in a stimulating, challenging and supportive atmosphere. The introduction of Mathematics in the early years is initially developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play. As they progress through the school, the children experience a structured programme designed to increase children's understanding of the number system and their confidence when performing mental and written calculations. A variety of teaching strategies and approaches are employed, including the traditional teaching of tables and the setting of homework. In Mathematics lessons, children learn how to make logical deductions, solve problems and undertake investigations. A great emphasis is placed on designing 'open ended' tasks which develop children's mathematical thinking, encouraging them to discuss their work, record conclusions and explain their methods of working.

## Computing

We believe that all children need to be prepared for a technological society and it is our aim that they should acquire the skills and attitudes that will help them to use information and communication technology confidently and successfully. The school has a 30 place computer suite enabling classes to both partake in whole class lessons and use computers to support work in other areas of the curriculum. Children begin to become familiar with the use of computers in reception and their knowledge and skills are developed as they progress throughout the school. Children are given the chance to experience simple programming, to develop skills of logical thinking. They will also use a range of multimedia sources including internet and email to find out information and communicate with each other. The use of interactive whiteboards in classrooms, visualisers, cameras and other similar equipment, enables teachers and pupils to harness the power of technology, to enrich and extend learning in all areas of the curriculum.

# Teaching and Learning



## Science

In science lessons, opportunities are provided for children to develop skills and gain an understanding of scientific concepts through first hand experiences. We aim to do this in an environment that encourages positive attitudes of curiosity, perseverance, open-mindedness, critical reflection and co-operation. Children are provided with opportunities for structured investigation, in order to develop a scientific approach to help them learn more about the world around them.



## History

In history children study people, events and developments in the past and the ways in which these have helped shape the present. Interest in and curiosity about the past is taught through storytelling, video clips, individual research, drama and the examination of a range of historical sources including pictures, written and oral evidence, buildings and artefacts. Visitors are encouraged into the school to share their experiences and visits to museums or other places of historical interest are made where appropriate.

## Design Technology

Children are given opportunities to construct using a range of skills and a variety of materials. The range of skills includes modelling, fastening materials together using a variety of mechanisms, food technology, assembling and disassembling models and exploring simple mechanisms such as joints, levers and gears. The varieties of materials include clay, textiles, foodstuffs, sheet materials, wood and the use of constructions kits. The children are always encouraged to create designs and plan their work. They evaluate and modify it as they progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses and adjusting their work accordingly.

# Teaching and Learning



## Geography

In our teaching of geography we aim to give pupils an interest in and curiosity about people and places. The children are given opportunities to visit and reflect on the locality of Ampthill, including the school grounds and the local environment. The pupils then contrast these experiences with different places around the world. During their course of study, children have the opportunity to support their learning through using a variety of geographical evidence e.g. photographs, maps, pictures, videos and ICT material.



## Physical Education

All children have an opportunity for PE twice each week through gymnastics, games, athletics or dance lessons.

Children participate in a variety of individual and group based activities and also in competitive games. By providing activities to develop control, co-ordination and mobility, we aim to assist the children to develop an understanding, and awareness of their own capabilities and mastery of their body movements.

Health and fitness are promoted by activities that extend the children physically and we hope to lay the foundations for the enjoyment of a variety of sporting activities throughout life.

Our membership of the Redborne Upper School Sports Partnership benefits the children at The Firs greatly as it gives children access to many extra-curricular sporting opportunities as well as enriching the curriculum through the access to specialist sports coaches in areas such as tennis, tag rugby, cricket, a Y4 swimming programme and the Young Leaders Programme. This gives our Year 4 pupils the opportunity to take a leading role with Y1 pupils in a multi-skills festival.



# Teaching and Learning



## Music

Musical appreciation is extended by the children being taught about rhythm, pitch and the basic understanding of musical notation. Children are taught to listen and appraise the works of others, to sing, to play simple percussion instruments and to compose music themselves. The school has a variety of instruments from various cultures, CDs, DVDs, music schemes and live professional performances, which are used to deliver the planned music curriculum.

In addition, some children are offered tuition in the violin, viola, cello, guitar, piano, flute and some brass instruments by the peripatetic staff. A charge per term is made for tuition and lessons take place during the school day. Children are encouraged to play their instruments in assembly, in our annual music concert and to enhance year group productions.

We have an active school choir which enjoys performing at a variety of venues. In recent years the choir has performed at music concerts and at local homes for the elderly and disabled and other venues in the local community.

There is an annual evening musical concert in which the choir and all children who are learning to play a musical instrument (either in school or at home) play to parents and friends. This provides a wonderful opportunity for children to gain experience of performing before a live audience. They also serve to publicly celebrate children's talents and achievements.

## The daily act of worship provides an opportunity for children to develop spiritual awareness



### Art

Emphasis is placed on the acquisition of skills and techniques involving the use of a variety of materials, with opportunities to create in both two and three dimensional forms. Children are also presented with opportunities to study, recognise and appreciate the work of past and present artists from a variety of cultures. We encourage high standards and value the efforts of every child through careful displays of their work.

### Religious Education

The aim of RE is to contribute to the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of the pupils as individuals and members of society. The teaching programme is based on the agreed syllabus. The children are taught about the beliefs and religious practices of the principal religions represented in Great Britain.

### Collective Worship

The daily act of worship provides an opportunity for children to develop spiritual awareness and understanding whilst at the same time providing children with a time for reflection. The act of collective worship is 'mainly of a broadly Christian character', but where respect and tolerance of the beliefs of others are shown. It also creates a sense of school identity and belonging through the sharing of values and experiences, and the celebration of achievement.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship by putting their request in writing to the Headteacher.

# Teaching and Learning



We also believe that children's experiences at school greatly contribute to their personal, social and emotional development

## Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) and Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

Through a structured programme in Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE), pupils develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy, independent lives and to become informed, active and responsible citizens.

As part of our accreditation to the national "Healthy Schools" scheme, the school has focused on developing a PSHCE programme which encourages children to develop a healthy lifestyle and an awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

### Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

SEAL aims to develop the underpinning qualities and skills that help promote positive behaviour and positive learning. It focuses on five social and emotional aspects of learning: self awareness, managing feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills.

By using the SEAL resources, both as a whole school and within small groups children will learn the skills to:

- be effective and successful learners.
- make and sustain friendships.
- resolve conflict effectively and fairly.
- solve problems with others or alone.
- manage strong feelings such as anger, frustration and anxiety.
- persist in the face of difficulties.
- work and play co-operatively.
- compete fairly and win and lose with dignity.
- recognise and stand up for their rights and the rights of others.
- understand and value the differences between people.

This is a programme which is followed by the whole school. In addition each year group runs a small group which focuses on specific skills and needs.



## Teaching and Learning



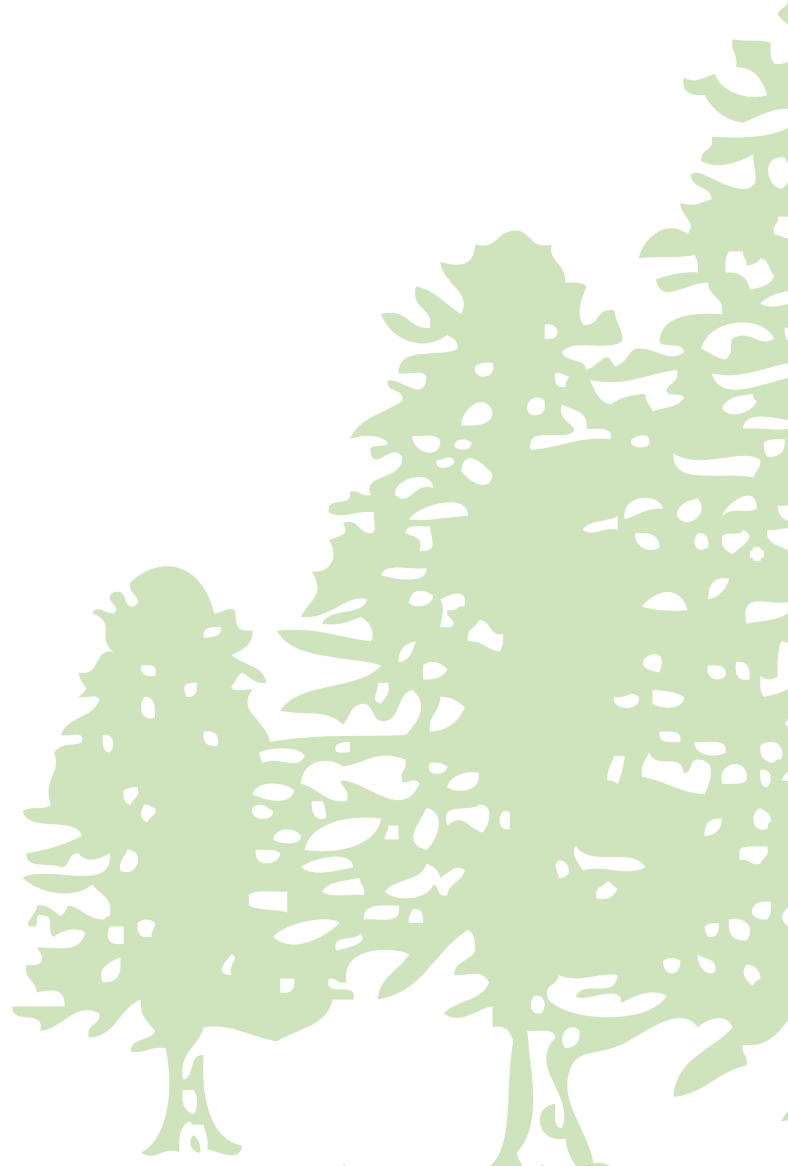
### Sex Education

Sex Education does not feature as part of the curricular programme, although pupil's questions in this area are answered sensitively and appropriately.

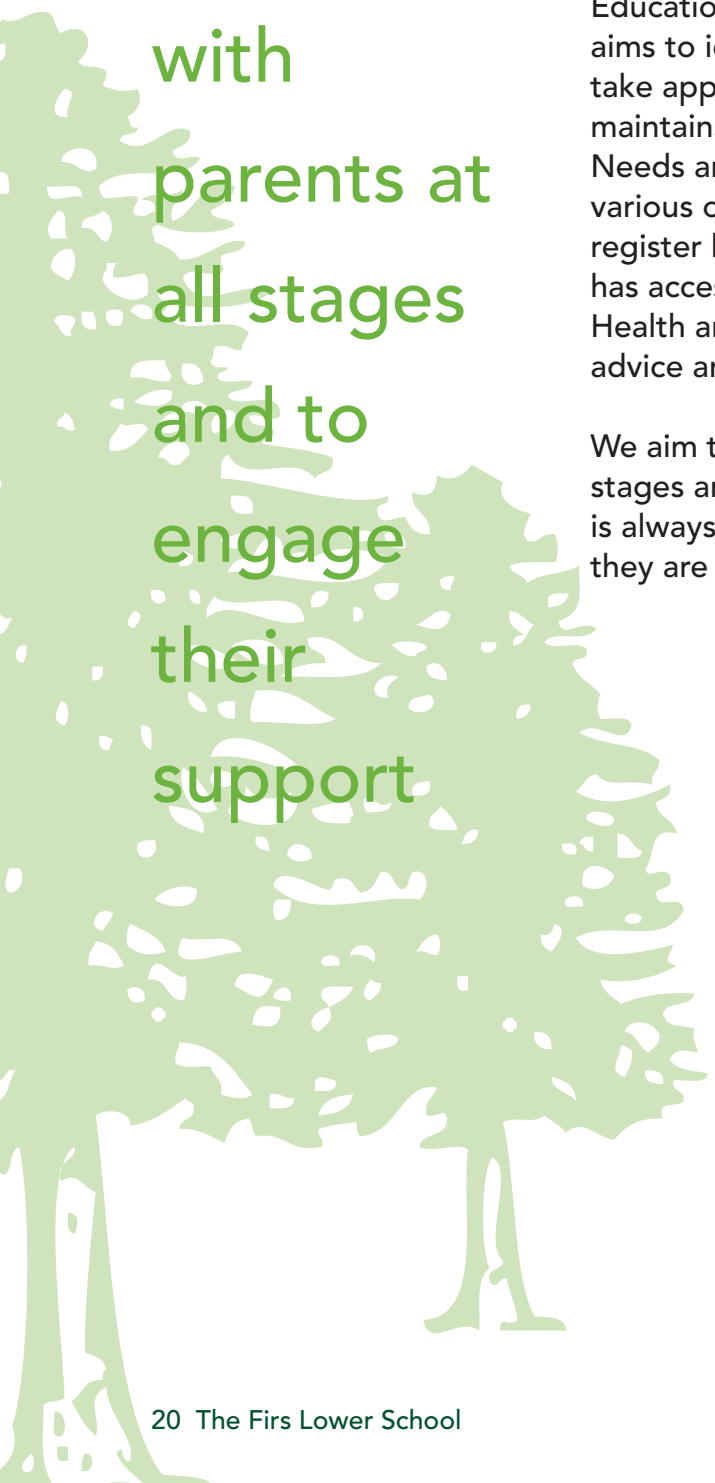
### Equal Opportunities

The school passionately believes in helping every child to achieve their best and think positively about themselves. As a result of this belief, the school promotes equal access to the curriculum for all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality or disability.

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# Teaching and Learning



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## Special Educational Needs

All children have individual needs and these will vary from subject to subject. They are addressed by the class teacher as a normal part of the lesson, through differentiation in the delivery of the curriculum (providing work at a suitable level for the child). However it is recognised that, at any time, some children may experience a particular learning difficulty that can be of short or long term duration.

Those children who are identified as having Special Educational Needs will require special help. The school aims to identify as early as possible those children and take appropriate action. The Special Needs Co-ordinator maintains a register of children with Special Education Needs and works closely with the class teachers and various outside agencies. Those children on the SEN register have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The school has access to the Local Authority's Psychological Service, Health and Welfare agencies etc who are all able to give advice and support.

We aim to involve and consult regularly with parents at all stages and to engage their support. Parent's permission is always sought before outside agencies are involved and they are kept fully informed of the outcomes.

# Teaching and Learning

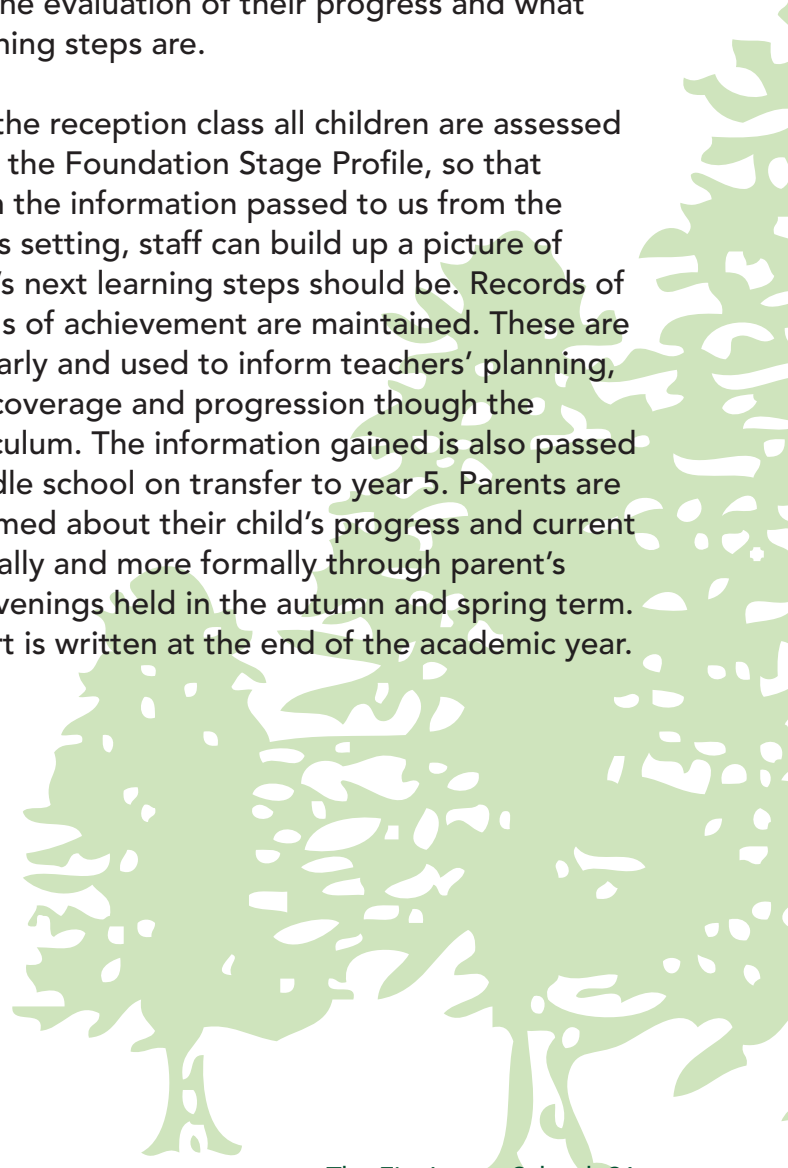


We believe  
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teaching

## Assessment for Learning

We believe that assessment and monitoring is essential to the promotion of effective teaching and learning and should take place on a continuous basis. It should be a fair and open process, which involves, informs, supports and motivates pupils. We assess our children's progress by continuous observation, assessing children's work on a regular basis and by giving written or verbal feedback to celebrate successes and help the child with the next steps to improve or develop their learning. Teachers ensure that children know the learning objective and how they can be successful indicated by the 'success criteria' for each lesson. Children are encouraged to give feedback on their learning and that of their peers. In addition, children are given increasing opportunities to share in the learning process, entering into a dialogue with teachers about their targets, the evaluation of their progress and what their next learning steps are.

On entry into the reception class all children are assessed in key areas of the Foundation Stage Profile, so that combined with the information passed to us from the child's previous setting, staff can build up a picture of what the child's next learning steps should be. Records of children's levels of achievement are maintained. These are updated regularly and used to inform teachers' planning, to ensure full coverage and progression through the planned Curriculum. The information gained is also passed on to the Middle school on transfer to year 5. Parents are regularly informed about their child's progress and current targets informally and more formally through parent's consultation evenings held in the autumn and spring term. A formal report is written at the end of the academic year.





# Teaching and Learning



## Enriching the Curriculum

Topics on particular areas are often begun with a 'wow' starter to peak children's interest and we often organise themed days or weeks, which allow children to investigate a particular area of learning in more depth.



Educational visits are designed in every year group to give children the opportunity to develop their learning outside the classroom in a number of exciting contexts. This might involve the children in visits to sites in the local area or to further afield, such as churches, museums, art galleries, zoos etc.

In Year 4 the school organises a residential visit for pupils, usually in the spring term. The residential visit gives children an exciting opportunity to extend their learning and grow and develop as individuals as they take on personal challenges as part of a very carefully planned programme of outdoor and adventurous activities, in a safe and supportive environment.

## Teaching and Learning



We feel  
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the town

### Partnership with the community

We feel that it is very important that the school plays an active part in the life of the town and encourage the children to appreciate this and contribute as fully as possible to their community.

The school maintains close links with local playgroups and all the schools in the Redborne Schools Partnership including Russell Lower, Maulden Lower, Alameda Middle School (with whom we share the school site), and Redborne Upper School. The headteachers meet regularly, as do other staff. This ensures that we share good practice and work together in the interests of all our pupils.

We have regular visits from the local Baptist and Anglican churches, who join us for assemblies and help to deliver aspects of the RE curriculum. We support both the local Day Centre for the elderly and other local senior citizens with Harvest Festival produce. The Leonard Cheshire home for the disabled and Lavender / Gloucester Court homes for the elderly are visited regularly by the choir. The school joins in various community events such as Ampthill Carnival and the Remembrance service.



# Healthy School – Healthy Children



One of our key aims is to encourage children to develop a healthy lifestyle. To us this means promoting exercise and educating children about the need for a healthy diet. It also means ensuring children are safe, happy, developing morally and spiritually and enjoying their life at school.

## Care for children

At The Firs, we believe the care and support we give children is the most important thing we do. Central to our pastoral policy is our ABC code.

This code of conduct has been formulated with the safety and well being of the children in mind and to enable the school to function efficiently as a place of learning:

**Ask for help if you have a problem with your work or friendships**

**Best work and best behaviour**

**Care, courtesy and consideration for others.**

We encourage our children to ask for help if they have any problem. In addition, we similarly ask our parents to pop into school and let us know if they have a question or concern, so that we can act upon it promptly, address any difficulties and ensure children's happiness and well being.

The school takes bullying very seriously. The school has an anti-bullying co-ordinator who works with staff, the School Council and pupils to ensure anti-bullying messages are re-enforced appropriately and regularly.



# Healthy School – Healthy Children



## Rewarding pupils

On a day to day basis we reward success by joining in the excitement and pleasure of a task well done. A particularly pleasing piece of work will often be sent to the Headteacher or shown to another class to share. Teachers show that the work is valued by mounting it attractively and putting it on display. Good work, special effort and/or achievement or acts of kindness and consideration are celebrated and rewarded with a merit in our weekly whole school Friday merit assembly.

Each class teacher nominates one or two children to receive a gold merit card, which can be taken home, and a merit badge which is worn at school for the rest of the week.

## Behaviour and School Rules

We consider it essential that children should develop self discipline and our behaviour policy is based on encouraging the child to have consideration for others, which in turn, we hope will lead to self discipline. Good behaviour is insisted upon at all times as we try to develop politeness, tolerance and consideration. Any actions contrary to these criteria are dealt with promptly and parental co-operation sought if necessary. Our rules are few and simple and pertinent to the care and safety of everyone.

- Polite and respectful behaviour at all times
- Aggressive behaviour, bad language or bullying will not be tolerated
- Look after your property and respect the property of others
- Quiet movements around the school
- No running in school

In addition – for health and safety reasons:

- Long hair should be tied back
- No sweets to be brought to school.

# Healthy School – Healthy Children



No jewellery should be worn (with the exception of small ear studs, although this is discouraged).

Earrings/studs must be removed for PE lessons.

The majority of children at The Firs are very well behaved and are kind and caring towards others.

Minor breaches of discipline and general behaviour issues are dealt with by class teachers, using the normal agreed classroom sanctions. However a very small number of pupils, on occasion, will try to push the boundaries and for this reason it is important that there is a clear policy and system of procedures so that new teachers, children and parents all know what to expect and that more serious incidents are dealt with consistently throughout the school. Our approach to this important aspect of pastoral care is governed by our behaviour policy which is available on our website.

The school site has secure perimeter fencing and a door entry system. In addition, the school has rigorous procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe, such as regular health and safety inspections, DBS checking staff etc. All these factors ensure children are safe during a school day at The Firs.

## Sporting Provision in School

One of the aims of the school is to involve all children in sport and to encourage a healthy attitude towards life. The school believes that sport should be enjoyable and that every child should have access to a variety of opportunities to explore and achieve their potential. As part of the National Curriculum our children participate in gymnastics, dance, simple orienteering, athletics, games and swimming in Y4. Children are enabled also to develop a range of skills through individual and small group work which culminates in team games.

Through the Redborne Sports Partnership, a range of exciting PE experiences have been offered to children at The Firs recently including tag rugby, cricket skills, dance and tennis coaching.

# Healthy School – Healthy Children



We involve  
children in  
sport and  
encourage  
a healthy  
attitude  
towards life

Football coaching is offered as an out of school activity. Weather permitting, children are also able to organise their own football games during the lunch-break. The whole school (including the Reception class) is involved in a fun sports morning at the end of the Summer term, when teams of mixed age pupils compete against each other through a variety of skill-based games. Through the Redborne Sports Partnership children also have the opportunity to enjoy competitive events, becoming involved in sporting festivals and tournaments during the course of the year. Recent events have included KS1 Multi-Sports, 'Tag Rugby', 'Basketball', Kwik cricket', 'Fencing', 'Rounders', 'Gymnastics', 'Tennis', 'Swimming' and 'Indoor Athletics'.

Children of all ages join in Saturday morning football training sessions on the school field and the school regularly takes part in inter-school football matches.

## Child Protection

Making sure that children are safe is of paramount importance to us. For this reason we have ensured that the school site is secure, that all visitors report to the office and sign in on arrival and that all adults who work with children in school are DBS checked.

Members of staff are on duty at the gate at the beginning and the end of the day, to make sure that children stay safely in school before school begins and go home safely with their parent/carer at 3:30 pm.


It is the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and, on rare occasions, this may require cases to be referred to other agencies.

## Illness

If your child is absent because of illness, please telephone the school on the morning of the first absence or send a letter into school when your child returns.

# Healthy School – Healthy Children

Making  
sure that  
children are  
safe is of  
paramount  
importance  
to us

A stylized green tree illustration with a thick trunk and a full, leafy canopy, positioned on the left side of the page. The tree is rendered in a simple, graphic style with varying shades of green.

## Medical appointments

From time to time you may need to take your child out of school for a dental/medical appointment. Please advise your child's teacher in advance, and for the safety of your child, please ensure you sign your child in or out at the school office.

## Medication in school

If children are ill, then clearly the best place for them is at home. Occasionally, however, it may be necessary for children to have medication administered at school. Should this be the case, please inform the school office and complete and sign a medical indemnity form.

If your child suffers from asthma and needs regular/occasional use of inhalers etc. please inform the school office so the procedures can be explained and the relevant forms signed. Please note, parents are responsible for checking the 'puffer' and ensuring a supply of medication is always available for their child.

If your child suffers from a nut or other serious allergy, it is imperative that the school is informed immediately, so we are prepared in case of anaphylactic shock. Please let the office have a photo of your child so all are aware. All medicines brought into school should be clearly marked with your child's name and handed in to the school office (with instructions). For reasons of safety no child should be in possession of any medication themselves.

## Emergency contact

We may need to contact you during the school if your child becomes ill, please ensure that we have up to date telephone contact numbers.



# Listening to our Children



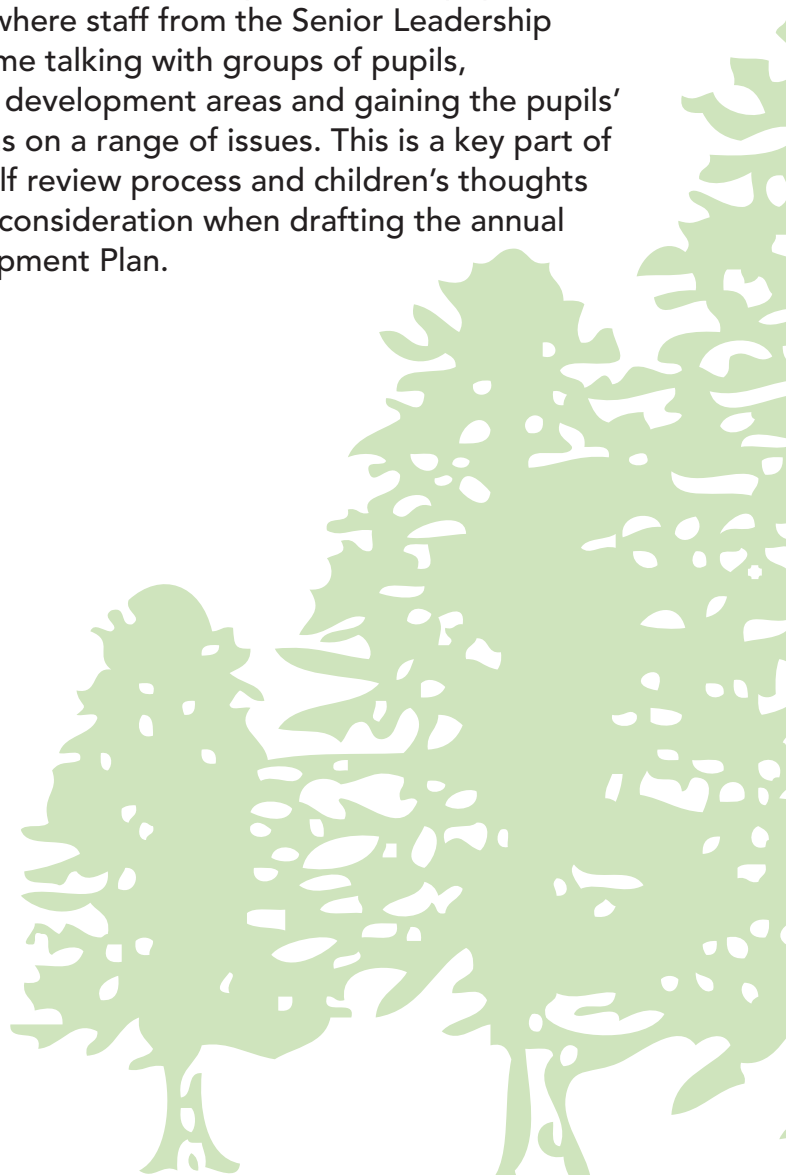
## The School Council

The Firs has a very active school council which has representatives from every class from YR to Y4. The school council has a very prominent voice within the school and has recently played a major part in a number of key development projects including anti bullying measures, strategies to help children enjoy their playtimes, and efforts to both support the International Schools' project and to encourage healthy eating.



## Pupil Consultations

At The Firs we consider children's views about their learning and their experience at school to be very important. For this reason, we conduct an annual pupil questionnaire. This is complimented by pupil consultations where staff from the Senior Leadership Team spend time talking with groups of pupils, discussing key development areas and gaining the pupils' views and ideas on a range of issues. This is a key part of the school's self review process and children's thoughts are taken into consideration when drafting the annual School Development Plan.



# The Governors



The  
Governing  
Body  
represents  
a  
partnership  
between  
parents,  
school  
staff, and  
the local  
community

## What is the role of the School Governors?

The Governing Body is collectively responsible for the strategic leadership of the school. It takes responsibility for shaping our values and aims and takes an active role in developing our long and medium term plans for the development of The Firs.

The Governing Body represents a partnership between parents, school staff and the local community. Governors are elected or co-opted from these groups. The Head Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The Governing Body is responsible for:

- \* Setting and monitoring the school's aims and policies
- \* Ensuring that high standards are maintained
- \* Agreeing and monitoring the school's budget
- \* Maintaining and improving the school's premises and environment

The Governing Body devolves some of these responsibilities to the three standing committees – Human Resources (HR), Finance and Environment and Curriculum and Achievement.

Governors work very closely with staff in school to ensure that children at The Firs enjoy their learning and make good progress. Each year, Governors meet with the Senior Leadership Team to review the strategic plan for the school. In addition, each governor is linked to an important area of development and meets with leaders in school. This, coupled with a regular programme of Governor visits, helps Governors to have a sound grasp of current practice and a good overview of the school development process.

We are very fortunate to have a very dedicated and committed Governing Body and their hard work make a great contribution to the school.



**The Firs**

**Lower School**



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