



The Priory Church of England Primary School

Inspiring all to learn, flourish and achieve

Headteacher: Mr P Ruffle

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Headteacher announcement

I am writing to share with you the news that I will be leaving The Priory Church of England Primary School at the end of the summer term, to take up the position of Headteacher at Moordown St John's Primary School in Bournemouth. My final day as Headteacher of The Priory School will be Friday 21st July.

This has been a very difficult decision to take as I have dedicated the last 5 years of my working life to getting Priory back to where it belongs as the first choice for children, parents and staff. It will always have a special place in my heart and it has been a complete honour to serve you as your Headteacher. Your constant support and patience through a time of unprecedented challenge has been invaluable to me and I will be forever grateful. It is a rare privilege to lead a community where all parties (governors, staff, children and parents) work together with a shared vision.

Through the hard work and professionalism of our dedicated staff and governor team, the school has flourished and moved from Requiring Improvement to Good. I have tried to show the impact that inspirational collective worship can have on creating a learning-centred, values driven culture. I am proud of our new Ofsted grading, but I find more personal satisfaction in our parent view report where 98% of parents recommended Priory School and in the learning behaviours and kindness now displayed by our pupils.

I hope you and your child are proud of the distance we have travelled during these years. I would ask that you speak to your child about this news and reassure them that they continue to be at the centre of all that we do. These changes are not happening imminently, so there is time to put a strong transition plan together. Everyone in school remains completely focused and committed to ensuring every child receives an excellent education. I intend to speak to the children during Tuesday's collective worship.

Our governing body, with Diocese support, will oversee the recruitment of a new Headteacher. Although I am extremely sad to leave Priory School, I am confident that the school will be able to appoint an excellent successor. I believe that during my time as Headteacher I have laid secure foundations and that the school can go from strength to strength.

Finally, I want to again thank you for your support and reiterate that my focus remains unchanged for the remainder of the academic year as I strive to further improve our school and serve the children here.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Ruffle', written in a cursive style.

Mr P Ruffle, Headteacher

Chair of Governors' Response

Hello everyone, I'm the Chair of Governors of the Priory School and felt it important to reach out to you, following Mr Ruffle's announcement.

I can appreciate that the announcement will cause some dismay within most/all of you!

I have been a parent at the Priory School for eight years and a Governor for five years and I remember the days before Mr Ruffle joined, and the remarkable transformation since.

Mr Ruffle has led the team through a tumultuous time over five years! Following a poor OFSTED result, then through the Covid era and then another OFSTED (this time with a "Good" rating), the recently refreshed curriculum, as well as navigating through an increasingly difficult financial situation (and I could list many more successes!) - and all with a smile.

Mr Ruffle will be leaving the school in a strong and stable position.

It should also be noted, that Mr Ruffle is only ever going to be as good as the team he leads, and has been supported by a fabulous team around him, and enormous credit must go to them also!

With every challenge comes opportunity, and whilst we will all feel loss, we will welcome a new leader in September, who can take the school to a new level by building on the strong foundations Mr Ruffle has laid:

- We have a refreshed curriculum, sequenced from Year R through to Year 6, which will importantly, enable children to learn how to reflect and become resilient, whilst connecting their learning across their years at the Priory School.

- We have an outstanding teacher and staff group. They are so committed to every child's education and well-being, and we must recognise this and thank them.

- We have the best pupils! I only ever hear great feedback about the behaviour and respect that our children exhibit.

So our current focus is:

1. Maintain our ambition – keeping true to our mission and what we all believe a school should focus on – inspiring a generation to learn, flourish and achieve.

2. Search for a new Headteacher. We will advertise shortly, welcome applications, and then the governors and Senior Leadership Team will work to assess candidates. Much to do in this space, but we know there are some fabulous candidates out there!

3. Celebrate the contribution of Mr Ruffle. He has given his all for the Priory School for the last five years.

We will wish Mr Ruffle every success at Moordown St Johns, and we are certain that he'll be as great for them as he has been for the Priory School, although there is still plenty of time to go - in which Mr Ruffle can continue to lead and support our School and our children.

Best regards

Geoff Tabor

Chair of Priory School Governors