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Dear Parents and Carers

Promoting Boys Writing

In January and July, many of you participated in a parent and pupil survey into learning behaviours across Key Stage 2. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting your child with this and for your own informative comments both in January and July. The survey was part of a larger project which I have been undertaking as part of my NPQH qualification, focussing on ways to increase the attainment of our boys in Key Stage 2.

Firstly, let me reassure you all that our Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment has been significantly higher than the national average in both 2016 and 2017. In 2016 50% of boys in England reached the expected standard for Key Stage 2 across all three subjects, whereas 63% of Hothfield boys did. In 2017, the national figure for boys was 57% and the Hothfield figure was 79%. The reason I chose the focus of boys' attainment was that in 2016 85% of our girls achieved the national standard for KS2 and I wanted to see if we could raise the figure for boys in 2017. As you can see above, we have done.

A key part of the project was to try to identify strategies that would help more boys achieve the expected standard. The Learning Behaviours Survey was part of this. The questions were aimed at identifying children's attitude to our 6 Rs – resilience, responsibility, reasoning, resourcefulness, relationships and reflection; all behaviours we associate with successful learners. When the children re-took the survey in July, boys in Year 3 particularly had a significantly more positive response to questions around dealing with challenge in learning (resilience) and using their initiative (resourcefulness).

The 6Rs are first introduced to children in Year 3 and I think this survey shows that they are helpful in creating positive learning attitudes, so now we and one school colleague in Key Stage 1 have agreed to introduce them too.

Another strategy we trialled was a more focussed approach to teaching handwriting. Samples that I analysed from classes taking part in this trial showed significant improvement between September and July, particularly in Years 3 and 4. In light of this we are recommending a more systematic approach to handwriting teaching across Key Stage 2.

The project has been an interesting one, but we intend to keep monitoring boys' attainment and hope to build on the success shown by the 2017 cohort.

Thank you once again for your help in completing the surveys.

Yours faithfully

Susannah Lord-Cloke
Deputy Headteacher, Hothfield Site