



# Dereham Neatherd High School

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Headteacher: Chris Smith

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Dear Pupils and Parents/Carers,

As we reach the end of a busy Autumn Term, I wanted to write to you to thank you all for your continuing support for the school and to congratulate our pupils on their hard work and achievements over the past three months. We've finished the term on a high with a great Christmas dinner cooked by the finest canteen team in the county, over 90 pupils taking part in the swimming gala and a show of amazing talent at the Christmas Concert. It has been a pleasure to be in school this week and there is a lovely festive feel in the air today!

As you will know, I have been appointed to take over the role of Headteacher from January. I have worked at Neatherd, and served its community, for over seventeen years. During that time, I have seen it go from strength to strength and it is a tremendous (and humbling!) privilege to have been entrusted with taking the school on the next steps of its journey. In doing so, I know that I have an extraordinarily talented and hardworking staff body here who are ready and willing to do their best to support every one of our young people to 'be whatever they want to be'.

We pride ourselves on being a traditional, inclusive and supportive school, where our school values of compassion, hard work, respect, integrity and fairness sit behind everything we do, but we know that we are far from perfect. We will make some mistakes along the way – it is a fact of human nature and I have certainly made my fair share of them in the past – but we will all strive to learn from them and to get better and better every day. That is the real meaning of education.

Some of my colleagues will be leaving us at the end of term to take up new and exciting opportunities and promotions, including Ms Carter De Bois (science technician), Mr Banks (teaching assistant), Ms Woodward (SEND department) and Mrs Smith (science teacher and learning mentor). In other staffing news, Mr Stek has decided to step down from his role as Director of Years 10 and 11 to focus on his passion for teaching history. I would like to thank all of these colleagues for their dedication and hard work over many years. From January, Mr Cannon will become the Director of Years 10 and 11, with Mrs Jacobs becoming the Director of Year 7. All of the year group Directors have been meeting this week to make sure that they know their groups well and can hit the ground running in the new year.

Finally, I would like to say thank you and best wishes to Mr Smith as he leaves us to take up his new post as the headteacher of Wymondham High School. Mr Smith has served our school for over eight years, four of which have been as headteacher, including two years leading the school community through an incredibly challenging time during the pandemic. Thanks to his commitment and inspiration, the school today is in a very good place. I have worked in and visited a lot of schools in recent years and I can say with certainty that whilst there is always more that we need to do, the pupils of this school get a very good deal indeed. This is in no small measure because of Mr Smith's inspirational leadership.

I hope that the next two weeks bring you and your families lots of peace, rest and joy. We look forward to seeing pupils for the start of Spring Term on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January (Week A). Until then, enjoy the holidays, and all best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Mallett  
Deputy Headteacher



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