



Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP School Debenham, Suffolk

Information for those candidates wishing to apply for the post of Headteacher
(Maternity Cover)



Learning by Faith

School Corner, Debenham, Suffolk, IP14 6PL

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<https://www.sirroberthitcham.suffolk.sch.uk>

1. The school at a glance

We are a voluntary aided primary school catering for children between the ages of 3 and 11. We have a strong Christian ethos and take pride in living our values and, as such, welcome children from families of all faiths and none.

We are a friendly one-form entry school, situated in the village of Debenham in the heart of Suffolk. As well as Debenham, our school also serves the nearby villages of Kenton, Winston, Pettaugh, Aspoll and part of Rishangles. We have a Nursery class with 20 places and seven single-aged group classes for children between 4-11. Our school site also hosts the Roundabout Pre-school and the Debenham Village Library.



Our school is set in large grounds, which includes a Forest Schools area and a purpose built Early Years outdoor learning space. We maximise our use of this wonderful space, promoting PE and an active lifestyle, with real success. Indoors, our shared learning areas are used for group work, practical learning and to provide for the specific needs of groups or individuals. To help children develop their social and emotional skills, our ELSA-trained teaching assistant works with children in a designated room called 'The Space'.

The relationships and the expectations we have of all members of our school family are underpinned by Christian values. We are proud of the caring and responsible attitudes and enthusiasm for learning that our children demonstrate. Our 'Rainbow Pledges' develop the Christian ethos across the school and give pupils a guide to how to behave whilst in school to ensure the best possible learning environment for everyone. To help pupils remember this pledge, they are celebrated and shared weekly during Collective worship.

The Friends of Sir Robert Hitcham, a charity comprising parents, ex-parents, staff and ex-pupils, is active in organising fund raising events, this year adapting their usual in-person Frost Fayre and Summer Sizzler to virtual fundraising instead. In so doing they have been able to enhance our pupils' experiences at school, having helped fund the new music curriculum and purchased musical instruments to support this and paying for the annual 'Mathletics' subscription, to name but a few.

2 Key information for the application and selection process

We are seeking to appoint a Headteacher to cover the Maternity Leave of our substantive Head from 5th July to 31st December 2021. If you decide to proceed with your application, please send your completed application form and Equal Opportunities monitoring form, together with a supporting statement to:

Headships@suffolk.gov.uk - Please ensure your email heading states clearly which school you are applying for.

Headteacher Recruitment
Education & Learning
Suffolk County Council
Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2BX

The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 16th April.

Your supporting statement should address the job specification and may be handwritten or typed and no more than two sides of A4, but should be in black ink to assist with photocopying. It would also be helpful if you could comment on the following in your application:

- your personal educational philosophy
- your views on school leadership and management and the role of the Headteacher
- the personal and professional qualities you would bring to this post
- how you would ensure the highest standards of teaching and learning.

Interviews will be held via Zoom on Thursday 29th April.

Selection and ratification will take place immediately following the completion of the interviews.



3 OFSTED and SIAMS Findings

OFSTED

During February 2021, the school was host to a Section 8 Ofsted monitoring visit. The inspectors found that the school leaders and governors were taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances. They also noted:

- The school has made it a priority to ensure that every pupil receives an education during the national lockdown and we are continually reviewing both the on-site and remote education on offer to all pupils.
- The curriculum in all areas has been reviewed and a new curriculum is being put in place which carefully considers the order in which the knowledge and skills for each subject need to be taught in each year group.
- The school is working effectively to identify and support our most vulnerable pupils, especially to support their personal, social and emotional needs. Consequently, these pupils are able to successfully take part in remote and/or on-site learning which means they are at less risk of falling behind.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read regularly and they set tasks to develop and demonstrate pupils' understanding of the books they read. Pupils who struggle with reading are identified and they receive appropriate individualized support to help them catch up.

Ofsted also identified that school leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- Develop leaders through high-quality training that supports them to carry out their roles effectively so they are confidently contributing towards school improvement.
- Provide focused training and support to staff so they have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the curriculum they are planning and delivering in all subjects.
- Ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well considered and planned for, and that teaching is suitable adapted.

The most recent Section 5 Ofsted inspection took place in June 2019, and the inspectors found that the school has the following strengths

- The school is a caring and nurturing environment that meets the spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of its pupils well.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Pupils read to a high standard across the school.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, and are well prepared to enter key stage 1.
- Pupils perform well in sport and physical education (PE). School teams have competed successfully in local sporting competitions.

However, the overall judgment was that the school was in need of improvement, with the following areas of concern being identified:

- Governors' actions to hold leaders to account have not resulted in notably higher standards for pupils since the previous inspection.
- Leaders are not diligent in ensuring that they routinely challenge weak teaching and share good practice across the school.
- Leaders' monitoring of arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not ensuring that they make enough progress.
- Effective curriculum planning to ensure that pupils make good progress across the full range of subjects is in its early stages of development.
- Leaders have not been successful in dealing with the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty for pupils. This means that work is sometimes too easy and sometimes too hard.
- Too few pupils make good progress in mathematics in key stage 2 because the quality of teaching in the subject is not consistently good
- Recent improvements in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have not been sufficiently strong over time to ensure that they sustain good progress.

The Headteacher and staff supported by the Governing body have been working hard on these aspects of the school and real progress has been made. A new substantive Head was appointed in January 2020 and the school has been on a developing journey. Covid-19 has brought additional challenges which has hampered the speed and progress of this journey however, there have been significant progress in the areas of behaviour, Christian ethos, curriculum and subject leadership. The school is on a clear trajectory in which the whole school community has invested in.

SIAMS

The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) took place in October 2016, and the findings were these:

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sir Robert Hitcham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Pupils benefit from high-quality relationships with one another and with adults, recognising this to be as a result of being part of a Christian community.
- Despite living in a largely mono-cultural rural area, pupils show a well-developed understanding and respect for those of other cultures and faiths.
- Governors have a very detailed knowledge of the school, and have been highly effective in supporting staff and helping to support the school's Christian distinctiveness during a period of change in senior staffing.



Areas to improve

- Review the opportunities that pupils have for guided and personal reflection during all times of collective worship, and consider improving the provision of the outside area for pupils to pray or reflect, possibly also establishing an indoor space for the same purpose, to further enhance pupils' spiritual journeys.
- Seek additional ways to make the school more visible as a Christian community in the village, including perhaps trying to add a religious element to the effective links that already exist with the local church high school.

4 Letter from the Chair of Governors

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in the position of interim headteacher at Sir Robert Hitcham CEVAP School. We are proud of our school and know that it is a wonderful and welcoming community to be part of.

The school has seen some important changes over the last fifteen months and, as such, there have been a number of improvements which means the school is a thriving place for our pupils to learn and a great place for teachers to work. Our teachers are an effective team. They are professional, friendly, fully committed and determined to provide children with every opportunity to enjoy each day and achieve their potential.

The school has a strong Christian ethos which we are looking to strengthen and develop, but we are inclusive of children from all faiths and backgrounds. It is our priority that every child regardless of their beliefs is warmly welcomed, supported and encouraged.

The Governing Body is seeking to appoint someone who will build on the recent improvements, lead and encourage staff in their development, while being sensitive to the current post-pandemic educational challenges that all schools face. Our priority remains a pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning. This post is an exciting and challenging opportunity to join the school for this temporary position at an important stage in its development. We are looking for a candidate who will bring their expertise and skills to lead the school. We want to appoint a person who has the vision, drive, resilience, experience and personality to build upon our success to date.

I hope that this information pack and the school website will provide you with all the information you need. Visits to the school are warmly encouraged and can be arranged by contacting the school directly. We would be delighted to show you round.

We are looking for an exceptional person to lead us during this interim period.

I would like to thank you again for your interest in the post and look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely,

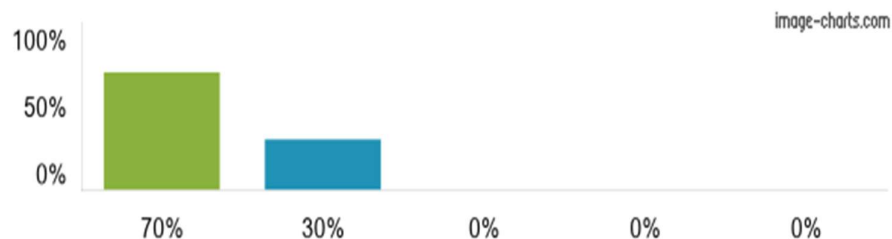
Claire Gibson

Chair of Governors

5 Parent Perspective

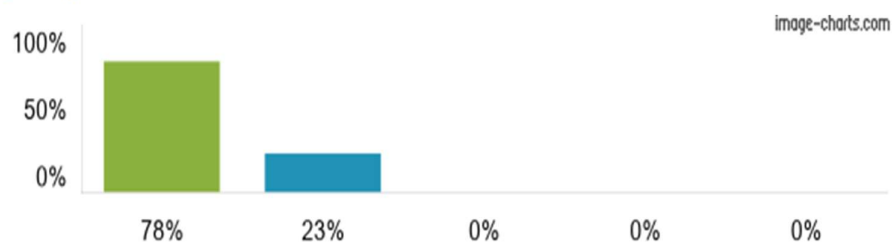
Ofsted Parent View February 2021

➤ 1. My child is happy at this school.



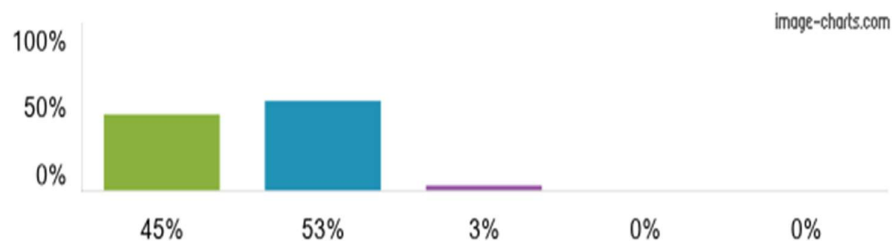
Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

➤ 2. My child feels safe at this school.



Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

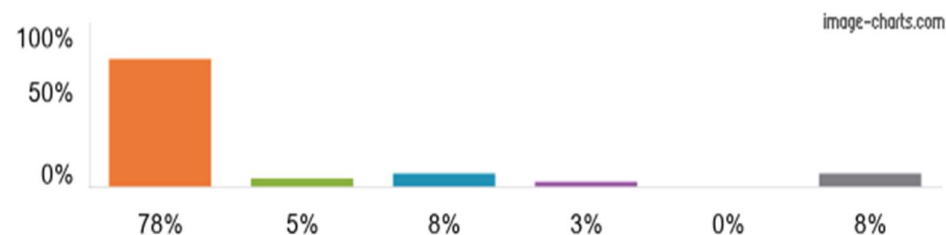
➤ 3. The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.



Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

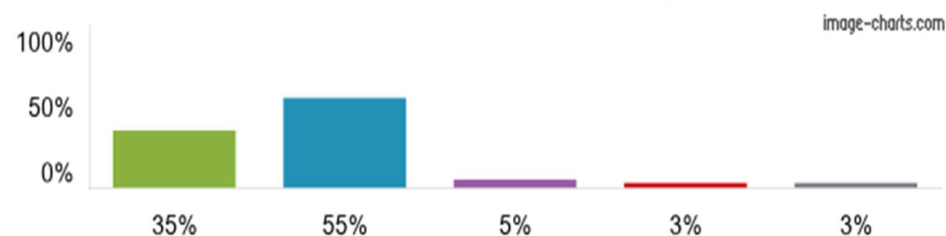


4. My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively.



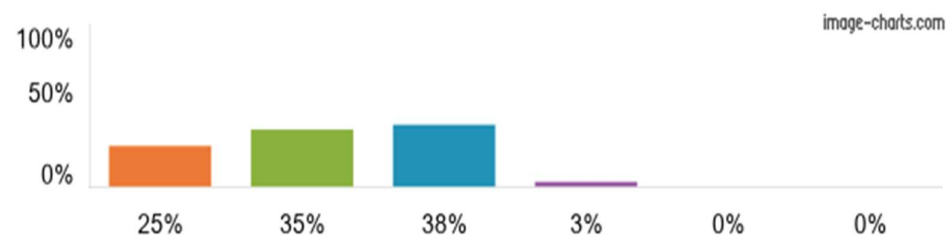
Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

5. The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year.



Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

6. When I have raised concerns with the school they have been dealt with properly.



Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

Key to results

My child has not been bullied

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Key to results

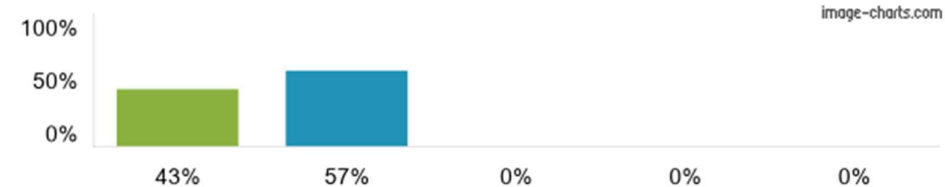
I have not raised any concerns

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

7. My child has SEND, and the school gives them the support they need to succeed.

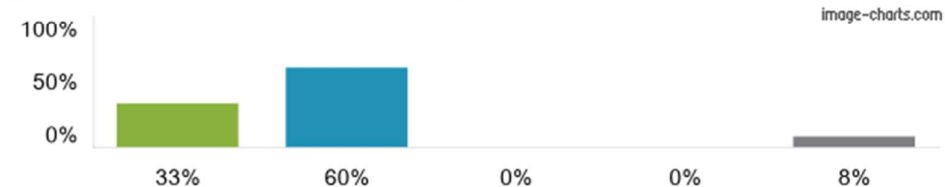


Figures based on fewer than 10 responses up to 05-02-2021

Strongly disagree

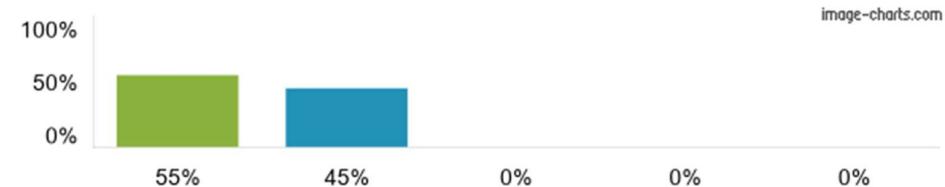
Don't know

8. The school has high expectations for my child.



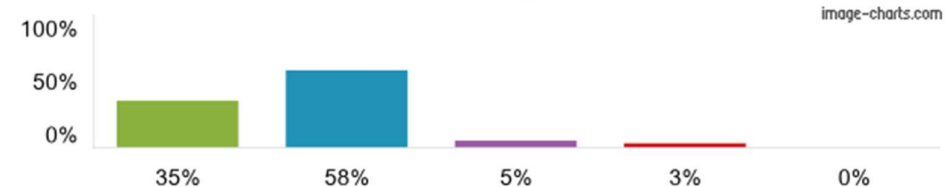
Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

9. My child does well at this school.



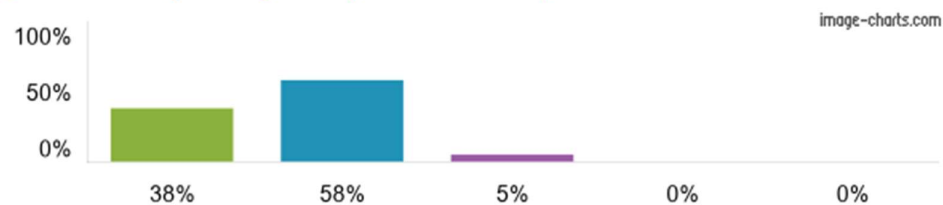
Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

10. The school lets me know how my child is doing.



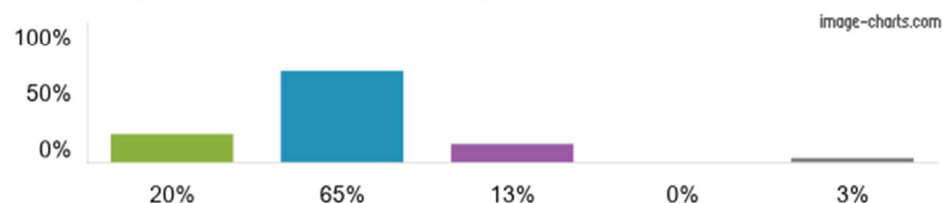
Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

➤ 11. There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school.



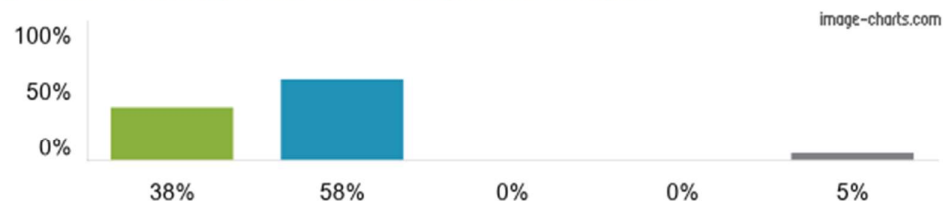
Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

➤ 12. My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school.



Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

➤ 13. The school supports my child's wider personal development.



Figures based on 40 responses up to 05-02-2021

➤ 14. I would recommend this school to another parent.



6. Debenham and its surroundings

Suffolk is a great place to live and work and our village, Debenham is at its heart. Compared to most other counties, Suffolk is safer and healthier, and our community satisfaction rate is one of the highest in the country. Suffolk is a large county, with a population of around 715,700. Largely a rural county with numerous villages and small market towns, Suffolk is famous for its broad skies, rolling countryside and Heritage Coast.



Debenham is an unspoilt village with a welcoming community and traditional architecture evidencing a rich 1000 year history. The source of the River Deben is described in The Domesday Book as one of the most populated villages in the area. While other areas have overtaken Debenham in population size (about 2000), the village is unusually well provided for with pubs, cafes, shops, a leisure centre and a high school that is consistently one of the best performing in the county and in fact the country.

The village has good road access to the three major towns in Suffolk. Ipswich is the county town and the major administrative and commercial centre, a focus for business, shopping, sport and entertainment. Bury St Edmunds has an historic tradition as a regional centre and is the major town serving the western part of the county. Lowestoft is a seaside town with an enviable stretch of coastline and is well placed for leisure as a gateway to the Norfolk Broads. For administrative purposes, the county is divided into three areas: Northern, Southern and Western, with Area offices in Lowestoft, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. Suffolk County Council headquarters, Endeavour House, is located in Ipswich.

The A14 provides rapid access from Felixstowe, one of the largest container ports in Europe, across the county to the A1 and the Midlands. The A12 links London with Lowestoft, and the rail connection from Ipswich to London Liverpool Street takes just over one hour.

Suffolk has a tradition of active cultural life and there are artistic events with national and international reputations, such as the music festivals at Snape and Aldeburgh as well as the 'Latitude' festival.

There are many exciting local projects and initiatives including the university, University Campus Suffolk (www.ucs.ac.uk), which welcomed its first students in 2007. Economically the county is embracing change to help people develop new skills. Education has a vital role to play, and investing in young people is at the heart of these developments.

7. Job Description and Selection Criteria

Job title: Interim Headteacher

Salary scale: £54,091-£61,166

Start date: 5th July 2021- 31st December 2021

Overview

To develop a vision for our school's future and to apply a clear strategy which ensures all pupils receive an exceptional education. This will develop their full potential in academic, creative, spiritual and moral life, as well as building on the school's links with the parish and local community.

Qualifications

- Qualified teacher status
- Award of National Professional Qualification for Headship, or other relevant professional qualification, or evidence of in-depth research based study.
- Recent and relevant professional development

Experience

- Proven senior leadership and management experience of at least 3 years.
- Proven success in improving standards within a primary school.
- Evidence of leading whole school improvement initiatives that have had an impact on pupil attainment, and have enhanced standards in teaching and learning.
- Evidence of designing and implementing an effective monitoring framework to promote excellence in teaching and learning.
- Significant experience in evaluating and using data to plan and improve pupil performance.
- A clear understanding of what makes good and outstanding teaching, and the ability to develop a culture where striving for outstanding teaching and learning is central to the school's work.
- Evidence of implementing effective strategies which improve attendance, punctuality and behaviour.

Job description

- Ensure the vision and values of the school, including its Christian and community character, are clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively.
- Be aware and plan around funding, education policy, and demographic developments, and anticipate trends.
- Ensure creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate new technologies to achieve excellence.

- Ensure a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on pupils' achievement, with learning at the centre of strategic planning and resource management.
- Ensure a culture and ethos of challenge and support, where all pupils can achieve success and are engaged in their own learning, with high expectations for the whole school community.
- Challenge underperformance at all levels and ensure effective intervention and follow-up.
- Implement strategies which secure high standards of behaviour and attendance.
- Promote equality and inclusion in all aspects of school life, and ensure that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are fully welcomed into, and included, in the school.
- Manage the school's financial resources effectively and efficiently.
- Recruit, retain and deploy staff appropriately, and support in the managing of their workload, to achieve the vision and values of the school.

Person specification

- Embrace the Christian ethos and the links to the local parish and wider community.
- Be passionate about education, allowing the pupils at Sir Robert Hitcham to aspire to be the best they can be.
- Enjoy working with children and young people, and be an inspirational role model to the pupils.
- Have exceptional interpersonal and communication skills to engage and build relationships with all stakeholders; to motivate and inspire.
- Respect others and have the presence to be respected; to have a calmness and authority about them.
- Have a clear vision for the school, and a strategic plan to build whole-school morale.
- Encourage a purposeful atmosphere where everyone can work together as a team, and feel valued to move the school forwards.
- Have the patience and confidence to allow new ideas, initiatives and procedures to embed, giving time for them to show impact.
- Have an excellent understanding of assessment, HR, Safeguarding, GDPR and other legal requirements.
- Be questioning and reflective, encouraging of challenge and the celebration of achievement.
- Be able to manage change, in whatever form it may arise.
- Have a sense of fun!

8. Message from the Rev. Susan Bates

Debenham is one of seven parishes in our Benefice; many of which are in the school catchment area. As we strive to serve and reach out to our community, we are delighted to have such a close and strong relationship with Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School.

In non-Covid times, pupils often visit the church for services and church led activities such as Experience Advent, Experience Easter and Experience Pentecost.



We also have a committed and lively Open the Book team which has presented its dramatic retelling of Bible stories in the school on a weekly basis for the last ten years. More recently this has continued as a weekly filmed story.

As the Vicar and a Governor, I would normally spend time in school, leading collective worship, offering pastoral support, attending events such as plays and coffee mornings and, when invited, helping with RE lessons. Our Curate, Tracey and I have recently filmed our offerings for collective worship.

Serving the young children and families of Debenham is one of the most important ways for our church to witness to the love of Christ and it is such a joy for us too!

8. Current Staff List

Staff Name	Role
Miss Laura Newark	Headteacher
Mrs Jill Robinson	Senior Teacher and Year 2 Class Teacher
Mr James Mansell	Year 6 Class Teacher
Miss Molly Miller	Year 5 Class Teacher
Mr Gavin Middleton	Year 4 Class Teacher (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)
Mrs Charlotte Adie	Year 4 Class Teacher (Monday, Tuesday)
Miss Jo Squirrell	Year 3 Class Teacher
Miss Anna Jackson	Year 1 Class Teacher
Mrs Amy Hurren	Reception Class Teacher
Mrs Rebecca Valentine	Nursery Class Teacher
Mrs Jo Woodhouse	French Instructor
Miss Jo Squirrell	Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator
Mrs Ruth Bullock	Nursery Nurse
Mrs Louise Kindred	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
Mrs Heather Meager	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
Miss Jasmine Balaam	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Nicky Betts	Teaching Assistant
Miss Sue George	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Joanna Kemp	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Melanie Legge	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Lynn Odell	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Sue Jones	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Natalie Rockett	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Jane Simpson	Teaching Assistant
Mrs Donna Taylor	Teaching Assistant
Mr Nick Withey	Caretaker
Mrs Lin Bolton	Administrative Assistant
Mrs Sarah Swinburne	Finance Officer
Mrs Gillian Secombe	School Business Manager