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Tuesday 5th November 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

As the new half-term begins, I am writing to share news that is both extremely happy and bittersweet at the same time – a real oxymoron and an example of how emotions can conflict as we reflect upon the difference two very important people have made at our school.

This half-term will be the last at Oak Meadow for two wonderful members of staff who will forever be woven into the fabric of our family for the lives they have touched across generations in their combined forty years at our school. Miss. Mills and Mr. Clarkson have taken the respective decisions to retire at the end of December as they both look forward to the next chapter of their lives. Though this news may feel sad initially, I am happy we have the weeks ahead to 'enjoy the moment' and remember what each has contributed towards Oak Meadow.

Miss. Mills has been an integral part of children's lives in our community for almost 30 years, many of you will remember her from your own childhood as someone who has been a mainstay of our school, both old and new as we moved buildings nearly 15 years ago. Working as School Business Manager in the front office, Miss. Mills has played a pivotal role in whole school organisation as well as providing a vital link for communication with home. Her multi-tasking is a joy to behold as I have witnessed her holding up to four conversations at a time between the office window, telephone calls, children's questions and staff queries! I will personally miss her unwavering support, passion for wanting the very best for our community, the fountain of knowledge she possesses for all things Oak Meadow as well as the copious amount of smiles and laughter we have shared. I know you will see Miss. Mills in the weeks ahead to share your thanks and best wishes for the future and I echo these alongside all staff – quite simply 'Bev' we love you and Oak Meadow will just not feel the same without you!

With that sentiment in mind, Mr. Clarkson takes well-deserved retirement from our school and will be remembered as one of the most loved teachers Oak Meadow has known from his 11 years of service. His nurture of every child he has taught and how he has made such a positive difference to both hearts and minds throughout his time here has been an inspiration to observe. I feel lucky to have worked alongside such a true gentleman who has shown children that education is about shaping the person we can become as much as the here and now. I know all those who have been taught by Mr. Clarkson over the years, their parents/ carers and families will understand exactly what I mean and want to share their thanks in the coming weeks as well as wishing him the best for the future. As a personal message 'Dave', thank you so much for the impact you have made. I have been privileged to work alongside you and experience the generosity you exude, always having time for anyone and everyone at our school. Everyone at Oak Meadow loves you and wishes you a long and happy retirement!

Looking forward, please take the opportunity to reflect with Miss. Mills and Mr. Clarkson respectively, sharing personal memories of stories with each. Please make friends and family members aware as well as I know there will be lots of well-wishers who would like to say their own goodbye in the weeks ahead. As a school community, we will say our farewells in the last week of the term as part of the Christmas Carol Concerts. Be assured that the staff at Oak Meadow also have their own plans for a suitable Miss. Mills and Mr. Clarkson send-off... all top secret of course!

Take care everyone and, as ever, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions at all.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Lane (Head of School).

From tiny acorns mighty oaks grow...

