

# ROEBUCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

DREAM-BELIEVE-ACHIEVE



Roebuck Primary School is a community school that has recently expanded to two-form of entry. It is situated in a ward that is within the top 40% most deprived wards in the country. The large majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. There is a higher number of pupils with Special Educational Needs than the national average.

I took over the school shortly after the 2013 Ofsted inspection where the school had been found to be Requiring Improvement. Staff had spent long spells of their careers at the school but were working incredibly hard. As a Head, I am a believer that you are only as good as your staff and so it was from the first moment that I wanted to invest in the people who can really make a difference.

First with the Senior Leadership Team and then with staff, we set about sharing our key beliefs as to what strong teaching and learning looked like. We created a list of non-



negotiables that are stuck to by all members of staff, both old and new. A detailed and manageable Teaching and Learning Policy was written and a rigorous monitoring schedule was put in place. Teachers were listened to and were given clear reason behind all decisions. Communication throughout the school was improved. Within a short time, there was a real team-feel where all staff were pulling together to raise standards and make a better school for the children. Teachers who had previously been in the shadows were starting to shine.



There was a real push to ensure that teachers got out of their 'bubble', including the Senior Leadership Team, by visiting other schools and observing good practice. Teachers attended inspirational training and in-house professional development was finely tuned and met the needs of staff. Every decision made was met with consistency – all the way through from Nursery to Year 6. We began using Working Walls in English and maths, improved learning environments and made book areas a focal point of all classrooms. We raised the pitch of our teaching and pushed hard with grammar as being a way that children can write more effectively. Assessment for Learning principles underpin all teaching – children self-assess; know their next steps; model to others and choose their own work to ensure that they always feel challenged. Staff work hard to try to remove any ceiling from learning.



This aim for all children to succeed has been a big factor in the schools' turnaround. Teachers and Teaching Assistants now regularly analyse and evaluate their own work. Teaching is videoed and reflected upon and almost all CPD is aimed at improving our own performance in the classroom and getting the best from the children. Staff now teach a weekly Aspiration lesson and a lot of discussion, both in assembly and in class, is based around everyone reaching their full potential. Children will only have a growth mindset if the adults who work with them do!

A new school motto was created and brought in to every part of school life. Staff were made to look closely at themselves and motivational videos and quotes slowly started to help people turn the corner. 'Ambition' became more of a buzz word and by staff developing and believing in themselves, this started to have an effect on the pupils. We are by no means fully there yet, but already there is a very different feel about the place. The image of the school is important and our pupil numbers have risen well in just two years. Staff take a more competitive and urgent approach to be the best that they can be – and the children, and their parents recognise this. Staff feel fully supported and valued and through training, having regular discussions about their performance and through partner teaching, they feel clear as to how they can develop and know that there are no limits.

A lot of work has been done with parents around growth mindset and helping them to feel supported as well. We look forward to developing this area further as a school. All of the improvements over the past two years have seen results improve dramatically and by having the highest beliefs and expectations, our latest Ofsted report was a strong 'good' in all areas.

Richard Fordham, Headteacher.

For more information on Roebuck Primary School please visit:  
[www.roebuck.herts.sch.uk](http://www.roebuck.herts.sch.uk)

St Margarets, Stevenage, Herts. SG2 8RG  
 Tel: 01438 311937

