

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to introduce myself to you all. I am Mr Ben Cooper, and I have been asked by the Sheerness West Federation Governing Body to become the Interim Executive Headteacher of the Sheerness West Federation's Schools, Rose Street Primary and West Minster Primary, until a permanent Executive Headteacher has been recruited. This will mean me spending 2/3 days a week working across the Federation at either school.

I have been headteacher of two primary schools for the last 13 years and am keen to use the experience I have gained along the way to support other schools and headteachers, without leaving the school where I am headteacher now, Swalecliffe Primary School in Whitstable. To that end, I applied to become a Kent Leader of Education, which meant that I was someone who could be approached to support other schools or school leaders on a part-time or temporary basis.

I have met with Miss Brewer and been to visit your Federation's lovely schools this week, however, they are never the same without the children. I am looking forward to working with and meeting you all, even if it has to be virtually. I value my relationships with staff and parents very highly, and so it has been very important to me that everyone finds this out at the same time, but this has been complicated to achieve. So, I hope that the plan has worked and that this letter arrives at the same time as the one sent out to Swalecliffe staff and parents, so that all find out together.

The current time is without doubt the most challenging which I have faced as a school leader, and I know that I have welcomed any support I have myself received. So I will do my very best to build on all that is good about the Sheerness West Federation and help the staff to build on this, and crucially to make sure that we have measures in place to keep your children, and the staff, as safe as possible.

I am really pleased to see that the plans are in place to have class bubbles when the children return, as I think that this is the next step to make, and safer than moving to year group bubbles straight away. It is also so important that the children are given an opportunity to settle back in school with their teachers, to learn the routines of the new normal, and to get back in to the habit of coming to school every day.

Miss Brewer, as Federation Head of Schools, will remain absolutely in charge of the day to day, but I will be taking a strategic view as appropriate to the executive role, and working alongside her to guide the Federation through what will undoubtedly be a challenging term. Whilst, my role is only a temporary one, I will fully commit to helping both Rose Street Primary and West Minster Primary schools, the staff and most importantly the children for as long as I am needed.

Let us hope that the infection rate stays low, the children can get back to some kind of normality and we can keep the federations schools' staff, children and community safe.

I will be at Rose Street on the first day of term in the morning, and then at West Minster in the afternoon. Please come and say hello to me, from a socially safe distance, and I will be delighted to meet you.

Thank you for reading this,

Mr Cooper