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Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Update on progress since June Ofsted Inspection**

The Ofsted inspection last June identified a number of areas that needed improvement and the inspectors judged the school as Requiring Improvement. I made my disappointment clear following the inspection in a letter to parents and carers and this is available on the [website](#). I do not intend to detail here the reasons why we disagreed with many of their judgements and why the school felt that the judgement was not fully evidenced-based but instead was a judgement based entirely on the 2018 KS2 test outcomes. Rather, I want to share with parents and carers the work we have been doing to address the issues raised and to reassure parents that we take this inspection report very seriously. We are taking significant actions to address them, secure further improvements and ensure we have the clearest evidence of good education for our next inspection.

What is important to me, the governors, the school's leaders, teachers and staff - and mostly the children - is that we do not alter our direction or vision for the children and their outcomes at the school. We will not narrow the curriculum to focus solely on the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted. That is not our way. Our children deserve a broad, balanced, exciting and relevant curriculum where the arts, music, sports, science, technology, humanities and the wider curriculum is still the driver for learning at our school. We do, however, have clear plans to address the issues raised about writing and mathematics, progress of children with SEND, those who are disadvantaged and those capable of the highest levels of achievement as well as leadership development to secure further improvements for all.

*'Improve pupils' progress, particularly SEND, disadvantaged and the most able by ensuring that teaching:*

- *Provides appropriate challenge and support*
- *Enables pupils to practise their skills and develop ideas in extended pieces of writing*
- *Secure pupils' ability to explain their ideas in mathematics' Ofsted 2019*

In the 2019 KS2 test outcomes, we were able to provide significant evidence that addresses these areas for improvement but we have development plans to ensure this is built upon and that progress improves for all pupils but specifically for those groups mentioned. To summarise, the attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved in 2019 from 2018 and we were above the national in all subjects at the expected standard, and were higher than the national in children achieving all three subjects - 9% above. At the higher standard we were much higher than the national average in reading and in line in mathematics. The only area we were below was in writing at the higher standard. This is an area of focus for us.

In terms of the amount of progress children made from KS1, there were improvements for all children in reading and children with SEND made equal progress to those without SEND. Disadvantaged children made more progress than those who are not disadvantaged in reading and children with higher previous attainment made more progress than all other children.



All reading progress outcomes were positive and showed all children made good progress. In writing, progress for SEND children increased significantly and disadvantaged children made much higher progress than all other children.

In mathematics, all children's progress improved but particularly for SEND children who made more progress than children without SEND and more progress than children with SEND nationally. Disadvantaged children made more progress than those who are not disadvantaged.

In summary there were vast improvements in 2019 – improvements which Ofsted were unable or unwilling to acknowledge. From these results we continue to focus on improving progress in mathematics and particularly improving progress in writing where we recognise that children's outcomes need to be better. This term we have focused on planning for writing, supporting teachers to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the expectations for writing and ensuring that there are real purposeful and exciting opportunities for children to write extended pieces. Our Flexible Fridays allow children opportunities to practise their writing independently alongside the taught curriculum. We are developing a progression in writing document, similar to our document in mathematics (available on our [website](#)), to further support improvements in progress. Most importantly we want children to develop a love of writing, whatever their need and to ensure we have the best, most appropriate strategies to support them in developing their skills. In mathematics we have introduced some small changes to teaching to ensure there is a focus on reasoning in every lesson. Our work in developing the children's spoken language is supporting this work in mathematics as children develop the skills to talk articulately about their mathematics (and all other subjects) and consequently write about their understanding.

For the first time in nearly five years, we have had a full leadership team in place for the first half of this term. In a large school this is important. This has made a significant difference to the capacity of leaders to support teachers and support improvement. I am grateful to all our leaders for their hard work, dedication and energy in working together with me and the governors to address the issues raised by Ofsted.

*Improve leadership and management by:*

- *Further tackling inconsistencies in teaching*
- *Develop skills of middle and year leaders so they play a full role in school improvement*
- *Improve the effectiveness of the governing body*
- *Improve leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND' Ofsted 2019*

The issues of consistency in teaching are being addressed as detailed above so I will not repeat them here. Teachers are supported through a range of strategies where leaders are able to give feedback and develop a professional dialogue with teachers to make improvements. We have a highly capable teaching team, supported by a very dedicated support team, who are driving their development with a shared sense of wanting to make improvements and also make sure that this is articulated and evidenced to inspectors.

A number of our middle (curriculum subject) leaders will be undertaking a national qualification to develop their leadership skills and we have secured support for year leaders to further their skills with the support of a Teaching School. We have talented future leaders who will benefit from a full senior team to develop their skills in ensuring our children are achieving excellence across the curriculum.

Our governing body have undergone their review. They were very proactive after the inspection in initiating this review and in detailing their plans to ensure their rigour could be articulated and that improvements are tracked and evidenced-based. Governors will detail this to you in their autumn newsletter so I will not steal their thunder here.



The review of Pupil Premium funding is planned for early next term and we will actively engage in this to ensure we can build on the significant achievements made in 2019. The specific area of leadership of SEND is one that reflects on all senior leaders and the one I have the most challenge in accepting. We face a double challenge in that the cohort of children with SEND in 2018 included a number of children who had joined the school during key stage 2 and many of these arrived after Year 5. We also face a funding catastrophe in that schools are underfunded but so are the outside agencies which support schools with advice and diagnosis. Inclusion is the very core of our school's values and we want every child, whatever their need, who lives in our community, and even outside it, to be welcome and to thrive at our school. I know that some parents have felt some frustrations in the speed of intervention and in gaining support and a diagnosis. I can assure parents that we are as highly focused on this as we are on safeguarding, on which Ofsted stated clearly that we are strong in ensuring our children are safe. I am working with West Sussex in developing a county-wide SEND strategy which, if successful, will result in better services and more resources in school, as well as ensuring that all schools reflect inclusion as a core purpose as we do. Unfortunately, with the pressure of Ofsted and high-stakes accountability, some schools have become less focused on inclusion so that they are less required to direct their limited resources to those children with higher needs. We will never take this route as we are a school for all children in our community.

My greatest regret about the inspection is the comment made about SEND leadership and the impact that has on our dedicated team. The system is imperfect and we have to deal with that everyday but the outcomes in 2019 for children with SEND reflect the good work we do and how well our children with SEND progress. Our team, which includes all class teachers, intervention teachers, leaders and support staff have continued, unrelentingly, to provide everything we possibly can to those pupils who require additional strategies and support. It is one of the main reasons I have spoken out about school funding and I will continue to do so. Any criticism of SEND Provision should be directed at me and not at our dedicated and over-stretched team.

We are at the end of our first full term since the Ofsted inspection and there are at least 5 more until Ofsted return. They will re-inspect us between 24 and 30 months from the last inspection. The Ofsted inspection framework changed in September and these changes are significant in that the framework focuses on the whole curriculum and not so narrowly on the three core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, although these, of course, remain important.

I am proud of the school, the children, the staff and our vision. Our strengths in behaviour, personal development and Early Years were acknowledged and continue to receive the attention we have always paid these vital areas of our work. We will not narrow our work to achieve success in the areas identified by Ofsted. Instead, I believe firmly, our focus on our vision and the pursuit of excellence in all we do will ensure that our next Ofsted is a successful one. I will write to parents and carers again to give you further updates on our progress.

The governors, leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff and I hugely valued the support we received from parents following the Ofsted and we continue to do so. You are our judges and we work together with you to support your unique child to thrive at our school, in our community and into the future. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

*Helen Williamson*

Helen Williamson  
Headteacher

