



**St. Mary's C. of E. Primary School
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Headteacher: Miss A. Brown

Monday 11th December

Dear Parents

As you know, our Ofsted inspection took place on 8 and 9 November 2017. The full report is now available on the school website, and will also be available on the Ofsted website from 12th December. Please contact the school office if you need a paper copy.

The headline judgment is that the school continues to 'require improvement'. This is a huge disappointment for all of us who have worked so hard to address the shortcomings identified in the 2015 inspection report. The feedback we have received from external advisers including the local authority since the last Ofsted has been overwhelmingly positive, and the HMI visit in May 2016 gave us confidence that we were well on the way to achieving 'Good' at the next inspection.

Governors have reviewed the report in detail and we feel that it paints an overly negative picture of the school as it is today, and fails to give due recognition to the progress made by the leadership team, teachers and support staff to address previous weaknesses. However we now need to look forward and consider the future direction for the school, including the question of academy status. We will take full account of the views of parents, staff and the wider community in this consideration, as well as examining the detailed recommendations in the report.

We are pleased that the school continues to be assessed as 'Good' for personal development, behaviour and welfare and for early years provision. The report contains many other positive statements, including the following (all quoted directly from the Ofsted text).

- The school has improved in many respects since the last inspection. The teaching of phonics is a notable example.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, supported by the local authority, understand the school's priorities and have worked tirelessly to address weak teaching. This is helping pupils to make better progress.
- Leaders and teachers are committed to pupils' welfare and provide well-targeted emotional and social support for pupils who need it.
- Teaching, provision and leadership in the early years is good so that children are well prepared for Year 1.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are taking appropriate action to support teachers to improve teaching that does not meet high enough expectations, or that does not secure good progress for pupils.
- Governance has improved since the last inspection.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school.
- The teaching of reading is effective and is well supported by good early phonics teaching, which has improved each year.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Playtime and lunchtime are well-supervised, happy occasions.
- The school's current assessment information and pupils' work reveals that across the school many groups of pupils are making effective progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There are some striking examples of strong progress.
- The early years curriculum is thoughtfully planned and allows children to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across several areas of learning.

There is much to be proud of here, and there is nothing in the report which suggests that the school leadership is on the wrong track. There is a clear implication throughout that appropriate action is being taken, although in some respects the progress is not yet embedded sufficiently.

You may wish to discuss the report with the Governing Body, and we plan to arrange an opportunity for this early in the New Year – date to be confirmed at the start of next term. In the mean time we invite you to send any urgent comments or questions to the Chair of Governors, care of the school office. At this very busy time of the school year, we ask you to kindly not discuss the report with the class teachers and teaching assistants, or with Miss Brown and the members of the senior leadership team. They are all focussed on ensuring that your children are safe, happy and enjoying the run-up to Christmas and it is important that the smooth running of the school is not disrupted. Please follow the guidance in the Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors which is on the school website.

We are grateful for your support during the inspection, and for the many positive comments you submitted on Parent View. We look forward to your continuing support as we plan the way forward for St Mary's School.

Jane Brown
Chair of Governors

Steve Boxall
Vice Chair of Governors