



Head's

Update

January 2020

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT OUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you know, Ofsted recently inspected our school and we have now received a brief report outlining the result of this inspection. This is available for you to download on our website and we encourage you to read it carefully. The format of the report is very different from previous inspections, due to the introduction of a new Ofsted Inspection Framework four months ago, in September 2019.

The inspectors found many positives within the school and found that we were welcoming, and honest about our school. They reported that the school had the following positive features:

- ◆ Leaders want pupils to achieve well and teachers' expectations of what pupils should and can do are rising
- ◆ Pupils are now reaching higher standards in some of their learning
- ◆ The school learning environment is stimulating and vibrant
- ◆ Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning
- ◆ Pupils said behaviour is improving
- ◆ Staff care for the pupils well and help them to keep safe. Pupils can talk with an adult if they have a worry
- ◆ Most pupils feel that staff deal with bullying well when it does occur
- ◆ Staff set good examples and show pupils how to be respectful citizens
- ◆ Pupils play and get on well together
- ◆ Most pupils were friendly and polite
- ◆ In 2019, Year 6 pupils achieved better than they have in the past
- ◆ Leaders have begun to design a suitable curriculum for mixed age classes. In all subjects, there is now a planned programme of what pupils need to know and be able to do. Leaders are better supporting teachers to deliver the plans
- ◆ Teachers are developing new assessment approaches. This is beginning to help them identify and fill gaps in pupils' learning
- ◆ The books children read are well matched to the sounds they know
- ◆ Pupils make good use of the library and change their books often
- ◆ The quality of pupils' writing is showing signs of improvement
- ◆ Leaders' are developing pupils resilience and self-awareness and the outdoor adventure programme (Commando Joe Missions) is supporting this well.
- ◆ Staff provide a range of activities beyond the classroom
- ◆ Sports Crew pupils enjoy leading playtime games
- ◆ Leaders prepare pupils for life in Modern Britain
- ◆ Leaders are working hard to get parents involved in their learning
- ◆ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are knowledgeable and understand

signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders respond well to any concerns reported and make sure the pupils get the support they need

- ◆ Pupils learn to keep themselves safe

The report also outlines areas that we need to develop further. Over the last few years, we have worked incredibly hard to raise standards in Reading, Writing and Maths, as historically our KS2 outcomes have been low and we feel that it is vital that the children have the necessary skills in these areas to be successful in the next chapter of their journeys. As most of you will know, the historical data is also used in school league tables and is used to compare schools Nationally. Last year, our Year 6 children achieved 67% in Reading, 63% in Writing and 74% in Maths which was a huge improvement and much closer to the National picture. The new Ofsted Framework launched September 2019 has also raised the expectations for foundation subjects: Geography, History, Art, Design and Technology, Music, PSHE and French. We were fully aware of the changes that the new framework required and this academic year we have adapted our planning of these subjects accordingly. However, due to the timing of the inspection, we were not yet able to fully evidence the impact of the changes we have made, as we are still developing the sequence of our learning and our assessment of the foundation subjects, in order to ensure that children remember more.

Ofsted said that there are a number of children in Year 3, who are not yet fluent readers and have low reading ages. There is a Government expectation that children are secure in their phonics by the end of Year 2 and are fluent readers, but unfortunately some of the children when they join the Juniors, are still not secure in this area. In September, we introduced a phonics programme and trained our staff in order to support those children, but this work is still on going and it is vital that parents support us in this area by hearing their children read daily at home, to enable the children to catch up on their reading. Going forward, we will be launching some new initiatives to encourage the children to read more at home and to read a wider range of materials.

In addition, whilst the majority of the children at Alfred Street are well behaved, we have a number of children who have a vast range of additional needs and some who display particularly challenging behaviour. Although Ofsted felt that we are developing children's resilience and self awareness, and provide a range of activities to develop children's personal attributes and behaviour, it is still an area that we need to prioritise going forward. We have plans in place to address this area further and correspondence will be sent in due course.

Currently, Alfred Street remains in the Ofsted Category of Requires Improvement. Although the staff and governors would have favoured a better outcome, in order to reflect the hard work that goes into improving the school, we appreciate that improvements still need to be made and that the changes we have made to the curriculum are still in the early stages of development. We will continue to work with the Local Authority to develop the school, and are confident that we are making good progress and are well on the journey to becoming a school that will be judged as 'good'.

On Wednesday 12th February at 6pm, we will be holding an information session for parents and carers outlining our school improvement plans going forward.

All Staff and Governors are committed to providing the best education for your children and we hope that you, as parents and carers, will continue to support us with this aim.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K O'Connor

Headteacher