

## **Governors' Review of the School Year 2016-2017**

In writing the report this year it seemed appropriate to link it with our Ofsted Inspection back in May 2017 which was an external assessment of the school. The school, through the School Improvement Provider, welcomes an objective review of its policies and procedures, its teaching and learning, its management and provision.

**School leaders have been successful in creating a culture across the school in which all aspects of pupils' development are equally valued. *Ofsted Report May 2017***

The Governors and staff of Witton Church Walk CE Primary School have a shared vision in wanting our children to enjoy learning and to feel valued and supported. We have a concern, not only for their academic development and progress and the acquisition of skills, but also in their spiritual, moral social and cultural development and it was reassuring to have this recognised during our Ofsted Inspection back in May 2017. The school focus on using the **United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child** is aimed at equipping children with the information skills and confidence to become aware of the links between what is local and what is global and to recognise their global citizenship. This focus involved challenging and supporting children to become critical thinkers, to develop independent learning skills and to learn about their rights and how to respect them and they also learn to respect others' rights in all relationships in the community. This links with British Values and its focus on mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, the importance of democracy and the rule of law, respect for others and individual liberty. Anti-bullying and inter-faith weeks enable the school to focus on specific aspects of the Rights of the Child and British Values. Details of both the Rights of the Child and British Values can be found on the school website with examples of how they are built into the curriculum. Whenever you are in school do look at the displays of children's work which are, in themselves, an illustration of how effectively this works within the school.

**The school provides pupils with a rich and engaging curriculum, which is further enhanced by well-planned enrichment days that focus on a particular theme or subject. Pupils are encouraged to think like historians or make observations like scientists, and consequently develop a good range of skills across the curriculum. *Ofsted Report May 2017***

Over the past two years the school has been innovative with the development of the curriculum. The requirements of the National Curriculum are covered but within the context of whole school themes. Last year's themes were: in Autumn 2016, 'A day in the life...', in Spring 'A Voyage of Discovery' and in Summer 'Where my wellies take me.' Each of these themes provided a rich source of learning opportunities for the children and the 'Wow days' together with the enrichment days make learning more enjoyable. The importance of school day visits, such as to The Salt Museum, Stockley Farm and the Liverpool Mosque, which provide learning opportunities for children, cannot be under-estimated, and the same can be

said for opportunities to take part in events in other schools or venues, an example being singing in the Town Library and at Daneside Court. The variety of sports available for children to engage in is also extensive and encouraging as are the opportunities to compete in sporting events with other schools. Residential experience last year saw Year 6 going to Menai and Year 4 to Mount Cook and these will provide children with wonderful memories of being together outside school, learning how to cooperate and work as a team. Our Yurt and the Forest School continue to provide opportunities for enriching the curriculum and developing children's skills and broadening their knowledge.

In the Summer Term the school hosted the Ethos Conference where children representatives from other schools met and shared a variety of activities and, during the day, it was a pleasure to see the children enjoying themselves and sharing together. It also happened to be a sunny day too so could take advantage of the school grounds throughout the day until gathering together for final reflection in the Reflective Garden.

Another successful time of sharing was the Great Get Together Picnic which was attended by invited guests. Each class had been involved in preparing a variety of food items from other cultural backgrounds, but primarily it was a day when we remembered that, as Jo Cox said, "We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us."

The Upper Key Stage 2 Science Fair was a brilliant afternoon which gave many of us the opportunity to take part in scientific investigations. There was a real 'buzz' and sense of excitement which we wish an Ofsted team had witnessed.

Early years provision is recognised as good by Ofsted, and walking into the nursery and Key Stage 1 there is a great feeling of warmth and busy activity with children engaged in various tasks and keen to share what they are doing. The Governors are aware that the early Years Team work well together and make an excellent contribution to children's all-round development.

Of course, we all enjoy the children's Christmas performances and their commitment to entertainment. Their confidence is amazing. This reflects something of their general behaviour within school. From personal experience I can proudly state that children are invariably welcoming and polite and willing to share their news and talk excitedly about their work.

**The headteacher and other senior leaders have swiftly and decisively tackled a dip in the school's performance. Their determined leadership has strengthened the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' rates of progress are now also accelerating quickly. *Ofsted Report May 2017.***

With National Tests constantly being changed and Government expectations and floor standards being raised on an annual basis the school has found itself in challenging circumstances. At Key Stage 2 in 2017 the percentage of children gaining the combined age expected standard rose compared to 2016 (which was an exceptionally difficult year due to circumstances Mrs Sarah Merison fully addressed in her Governor Annual Review last year) but are still below the national floor standard for attainment of 65%. Although still below

national results the proportion of children at the expected standard has improved considerably. Unfortunately, what this doesn't acknowledge is the good, and some cases outstanding progress children make from their point of entry into Witton Church Walk Primary school until they leave at the end of Year 6. The Ofsted Inspection team stated in the May Report: *"Children get off to a strong start to their time in school because provision in early years is good. They progress well from their starting points and the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is rising."* It further reports that *"The majority of pupils in the school are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and their work shows that an increasing proportion are working at the level expected for their age. In mathematics, pupils are becoming increasingly confident in tackling written problems and explaining their reasoning. Gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding, a legacy of previously slow progress, are now being filled.... Consequently, pupils are better prepared for moving from one key stage to another, or preparing to move on to secondary school."* Central to the School Development Plan is a focus on children's rate of progress from their starting points in school and particularly in mathematics. Apart from the termly Full Governor Body meetings the governors meet in sub committees and have regular updates on the monitoring of teaching and learning, and we take seriously our role in supporting Mrs Magiera and the teaching and support staff in raising attainment. Governors also have individual responsibilities and meet with the lead teachers on a termly basis. We are all committed to providing the best for the children in our care.

The progress made by Pupil Premium children is closely monitored by Mrs Kenyon has discussed the use of funding with Mrs Bickerton, the designated governor. (Mrs Ruth Cannon takes over the governor role in Autumn 2017). Ofsted recognized that pupils in this category are making good progress in their learning. *"..leaders identify the barriers to learning faced by these pupils and address them by providing additional academic and pastoral support."* Children with special educational needs are also well supported and this was also praised by Ofsted. Mrs Johnson, as SENCo, works with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure appropriate interventions and this obviously works effectively.

### **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Ofsted report May 2017**

Safeguarding continues to have a high priority within the school. Mrs Ellison and Mrs Parr play important roles within the school. Mrs Parr is our Safeguarding lead and ensures that all staff and governors are trained and kept up to date with Safeguarding expectations and procedures. Mrs Ellison works with, and supports families within our school community. The role they play links in with the school's commitment to meet the needs of the whole child as described at the beginning of this report. As Ofsted stated: *"School leaders have been successful in establishing a strong safeguarding culture across the school."* Children have opportunities to reflect on issues such as bullying and are aware of the dangers related to the internet and social media. Through the School Council children have a role in addressing concerns. Children *"have a good understanding of different aspects of safety, including fire and road safety, and understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Pupils are also aware of precautions to take when using the internet, such as not revealing personal details online, and know how to report inappropriate content."*

**Governors show a high level of commitment to the school and share leaders' ambitions for its future. *Ofsted Report May 2017***

The Governors are indeed committed to the school and have made plans to address identified areas for development. We currently have two teams of Governors with a focus on: School Performance Data and, when it is published, the revised School Inspection of Aided and Methodist Schools guidelines/procedures. Details about the Governors and the committees etc. can be found on the school website.

**And finally**

We welcome all new parents and children into our school family this September. We welcome those taking advantage of our revised Nursery provision arrangements. A welcome to new teaching and support staff and to new governors – Mrs Ruth Cannon, Foundation Governor, and Mr Edd Williams, Parent Governor. In Autumn this year Mrs Cath Bickerton will be stepping down as Governor and there will be a Parent Governor election. Thank you to Cath for the positive and supportive role she has played within the school, particularly as pupil Premium Governor. Thank you also to Mrs Sarah Merison, now an Associate Governor, who was an amazing Chair of Governors over many years and who is a hard act to follow.

I hope that this report is informative and useful. Thank you for the interest you take in the school and for your support which is gratefully valued.

Every blessing

Graham Sheen

Chair of Governors.