

Dear Parents,

HOW ARE WE DOING.....?

As an Outstanding School (as judged by Ofsted 2010), whose pupils continue to achieve high levels of progress and attainment, inspections by Ofsted become less frequent.

Both the school's senior leadership team and governors believe that independent external assessment of the teaching and learning in the school is essential for maintaining standards and developing the school's teaching staff.

As a school maintained by the local authority, we receive an annual visit by a member of the Milton Keynes Council's School Improvement Team. Previously, in addition to this visit, we have sought a more comprehensive review every three to four years.

In November 2014 this was conducted by Brenda Iles, Early Years and primary education adviser. Brenda concluded *'Leaders are constantly seeking ways to improve the environment, resources and quality of teaching, implementing new ideas and reviewing the effectiveness of provision on achievement.'*

This year (January 2018) we have had the first of what will become an annual review undertaken by Challenge Partners, a national organisation set up to improve outcomes for pupils and build a world class, self-improving and sustainable system.

The report was overwhelmingly complimentary, so we thought we would share with you some of the highlights:

- The school knows itself well and is constantly striving to improve on previous best performance. Leaders have created a culture of high expectations that enables pupils and staff to excel.
- Since 2015, standards have continued to rise. This is due to the high emphasis placed upon monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and analysis of pupils' outcomes through regular progress reviews.
- The school's motto of 'Building a life-long love of learning in a safe and happy school' is evident in all aspects of school life. This is particularly noticeable in the excellent learning behaviours of pupils who are interested in their work.
- Displays around the school are highly inspiring and reflect an outstanding range of learning opportunities that have been inspired through both literature and the arts. Pupils have the opportunity to work with artists and musicians. This has a very positive impact on engaging pupils in learning.
- The school's focus on developing 'a holistic child' is highly effective as pupils have very strong skills of empathy and care for others. When studying the novel 'The Christmas Eve Tree' pupils' writing demonstrated choice of descriptive vocabulary in seeing Christmas through the eyes of a homeless person.
- Pupils' writing demonstrated both compassion and high levels of understanding of the hardships brought about by poverty. This contributed significantly to their personal development.

- Relationships between all adults and pupils are very warm and supportive. As such, pupils thrive in an environment of high expectations and interesting learning.
- The school's decision for curriculum enrichment on Tuesdays is developing high curiosity in learning. Pupils have the opportunity to learn yoga, cookery, mindfulness, sewing, art, dance and music.
- School improvement strategies are highly inclusive. Pupils who need to catch up are given focused interventions so that they can catch up with their peers. A close eye is kept on the very few disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are making the same accelerated progress as their peers.
- Inspirational teaching has very successfully helped pupils develop a love of life-long learning. Most topics start with a very interesting stimulus, such as a visit to a place of interest. This fuels pupils' desire to want to learn
- Outcomes in art and music are exceptionally high and this is because the school has ensured that pupils work with artists and have access to excellent resources and high-quality teaching. The high-quality teaching of the arts makes a strong contribution to pupils' attainment.
- A wide range of purposeful enrichment activities such as dance, yoga, cookery and forest schools contribute to pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning and their exemplary behaviour.

Rachael Parkin
Chair of Governors
On behalf of the Governing Board of Loughton Manor First School

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