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Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2019

Dear Parents,

As you will remember, our school was inspected by Ofsted at the beginning of October, the first time we had been included in their schedule of visits since 2007. The complete report is now available for you to read on the school website as well as being on the official Ofsted website. This letter serves to give you a summary of the report and to let you know how we are reacting to the findings.

The overall judgement is that St. George's School is GOOD and that this finding applies to all aspects of school life. Some may wonder why we are not categorised as OUTSTANDING on this occasion, and we are able to assure you that the change is simply the result of Ofsted changing the way in which it interprets its results, restricting the outstanding judgment to just 1% of schools. We were assured at the inspectors' feedback to governors that the school has not worsened since the last inspection and that we had indeed done well in terms of inspection results. In fact, the Lead Inspector concluded the meeting by telling us that we have a lovely school in St. George's.

There is substantial praise in the report for our pupils. They are "happy at school and feel safe". The children "follow the school's set of values" and are "polite, honest and behave well". The inspectors recognise that our pupils "take care with their work and produce work of good quality". It is noted that "pupils achieve well during their time at the school". There is particular reference to the fact that "provision for children in the early years is strong" and that pupils at this stage in their education enjoy "a wide range of activities" provided by the teachers. It is encouraging to note that they "have a clear understanding of right and wrong" and "are prepared well for joining Year 1."

The inspectors identified evidence of parental support for the school, noting that "almost all parents agreed that their children enjoy school" and that "they are happy to recommend the school to other parents". In general, you "are pleased with the information" you receive about your children's learning. In addition, we learn that you are "pleased with the arrangements made for children when they first start school" and "with the support for pupils as they move through each stage of their education".

There is a specific paragraph on the subject of Safeguarding. In summary, our arrangements in this area of school life are found to be “effective” with special reference to the “up-to-date training” which staff receive on safety matters. Pupils understand about dangers in the world and know how to keep themselves safe. There is unanimity of opinion in that “pupils, parents and members of staff all agree that children are kept safe at school”.

As might be expected, there are many instances where the staff are complimented. They are “enthusiastic and carry out their responsibilities well” and “expect pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to succeed”. There are “clear plans showing what pupils should learn in each subject” and Ofsted note that teachers “understand what they are teaching and make learning interesting”. “strong relationships between pupils and members of staff” are recognised as a strength of the school.

The report recognises the strength of the leadership of our school. “Senior leaders are clear about what works well” and look forward in the sense that they had already identified the “few areas needing further development”. They provide good training for the staff and help to lighten their workload”. They are “ambitious for all pupils” and “have systems to carefully check that the school is a safe place”. The leadership of the school is, of course, substantially responsible for the many achievements of the school already referenced in this letter. And with reference to leadership, the role of the governing body is duly acknowledged: the governing body holds leaders to account for their actions. Governors know the school well, carry out their responsibilities earnestly, have a realistic understanding of how well the school is doing and are ambitious for the future.

Studying the report, we can refer to three main areas in which the school could improve its already high level of performance:

1. While the majority of parents are happy with the information that they receive about their children’s education, there are some who would welcome clearer communications from the school. Specific mention is made of a few parents of pupils with SEND, who would appreciate better guidance on how they might support their children. Similarly, although “instances of bullying are rare” at the school, some parents are not always happy with how such matters are dealt with. Both of these concerns are already receiving attention by the leadership of the school.

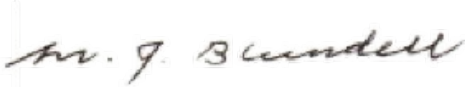
2. In the area of teacher performance, there is one major suggestion for improvement: that of the role of subject leaders where several suggestions are made as to how higher standards may be achieved in this aspect of school life. In identifying this need, Ofsted were confirming a target that the school leadership had already incorporated in the current School Development Plan which you can read on the school website.

3. The final recommendation is that the school needs to devote more attention to the area of Phonics in early years. It is recognised that phonics are “taught in a logical order” but we need to ensure that all pupils understand the purpose of an activity and are furnished with reading matter that is within their capability.

The Ofsted Report comes a short time after so many of you contributed to our survey of parental opinion, which the inspectors studied. Putting the two of them together indicates the great strengths of our school as we continue to serve the children entrusted to us by yourselves, and aim, as ever, to seek further improvements from an already strong base.

Perhaps the final word might be given to the Local Authority who wrote to us shortly after the inspection had been completed. Their comment was as follows: "it is a great outcome and you and the team should be very proud of the fantastic school that provides a wonderful education for our community".

With very best wishes to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mr. J. Blundell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line to the left of the text.

Michael Blundell  
(Chairman of Governors)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul O'Rourke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'P'.

Paul O'Rourke  
(Headteacher)