



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Armstrong

Diocese of Plymouth

15th December 2016

Dear Parents and Carers,

We appreciated all those who contributed-either by attending or in correspondence- to the open meeting two weeks ago with regard to the OFSTED report. We are grateful for all the offers of support and positive messages that we have received alongside the suggestions as to how we can improve. Please find below a summation of the key issues which have been raised and our planned responses to them as we continue to move forward together.

Homework

This issue can cause difficulty between home and school and so we are reviewing the format of how homework is set at St Mary's. We will be writing to you in January with regards to this as well as the establishment of a new working party of staff and parents to work together on improving outcomes in this area.

Governors

We do have vacancies for Governors so we intend to hold an information evening in the New Year which will enable all interested parties to find out more about what the role requires. New Governors will need to attend training to enable them to effectively monitor standards and a commitment of both time and energy will be required. We are in the process of arranging a review of Governance with a National Leader of Governance as recommended by OFSTED.

Communication

We have worked hard over the past two years to improve communication. All teachers are willing to meet with parents to discuss their child and how they are doing in school. An appointment can always be made to see a member of the Senior Leadership Team and these senior staff are also on duty twice a day to allow for informal conversations. 'Open Book Evenings' were well received but some of you wanted these later in the day. We will therefore be offering a new, later slot for parents in the next 'Open Book Evening.' It was also felt that the website was not easy to navigate so we will review this and give clearer signposts in our correspondence in the future.

More Able

All teachers have high expectations for the children but we accept that you would like to know how we are achieving them in school. We intend to hold a parent session in the Spring Term where we can support you in your understanding of what we mean by 'Greater Depth' and how we achieve this through reasoning and challenge. We will also continue to offer enrichment sessions which support the learning of different groups of children.

Improving Outcomes

The progress made by all children is measured from their starting points and this is monitored regularly through our school systems. We currently use *School Pupil Tracker Online* to track the progress of children within the school. Following a directive from Plymouth CAST, this will change to *Target Tracker* in the New Year. Once we know more about this new product we will provide you with more information. We also use our 'CAPs' (*Class Action Plans*) to effectively monitor progress, ensuring that all children achieve their full potential, whether they are working below, at or above the expected standard. From this information we put in place support strategies across the school but we will need your continued support with the basics such as reading, handwriting, spellings, and times tables. To support you with this we intend to provide more workshops next term. Moderation



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meetings take place regularly and we attend those organised by both Dorset and Poole to ensure that our teacher assessments are fair, accurate and in line with our colleagues. We have adapted our feedback and marking policy in line with other schools and to enable our children to achieve the best outcomes. We know that you are keen to support your children to ensure they achieve their best. Therefore in the Spring Term we will be providing workshops on Phonics for Year One Pupils and on the end of Key Stage Assessments for Year Two and Year Six.

Curriculum

The inspectors reported that our curriculum was 'broad and balanced' and that it "excites, motivates and inspires pupils with their learning". We are currently updating our Curriculum overviews, which will include a description of the skills being taught so that parents can support these at home. *Quality first teaching* is regularly monitored, and any inconsistencies are being addressed. Our work with Springhill in Southampton enables us to support our Newly Qualified Teachers through a coaching and mentoring scheme. We will continue to monitor our expectations and attune the curriculum accordingly. Like you, our aspirations for all the children are high; however we recognise that consistently good teaching needs to be in place in order for those aspirations to be achieved.

Networking

Over the past two years we have developed good relationships with other schools and these help us develop our good practice further. This focus on school improvement is beneficial for all parties. We are also actively involved with the *Poole Schools Teaching Alliance*. Our Middle and Senior Leaders attend networking meetings with English, Maths and Inclusion Leaders. This collaborative work will continue as we push forward with our plans for improvement in the areas identified by OFSTED.

We will continue to work with you all to build on the actions of the Ofsted report and we are confident that our check- up visit within the next six months will provide good news to share.

Changes To The Day In School

Starting in January we will also be trialling the following changes to the school day. We will evaluate their success and communicate these to you in the Spring Term.

- Children will go into class at 8:40 where a member of staff will lead them in an appropriate activity. The main gate will continue to open at 8:30 and the pupils will still gather on the KS1 playground for 10 minutes before school.
- The "Catch Up" system which provides a behaviour sanction for children in KS2 will now take place over lunch time rather than break time. This will allow staff to talk through behaviour issues with children in a more productive way.
- The first three days of the Spring Term will be devoted to spelling and handwriting. Appropriate challenge will be offered for all children. Please can we ask for you to continue to support us in these areas at home.

Again, you are encouraged to make an appointment with your child's class teacher if you have any concerns with regards to your child. If you wish to speak to any member of the Senior Leadership Team, you can make an appointment by contacting the school office at any time.

Thank you to so many of you who took the trouble to both raise your concerns and to offer us your support. As a learning community formed around our core values of love, spirituality, respect and creativity we look forward to working together with you to achieve the dreams and aspirations that we share for all the children.

On behalf of everybody at St. Mary's, we would like to wish you and your families every blessing for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Helen Armstrong
Headteacher