



Headteacher: Mrs Deborah Wood
'Learning together, we can achieve great things'

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to let you know that our Ofsted Report has now been finalised. A full copy is available for you to see on our website, or you may pick up a hard copy at the school Office.

The report recognises that Courtney Primary School is on a journey of improvement and that we have many healthy green shoots which are starting to grow. However, the final judgement for the school was 'Requires Improvement.' In summary, this was because, although the "rapid action" of the new Headteacher has led to improvement, these are "too new to have had proven impact" and that changes in staffing have slowed the process down somewhat. We are disappointed with this overall rating as we know that significant improvements have been achieved in the last 18 months, largely due to the huge dedication and talent within our school staff and from support of yourselves as our parents and carers.

If you look beyond the judgement, however, we feel that there are many positives to be drawn from the report, so we do encourage you to read beyond the headline statements. Above all, it recognises the high aspirations we have for the school, **"The headteacher and senior leaders have an ambitious vision for improvement"**. In addition, the main focuses of our work so far have been recognised:

Outcomes

All of our end of key stage outcomes (KS2, KS1, Y1 Phonics, EYFS) for Maths, Writing, Reading and Grammar were either in line with national or better in 2016 in terms of either attainment, progress, or both. We worked very hard to ensure that children at the end of KS2 and KS1 were in the best position they could be in order to achieve the higher expectations introduced in 2016. The report highlights the particularly good progress in KS1

In 2016, the standards pupils reached at the end of Year 2 were above national levels and represented good progress. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics check was also above national average.

Attitudes to Learning

Our children are recognised to have good attitudes. As a school, we have been working on the children developing higher expectations for their work and on our marking policy in order for the children to take greater ownership of editing and improving.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They take pride in their work. They use the feedback from their teachers to correct and improve their work.

Writing

Our main focus over the past year has been on Writing. Although this has led to recent changes which have yet to be fully embedded, the impact is already evident.

The new, more challenging teaching [in writing] is giving pupils technical skills and good vocabulary to express their ideas at standards in line with and sometimes above those expected for their age.

Staff

The members of staff at every level have risen to the challenges brought about through a change in leadership. They are a credit to the school in the way 'next steps' are fully and whole-heartedly embraced.

...staff are wholly positive about the drive for improvement and the rigorous programme of professional development which leaders have put in place.

Safeguarding

We have worked hard to make sure that our systems and practices for Safeguarding not only meet stringent requirements but are also effective for keeping children as safe as we can. This has been a successful team effort.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective...Leaders work as a team to promote a culture that protects children who are at risk of harm... Procedures for recruiting staff are rigorous... strong links with outside agencies...support to families who need it.

Vulnerable Groups

A considerable amount of time and energy has been put into making sure that all groups of children, particularly our most vulnerable receive the support they need in order to make maximum progress. Again, this has been recognised.

Disadvantaged pupils have benefitted considerably from additional support and the more precise identification of the gaps in their knowledge and skills. From different starting points, their progress is improving and the most able disadvantaged pupils are making particularly rapid progress towards greater depth in their learning. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good.

Areas to Develop

We can assure you that the Governors and the Senior Leadership Team are determined to use this report as an opportunity to develop further and that all points identified for improvement will be addressed. Many of the areas of development raised were ones of which we were already aware and are currently addressing. A few areas were less obvious, one of which was behaviour.

We have already started to address this by talking with our pupils and with a group of the parent/carers. As a result, we have already made some changes within the school – details of which will be communicated through the Newsletter and via your children – which include more rewards for making the right choices and, specifically in response to the report, developing clarity of consequences for repeated wrong choices.

The inspection also highlighted that the opinions of some of the parents/carers have clearly changed since our last survey in July. We are looking into ways we can gauge parental views more regularly, so that we reduce the 5% of our community who felt that we have not responded well to concerns raised. We will be gathering contributions from all stakeholders when we review our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies very soon. We are keen to ensure that all parents'/carers' views are heard, so any views expressed to the Ofsted team (which were anonymous) will not have reached us. Unless you are sure we are already aware of your concerns, please do consider passing them on to us so we can improve our practice.

Finally, two days can only be a snapshot of what goes on; whilst much of Ofsted's findings match our own self-evaluation and reflect the actions already planned and taking place through the School Development Plan, we are disappointed with the overall gradings. We are, however, committed to improving this school, of which we are all so proud, and will continue to work tirelessly to raise standards in all areas and respond to each of the points raised.

If any of you would like to discuss the contents of the report with either of us, please contact the school Office. Our journey continues.