



Bennet Canfield, Little Canfield, Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1YE

'Learning, achieving and enjoying together'

11th October 2018

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

Re: OFSTED Report

Please find attached the OFSTED Report following their recent visit on 12th & 13th September. The visit was known as an 'Academy First Inspection', as it was the first inspection by OFSTED since the school converted to Academy status back in January 2016. OFSTED are duty-bound to inspect any new Academy within 3 years of it opening.

The overall view by OFSTED matches that of the school. Takeley is a school that has 'Room for improvement to be good.' This is a fair reflection of the stage of the journey that the school is currently on. The OFSTED report recognises that the "Leaders know what they need to do to make the school better. Working with energy and determination, they are starting to make the necessary changes."

For many of you, this is understandably disappointing, but I believe also not a surprise considering some of the views expressed to me by parents and carers last year. As shared in my previous Headteacher Updates, the behaviour this time last year at Takeley was poor. This is not to say for all children, as the majority tried to behave well and stay focussed on their learning. However, a significant minority across the school behaved in a manner that disrupted learning in lessons and caused some significant safety issues on the playground. On top of this, and contributing to it, the school had insufficient Curriculum plans and insufficiently reliable assessment systems to accurately gauge how well children were doing. It is my view that this time last September the school would have been considered 'inadequate'. Much has now changed.

Last September, the Senior Leadership Team of Mrs Russell, Miss Dennis and I were all newly appointed, and we had no middle leadership structure to inherit. The school's financial position was also not clear, despite the Trust's best efforts to unpick and understand the existing finances they had inherited. We now look towards a bright future. OFSTED recognised that the current leadership have "well thought out plans" to deliver improvements but have not yet had sufficient time to implement these. Over the last year, the school's culture and ethos has changed dramatically. Behaviour in school is typically 'good' and improving. The school is a much happier place, with children not afraid to take on challenges and with teachers able to spend lessons focusing on learning and not controlling behaviour. The school is building a 'challenging' new curriculum, with its first cycle completing this Spring term. This will then require its first round of evaluation and review, to improve it further.

We have a young and highly driven new staff team, who are passionate about bringing about the changes and improvements needed. A new middle leadership team is now also in place, supported by both internal and external training (please visit the school website for our staffing details). Vitally,

we have established a school financial budget that does not place the school in any deficit over the next 5 years but, most importantly, ensures we can invest in a significant amount of much needed training and resources. We are investing in curriculum resources including a large investment in reading books; new ICT resources and an extension to the KS2 playground, with an adventure playground and outdoor gym. This all gives a total investment in excess of £120,000.00 for which we must thank the Academy Trust and our local governing body.

Our journey continues; we have much to do. We recognise the work that needs to be done with parent communication so that you feel better informed and supported. We know where we are going and how to get there, we just need time. We now have the stability and drive to take us forward.

I have also attached a copy of our revised 'School's Ethos', which sets out what Takeley stands for, and an 'Improvement plan' that sets out our agenda. The two key points for improvement are: -

1. To accelerate children's progress within lessons, through interventions and through targeted homework across all classes and year groups.
2. To provide a challenging curriculum across all subjects, particularly science and the foundation subjects, by improving subject leadership, ensuring long and medium term plans, deepen children's thinking, and providing the resources to make this possible.

I thank you all for your support over the last 12 months; without it we would not have made the inroads needed to achieve the progress we have to date. I know that there are still those that we have to 'win over', and there will likely be some concerns in light of the OFSTED Report. I ask you to please look beyond the headlines, and rather at our capacity for further improvement and at what we have achieved in a very short timescale so far. I hope you will all join us on our continued journey.

Our team and I aim only to provide the very best we can. We don't aim, in OFSTED terms for 'good', but neither for 'Outstanding'. What we aim for is that each and every child 'Learns, achieves and enjoys together' to the very best of their ability. If we achieve this, and the mission we have set ourselves, then we will achieve something much richer than OFSTED's 'Outstanding'.

With thanks to you all for your continued support and understanding.

Yours sincerely and on behalf of all at Takeley,

Mr Andy Cosslett
Headteacher

T: 01279 870 541 F: 01279 870 541

Email: admin@takeley-pri.essex.sch.uk