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'Enabling every child to fulfil his/her potential in a nurturing Christian environment.'

20th July, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

As this highly unusual school year draws to a close we would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the progress we have made towards **OFSTED's key findings** as requested by parents' in the recent consultation. For ease of reading, I have addressed each of the areas identified for improvement and provided an update on actions the school has taken to move forward:

To ensure staffing **continuity** Claire Chaloner, Alex Coker, Tom Penny and Lucy Jones will continue to teach their current age groups. We will continue to provide support for pupils from skilled Teaching Assistants and our school Admin, Cook & Caretaker are also consistent next year.

At **leadership** level I am delighted to be joined by Amanda Donelan (a current CDAT Headteacher) who will support the school between one and two days per week dependent upon need during next year whilst we transition into CDAT. This will increase our **leadership capacity and drive improvement of the school with myself and our subject leaders**. From our short time together, I have found Amanda to be incredibly personable. She shares the core values of community, integrity and compassion, which make Utkinton such a wonderful place to work.

Whilst our relationship with CDAT will provide **long-term leadership continuity** with their Education Board at a strategic level, we are also looking forward to holding parent governor elections in the Autumn Term to establish our **Local Governing Body** from local stakeholders who are passionate about the long-term future of our school. Our IEB have steered us through changing times and will hand over to the Local Governing Body at the point of conversion.

During the last year, as a CWAC school, we have had **high quality support and development** from Sarah Curtis (Associate School Improvement Advisor), Steph Cade (National Leader of Education) Alex Kozyra (English Senior Leader of Education) and Steven Caldwell (Maths Senior Leader of Education) **supporting school staff to improve their practice**. Staff have also had opportunities to visit other settings to '*observe best practice in different areas and this has had a positive impact on their own practice*'. This was alongside staff meetings/training led by both the school and external providers. During an external School Review in February '*staff commented that they have appreciated the ongoing support, expertise and direction of the SLEs and other specialists*'.

The report by our Associate School Improvement Advisor at the beginning of December 2019 noted that '*there has been a significant improvement in teaching and learning. All staff are hard-working, committed to improving outcomes and are acting immediately on suggestions made by the Senior Leaders of Education.*' The IEB also commissioned a School Review, by an OFSTED Inspector, in September 2019 and



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February 2020 who said that the '*significant changes to the way in which phonics, writing and maths are taught*' were having '*a positive impact on the consistency of provision and pupils' learning and outcomes, as well as attitudes to learning*'.

In English, the Improvement Advisor noted numerous whole-school strengths including: staff have higher expectations of the children, staff subject knowledge has increased, planning is broken down into more detail, outcomes of units are clearer, power points help focus the teacher on the learning objectives and staff are more confident using assessment statements.

Writing, which OFSTED noted needed improving, was described in our February Review as having a '*structured and developmental approach*' which was impacting pupils' work due to our '*much clearer structure to support the development of writing through the teaching of writing sequences. This is supported by medium term plans which give teachers clarity about the objectives they are teaching and the different genres this can be done through. Each teaching sequence is supported by a good quality text as its focus and intersperses teaching of features with opportunities for independent application of this through different genres, culminating in an extended piece of writing at the end of the sequence. Pupils across the school were able to explain this sequence and show examples of how they had used some learning to apply this to their work...In the lesson visits teachers showed good subject knowledge and were able to explain their rationale for the teaching sequence and the process of implementation.*' After agreeing non-negotiables for the presentation of pupils' work at the beginning of the Autumn Term, 2019, monitoring showed good **presentation and handwriting** in their everyday work.

Maths also had many whole-school strengths identified by the Improvement Advisor, including: consistent use of language across all classes, a calculation policy being in place, appropriate planning for mixed-age classes and an increased use of pictorial and concrete resources. Our School Review in February 2020 stated '*The intent for Maths and the rationale behind the delivery model has much greater clarity. Mental arithmetic and fluency are supplemented with materials such as Times Table Rockstars...the leaders have a forward plan to extend targeted groups for intervention across school and not just for Y2 and Y6 and based on knowledge of gaps and misconceptions.*'

As we move towards academisation, the local authority will begin to handover and step back as we move to **school-led improvement**, with accountability to and support from CDAT. Going forward, we will allocate subject leaders across the school and enable them to link with other CDAT teachers to develop their knowledge and improve practice in school. Mrs. Chaloner will focus on developing our Early Years provision to include an on-site Pre-School and she will also take responsibility for the teaching of Phonics in EYFS and KS1. To ensure that standards continue to rise, annual **appraisal** is now in place for the Headteacher and Teaching Staff.

In consultation with staff, we introduced a new on-line tracking system for English and Maths which was linked to our new marking policy. The system is focused on identifying how securely pupils have learnt



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concepts and objectives taught. During our school review it was also noted that this system was **'supporting staff with identifying individual pupils' next steps and gaps and informing planning as well as where additional support and intervention may be needed in core subjects.'** We also intend for this assessment tool to be used for the foundation subjects to support **teacher subject knowledge** and ensure age-appropriate, **high expectations** of what the children should achieve **in each subject**.

I have also implemented a whole school, termly monitoring and evaluation cycle that ensures **regular checks** are made on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, so that any **weaknesses can be addressed promptly and effectively**.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, our journey of school improvement had to be put on hold whilst we focused upon Covid-specific issues. Next school year our first priority, after supporting the children in settling in, will be to ensure that all the progress that was made last year towards the OFSTED key findings is embedded into the everyday life of the school before we build on those foundations. Unfortunately, our curriculum 'Zoo Project', which was helping us to develop other subjects, e.g. history, geography, music, etc. was also put on hold due to the pandemic. We are hopeful that our involvement in that project will continue during next school year, albeit much of it having to take place virtually. We recognise that the wider curriculum and developing subject leadership remains a priority for us, along with catching up with any lost learning from school closures.

We are planning for a full reopening to all children in September and will begin the autumn term by assessing each child so we can plan for their learning and set targets for the year; these will form the basis of our autumn term parent teacher meetings and we look forward to sharing our plans with you further after the summer break.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Pleavin