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Petersfield Infant School

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Dear Parents and Carers

On the 18th and 19th October, following a 14 year gap, we were inspected by OFSTED. Please find the latest report attached for your attention.

We are incredibly proud of our school and the positive comments throughout the report reflect how we feel. We are however very disappointed with the overall judgement but as explained in the letter from the governing body it only takes one area to be highlighted for development to affect the overall judgement.

Each of the areas highlighted for development had previously been identified by the current leadership team. We have been working incredibly hard since September 2021 but unfortunately 13 months has not been long enough to fully develop and implement these improvements. I would therefore like to address each of our 'Areas to Improve' and explain what we are doing to strengthen these domains:

- *"Curriculum plans do not begin from Reception in several subjects. This means that leaders cannot be sure that children in the early years have the secure knowledge that they need for the next stage of their learning. Leaders need to develop subject leader's expertise so that well sequenced plans allow children to build on their knowledge from the early years into Year 1."*
- *"Leaders do not explicitly identify the key knowledge that pupils must know to achieve success in several subjects. This means that teachers do not always take a consistent approach to identifying what pupils know and can do. Leaders should refine their plans so that staff have a clear understanding of the specific knowledge that must be learned and assessed so that pupils can improve."*

These first two areas for development are closely linked. Subject leaders are developing their expertise in their subject through training with HIAS (Hampshire Inspector Advisory Service). This training is helping leaders focus on the key knowledge and skills that children need to learn in all subjects from Year R through to Year 2. They are rewriting every unit of work within their subject to ensure the key knowledge and skills are at the heart of the learning sequence. For example, in Year 2 the children study the Titanic as part of history. OFSTED have asked us to be more explicit about the key knowledge and skills the children will learn. Key facts need to be explored such as, when the Titanic sank, why it sank and what has been learned from this era of history to help make travel safer. Identifying specific knowledge and enquiry skills ensures all children learn similarly and teachers can assess against the same criteria better informing staff about which children are on track and which children need additional support. We plan to share the key knowledge and skill within each unit of work with parents in coming months to allow you to work in partnership with us to help our children continue to make progress. OFSTED see progress as knowing more and doing more.

- *"Implementation of the new reading programme has been too slow. As a result too many children have fallen behind in learning to read and developing fluency. Leaders need to ensure that they monitor and review their plans to catch pupils up quickly, so that pupils make the rapid progress they need to meet the age related reading expectations."*

The final area for development is phonics and reading.

As you know, we introduced our new synthetic phonics programme, Little Wandle, last year. Staff have completed numerous training sessions to enable us to implement the programme across the school. OFSTED felt we had been too slow in rolling out the programme and that because of this, alongside the long term impact of COVID, children have fallen behind. To address this issue we are following the advice of Little Wandle and have been teaching phonics twice a day. This will support the children to catch up and close any gaps.

We are also setting up 'Adopt a Reader' across the school. Each member of staff will 'adopt' a child who requires additional support with reading and phonics and will read with them at least three times a week. This is on top of the reading they do in class.

We are asking parents to help us by ensuring you read regularly with your child and practise the key words/ graphemes that the children have been learning in class. You will find these on the homework sheets or on the flash cards provided.

I fully appreciate that some aspects of this report may be a concern to you and I am happy to discuss these with individual parents over the coming days. There are clearly strengths identified in the report but, as headteacher, it is my responsibility to ensure that all aspects of our school are good for all of our children. Please be reassured that all staff are working incredibly hard to implement these changes and you will be kept up to date with our progress.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please call or email me at the following email address: headteacher@petersfield-inf.hants.sch.

Best wishes

Crissy Hodgkinson