

Summer 2019

Dear Families

After an exciting and busy year at Blackwell First School, I reflect on the high quality of provision at Blackwell First School with pride. Pride towards the families and governing body for being such significant partners in the life of the school and also pride towards the staff and children for their hard work in making the school such a successful part of the community.

On this occasion I should like to concentrate on one major issue in my termly letter. You may have seen in the press or on television that Ofsted, the body for assessing the performance of schools, will be working to a new framework from September 2019 and that they are likely to inspect an increasing proportion of those schools graded as Outstanding at their most recent inspection. The intention is to check that standards have been maintained or exceeded and to use the most recent grading system.

Blackwell was last inspected in 2011 and it is reasonable to assume that we could be in the group of schools to be visited in the near future.

Although the inspection process can be stressful for Staff and Governors it is clearly in the best interests of the children that the performance of the school is assessed by an independent agency.

We welcome this as an opportunity assess our progress since then.

The inspectors will be looking at the both the academic performance of the school and whether it provides an appropriate rounded education that provides all the children with the best possible start in life.

They will make judgements on Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. These will lead to one of four grades – Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate. (This replaces the earlier five grade system and thus direct comparison can be misleading).

I can assure you that the school has not been complacent since the last inspection and that we have made every effort to maintain or improve performance in all areas.



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We believe that we can show the inspection team compelling evidence to support this assertion. This will include the following points.

- The strong academic results in terms of attainment and progress.
- Highly motivated staff and enthusiastic children.
- The move to a five class system.
- Provision of the Governor led Nursery as WCC could not provide funding.
- Provision of in house catering.
- Strong SEND provision.
- The revised school day which enables an extended and balanced curriculum.
- Before and after school clubs.
- Forest school.
- Strong support from families and competition for Reception places.
- The major investment in the buildings (2016,2017,2018 and 2019).
- Collaboration with partner schools and the Teaching School.
- Regular investment in staff training and development.
- Independent assessment of all aspects of the school.
- Strong financial position as a result of key investment decisions (Clubs, Nursery, Kitchen).

If you have been part of the school since the last inspection (there are a few of you!), I should be pleased to have your thoughts on any other positive changes since the last inspection that you think we should bring to the attention of the Ofsted inspectors

Although this letter has focused on one topic, I should like to close by thanking the dedicated staff team for a highly successful academic year, to welcome new staff joining in September and to wish those staff members leaving us and the children of Blue Class who are moving on to Middle School every success in their new ventures.

I hope you will all have a good summer break.

Hugh Evans

Chair of Governors

