



Inspiring a love of learning through
the bonds of family, faith and friendship.

Folksworth C of E (VC) Primary School

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Dear Parents/ Carers,

I am delighted to inform you that our Ofsted report can now be shared with you. The headline is:

'Folksworth Church of England Primary School continues to be a 'Good' school.'

Inspectors also said:

- ✓ *'Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. They want to learn'*
- ✓ *'Pupils feel safe and well cared for'*
- ✓ *'Pupils are given interesting experiences to help them enjoy and remember more of their learning'*

This inspection was reassuring in that it confirmed the strategies and changes we have been implementing since I joined the school in September 2018 are the right things to be doing, the curriculum we are developing is right for our children and that we are moving in the right direction. We are happy that inspectors recognised that standards are improving and that we now need more time to be able to fully evidence the impact of the developments.

I am pleased to say that there were no surprises that came out of this inspection. We knew that standards in the school had declined during the years since the previous inspection in 2016 due to the turbulent journey the school had been on. The development points from the inspection are those that we had already identified as key priorities on our School Improvement Plan and actions have already been put in place to address them.

We can now continue to move forward with confidence that we are on the right path. We are proud that throughout all of the changes we continue to be a 'Good' school.

Attached to this letter are additional pages which give more detailed information about the inspection and outcome. If you would like to comment on the report or need further information then please do contact me directly mnorbury@folksworth.cambs.sch.uk and/or contact Clare Kirk, our Chair of Governors on chair@folksworth.cambs.sch.uk

Yours sincerely

Michelle Norbury
Headteacher

Background to the Inspection

In 2016 our school was graded as 'good' under the old Ofsted Inspection Framework. As we were previously a 'good' school a 'Section 8' inspection took place to see if the school has remained good.

This time we were being inspected under a new Inspection Framework that had only been in place since September 2019. The focus had shifted significantly from Pupil Outcomes (SATs) to the 'Quality of Education' and 'Curriculum' a child receives in their time at the school. The difference in style of written report reflects this shift in focus.

Under the 'Section 8' New Framework Inspection guidance the inspectors had three options for the headline outcome for this inspection:

1. The school remains good.
2. The school remains good and there is sufficient evidence that it could be judged as outstanding.
3. The school remains good but inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining.

If the inspectors had had any serious concerns then this inspection would have been immediately converted to a 'Section 5' inspection which would have given the inspectors the opportunity to grade us as 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'. This was not necessary – the inspectors did not have any serious concerns.

We believe that inspectors made the right decision to grade us as they did based upon the school's journey over the years. We know that standards did not improve in the years since the inspection in 2016 – the outcomes on National Assessment such as SATs show this. These outcomes are no longer in decline. In addition there has also been an unusually high turnover of staff and the leadership of the school has seen some significant changes. Staffing and leadership is now more stable. The inspectors recognised that this has already been identified by the current leadership team and a lot has been done, and continues to be done to address this. Last year's results showed that we were on an upward trajectory, however, they would like to see more end of year data to prove this.

The inspectors were confident, as are we, that when Ofsted return to complete a full 'Section 5' inspection in approximately 18 months time we will remain to be at least a 'good' school but will be able to demonstrate the impact of the new curriculum and new approaches we have implemented since September 2018.

Strengths of the School highlighted by the inspectors

At the end of the day inspectors met with myself and Mrs Sawyer before the full feedback meeting in which representatives from the Local Authority, Diocese and Governing Body attended. In both of these meetings the inspectors were incredibly complimentary about many areas of our school and fed back that:

- The chosen curriculum is the right one for the children in the school despite needing refinement.
- Subject leadership of writing is strong. Inspectors agreed with the subject leader's comment about the writing 'journey' approach that 'where it was working, it was working well.'
- The introduction of Read, Write, Inc had been done successfully and was already showing evidence that it was having a positive impact.
- The EYFS environment was appropriate and attractive. The outdoor area is well resourced. There were quality activities being provided and adults were giving children opportunities for writing across the provision.
- Inspectors had seen a high level of challenge taught in the guided reading activity that they had observed.
- We have some highly effective HLTAs.
- Leaders were transparent and had self-evaluated the school accurately. They were able to describe exactly what the inspectors would find during the inspection and what was being put in place to address certain areas.
- Governance is strong and governors spoke passionately about the school.
- Policies and procedures had been strengthened since September 2018 and more robust systems have been put in place.
- The inspectors were impressed with the positive behaviour and attitudes shown by the children across the school.
- Children seemed very happy in their lunch groups and were able to mix with different age groups across the school.
- The inspectors felt that everyone helps and supports each other which was reflected in their interviews with children throughout the day and observations at break and lunch time.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) comes through in all areas.
- There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos.
- Staff have high expectations of behaviour.
- Children enjoy and benefit from the increased number of visits they have the opportunity to access.

Areas for Development

We have published our Key Priorities from our School Improvement Plans for this year and last year. These can be accessed in the 'Information, School Improvement' page on our website. These plans evidence that consistently good teaching, developing writing and developing our curriculum have been part of our Key Priorities since September 2018.

1. Improving the teaching of writing

In September 2018 we introduced a new 'journey' approach to the teaching of writing. This consists of the key areas of Explore, Skills and Ideas, Have a Go and Ready to Write. It is important to us that children get the opportunity to 'Explore' similar texts. They then develop key skills that they will need to evidence in their writing before 'having a go' in a piece where the thought processes and skills required are heavily modelled by the teacher. Following this stage the children are 'Ready to Write' and produce their own piece for a real life purpose. This has already proved to be successful in engaging children in their writing and we saw children receiving responses from publishers to pieces they had written or writing letters to local companies amongst other things since the introduction of this model. However, the leadership team were aware that this was not happening as well as we would have liked in two classrooms at the time of the inspection. We are pleased that the inspectors recognised the support leaders were offering to address this. I am pleased to say that since recent changes have taken place this approach is now being planned and delivered following this model in all classrooms much more consistently. We will, of course, continue to monitor this to ensure that the quality of the teaching of writing remains at least consistently good.

2. Reviewing the curriculum to ensure that knowledge and skills is sequenced coherently and logically so that pupils learn more and achieve well.

Inspectors recognised that we were less than one term into a new curriculum after our school had embraced the opportunities raised by the shift in Ofsted focus to make changes to our curriculum offer. They were confident that our curriculum intent was right for the children in our school. They were also clear that this area for development was one likely to appear in many schools who have been inspected since the new Inspection Framework was introduced during this transition year.

As a school we had recognised that we would not get our curriculum offer completely right straight away and that closer scrutiny would be required of each subject as we implemented it. Prior to the inspection we had already made plans to review each subject in more detail across the Spring and Summer Terms. Our intention is to develop a table for each subject showing the progression of skills across the school and Knowledge Organisers setting out exactly what children will learn in each topic. Since the inspection we have already made changes to the sequencing of our science planning and are in the process of developing Knowledge Organisers for this subject as our starting point. The curriculum document on the website has already been updated to reflect this and will continue to be updated across the rest of this academic year.