

Friday 14th December 2018

Dear Parents,

You may be aware that yesterday, the school league tables were published by the DfE, and further reported on by newspapers. Our data for 2018 at the end of KS2 was below National expectations and this was published on our school website earlier in the term.

I have been in communication with some parents already, but I wanted to share the same messages with you all.

It is extremely disappointing that a results table does not reflect the range of needs of the children in a cohort. The media will report this 'news' without any background information of pupils and without knowing the rate of progress that our pupils make, from their individual starting points in KS1, to how well they achieve in the Year 6 SATS. The tables merely show how well a particular year group of pupils at a given school has performed in tests or exams.

As a school, we are inclusive and we see EVERY child as an individual. When children do not make expected progress in a term, we put timely measures in place to address this, with support from yourselves. Our percentage of children with additional needs is well above the National average, yet we have to measure ALL children with the same testing process at the end of Key Stage 2. One size definitely does not fit all.

Our projected data for 2019 for maths is 96% and 76% in reading and writing, which demonstrates that outcomes are cohort-specific. The National average is 71%.

Our INDIVIDUAL children should be CELEBRATED, not just for their progress in reading, writing and maths, which is important and must be reported, but for their strengths across the curriculum and in their social and emotional development. Our school was judged as good last year, because we delivered and demonstrated that progress is being made from our children's individual starting points, to when they leave our school.

In 2017, Ofsted said that that:

The school is quick to identify any pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. Staff make effective provision for these pupils through activities which are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where needed, individual support plans are in place, with challenging targets. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is largely good from their individual starting points.

Across both schools, pupil outcomes are on an improving trajectory to be in line with National expectations. We have reported our data, when other schools have not, as we have nothing to hide. I am proud of what our children are achieving on a daily basis within a broad and balanced curriculum,



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and we are constantly reflecting and making further improvements to raise standards. Our current leadership team are working hard alongside our Teachers and Teaching Assistants, to ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching and learning and ensure that additional support is put in place when needed.

Historically, it has not been possible for the Infant & Junior Schools to work so closely together. Now that we have future plans for an amalgamation, our two schools have strong ties, a joint leadership team and a shared goal. It is not easy, if an Infant and Junior school do not work closely together.

When Ofsted visited in October, they said in their report that:

'Leaders have shown resilience and determination to overcome the many challenges that the school has faced. They know the school well and have a clear understanding of areas for further improvement.'

As a determined and committed Acting Headteacher, I have been working very closely with Karen Butler and Christine Windwood, our Local Authority School Development Advisors. Karen spent a whole day in both the Infant and Junior schools with me at the end of November, to monitor standards and pupil outcomes. She reported that:

'Maths groups were observed where pupils were being challenged to extend their learning. They were able to articulate clearly what they were doing and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Effective modelling by teachers was observed and teachers' use of voice was effective in engaging pupils.'

Work was pitched correctly to meet the needs of the pupils, teachers' established meaningful opportunities for the pupils to apply what they had learnt and provided scaffolding to guide, support and challenge pupils.'

In October, the Government announced that *'mental health checks would be introduced for children as young as 4, to give the mental wellbeing of our children the priority it so profoundly deserves, and that new mental health assessments are to be made available to all schools as part of new classes on 'mental resilience', which will be part of the curriculum from 2020.'*

(<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6258355/EVERY-schoolchild-Britain-routine-mental-health-checks.html>)

We have been measuring well-being at Moorside since 2016. We have put nurture provision in place this year, having identified that if children do not have the emotional resilience to cope with the challenges of the National Curriculum, we cannot expect them to meet National expectations. Compass Buzz (Children's Mental Health and well-being project) delivered their recent training for 7 members of our staff team last week, so that we can offer the best emotional support for our children. We have an Inclusion Team working across both schools, who are currently gathering evidence for the 'Inclusion Quality Mark'.



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The published data does not reflect the fact that our exclusions decreased by just over 50% last year. The league tables do not reflect the fact that we are a forward-thinking school and aspire to work ever more closely with our community to ensure that we develop our children holistically as well as academically.

I am proud to lead Moorside and will continue to look forward, not backwards. I really appreciate the support that you give your children and the school and know that we will continue to work together, to secure the best outcomes possible for everyone at Moorside.

Best wishes,

Mrs Rowett
Acting Headteacher

