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**‘Growing Together. Empowered to be more.’**

**OFSTED REPORT: FEBRUARY 2020**

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with great pride that we write this letter to you on behalf of all of the Urmston Primary School staff. Clearly, this is not because of the judgement that Ofsted has given our school, but because our school is more than just an Ofsted grading. It perhaps goes without saying that we are not overly happy about the report. However, we are not writing to you with any bitterness, but with an honest message that we’ll continue to provide and develop the education that your super children deserve.

Firstly, may we take this opportunity to thank you once again for your overwhelming response to Ofsted’s Parent View questionnaire. The lead inspector said that she has never encountered such a positive set of replies and comments. It is therefore disappointing that this only amounts to a line in the report saying that your opinions were considered by inspectors. Regardless of this, it means a great deal to us.

We’ll be honest...this letter was originally three pages long. It explained in great detail some elements that we feel are slightly misleading, and stated the reasons why we don’t necessarily agree with all that has been said, or the judgement that it gives for the school we care so much about.

However, upon reflection, we want to keep moving forward and certainly do not want to make excuses - we feel that you know the school well enough to make some judgements of your own, and that you might be able to see beyond some of the statements made. Suffice to say that since the infant and junior schools amalgamated mid-way through 2017, our wonderful staff have made huge strides in merging two school cultures in to one. This has been no mean feat and we are tremendously proud of our culture, our vision, our values and our identity; but most of all, we are proud of our children and their burgeoning young characters who, through your support, continue to become more resilient, respectful, responsible, kind and happy, and ready for the next stage in their education.

The report doesn’t reflect our school’s development over the last couple of years and it isn’t necessarily part of Ofsted’s remit to acknowledge our context, the pace of change in all areas of school improvement or the plans that we have set in the short, medium and longer term. This pace of change has been swift and as leaders, we make no apology for it not being quicker. May we just assure you that all the decisions we have made and continue to make are always done so with the children’s best interests at heart. We already have firm plans in place to ensure sustainable improvement for all areas of the curriculum, particularly those that the inspectorate deemed to be weaker – namely the arts and RE.

When we first became a primary school, our vision was clear – we wanted our children to ‘grow together’ and be ‘empowered to be more’. We believe that we fully meet that remit and will continue with our children’s personal development being integral to our UPS vision and it will become an even greater strength in the future, enhancing our pupils’ knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum and embedding strong character education into all that we do.

Despite us feeling that the report is not a completely accurate reflection of our school, it is important for us to add that we fully respect the whole inspection process and, although we disagree with the outcome and the way in which parts of the report are written, we feel that the future of education will be very bright with a renewed, broader focus on our children’s holistic education.

We understand that some of you may be concerned about the judgement, so please do take a look at our attainment figures (<https://urmstonprimary.com/information/performance>) for the end of Early Years, KS1 and KS2. We feel this illustrates just some of the strengths of our school and we’ll continue to maintain these high expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths, whilst ensuring greater breadth in the arts and RE.

We greatly value the relationship that we have with you all and with the whole of our school community and we trust that this will continue. If you do have any queries or concerns about the report, please do come and tell us about them – we’ll be around as usual and are happy to answer any questions you might have.

***Furthermore, we’ll be holding meetings for parents on Tuesday 10th March, at 9am after drop off in the infant hall, at 2.45pm before pick up in the junior hall, and at 6pm in the infant hall for those of you who can’t make it during the day. We strongly urge as many of you to come as possible, to support us, but more importantly, to challenge us on what has been said in the report. We think that this will be a more effective way to communicate with you rather than writing it all down in a letter!***

Again, thank you so much for your support – it means so much to us that you value what we seek to do and to be here at UPS. Like every school should, we are constantly reflecting on how we can improve, we know what we need to develop and are excited about doing so. We acknowledge and respect all of the points that Ofsted have raised, many of which we are already aware of. However, we have a firm plan in place, and we are just as confident in providing the best education possible for your children as we were before Ofsted arrived a few of weeks ago.

Thanks again and please do talk to us if you feel you need to.

Yours sincerely,

***Simon Parker, Mark Doherty, and Derek Brown***

Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Chair of Governors, on behalf of all of the staff and governors at Urmston Primary School