

2 December 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians and members of the Fosse Family,

As we move towards the end of our first term, and following on from the recent ISI inspection that took place in October, it is important that the school write not only to share the outcomes from the ISI inspection but also to communicate our thanks to the inspection team for their thorough and professional scrutiny of school provision both current and historic. The full report is attached and can also be found on the school website, but we wanted to take this opportunity to share some highlights, both positive and negative, and to address any potential concerns related to next steps.

The inspectors visited and spent three days with the children and members of the school team, and on behalf of Fosse Bank School we would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all of you who spent time and energy sending your comments to the inspectors. These were overwhelmingly positive and clearly demonstrated your overwhelming support for the school.

The inspectors gave some wonderful feedback to the school and we have summarised some of the headlines below:

Teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources.

Externally standardised test data indicates that the attainment of most pupils, including those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and EAL (English as and Additional Language), is above age-related expectations for reading and mathematics.

Evidence from pupils' work shows that they successfully complete and understood work of increased difficulty in the material covered.

The pupils participate confidently in presentations, assemblies and class discussions appreciating different viewpoints and encouraging others to speak and contribute.

Children in the EYFS independently and confidently choose activities while older pupils demonstrate good leadership skills and understand the importance of making responsible decisions.

Pupils demonstrate good speaking and listening skills. They leave school able to write fluently using age-appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation.

There is a 'culture of literacy within the school.'

Many pupils are involved in activities that benefit others within school, the local and wider community. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) most children make good and sometimes excellent progress, supported by the assessments made by staff which include next steps required for learning and valuable input for parents.

In EYFS, adults carefully support children's learning knowing when to intervene and when to step back to enable children to reflect independently and choose confidently activities that take their learning to the next stage.

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of spirituality and non-material aspects of life.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of extra-curricular activities including art, cookery, chess, gymnastics, football, rugby, netball, ballet, and construction. These activities contribute strongly to pupils' achievements and personal development.

They are usually successful in gaining places of their choice for the next stage of their education and occasionally achieve academic awards outside school.

During discussions and in their responses to the questionnaires, pupils stated strongly that they achieve more in their lessons because teachers encourage them and motivate them to learn, and they can ask teachers for help if they do not understand.

All parents who responded to the questionnaires stated that the school enables their children to be confident and independent with strong social skills. Pupils' personal development is supported by teachers' strong knowledge of pupils and their families.

Pupils of all ages were observed in the forest area reflecting deeply on themselves in relation to nature.

Pupils state strongly that the school's golden rules and messages displayed around the school remind them of behavioural expectations, particularly showing respect to one another and being kind and helpful.

They spoke proudly about their work and said that teachers recognise when they try hard and that this encourages them to try even harder.

95% of pupil, 95% of parents and 99% of staff responses to the inspectors questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed with comments.

Whilst the above is gratifying and most encouraging, it is the case in any organisation that there is always room for improvement and whilst we cannot, nor should we desire to, hide our disappointment in aspects of the report – particularly the judgement that the school was non-compliant within the area of safeguarding and therefore deemed not met standard for leadership and management – we have not only taken onboard these comments, but the school management and governing body have been proactive in their response and we have already undertaken the following to ensure that Fosse Bank School is fully compliant and indeed we are looking forward to welcoming back ISI very soon to enable the inspectorate to recheck our compliance and to ensure that all recommendations have been acted upon.

Action point 1: The school must implement an effective safeguarding policy.

This academic year Peer on Peer abuse has been a focus for all schools and we have updated our safeguarding policies accordingly. We have implemented a curriculum focus on this area through PSHE and assemblies to ensure our pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe. All staff and governors have had training to ensure we implement the policy effectively.

Action point 2: The school must put in place effective safeguarding training which enables governance, leadership and staff to understand and implement consistently the requirements of current statutory guidance.

There has been a significant change in governance beginning immediately prior to this inspection and indeed continuing into the launch of our newly restructured Governing Board which was an already planned element of our 130th anniversary celebrations that launch in January 2022.

*All new governors receive rigorous safeguarding training in-line with the statutory requirements and we are also pleased to announce that we have a newly appointed safeguarding governor with vast experience, **Mrs Bailey** who joined the Board of Governors in November.*

We can also confirm that the new Board of Governors have made clear their intention to not only ensure compliance but to audit and revise such provision on an on-going basis.

Action point 3: The school must maintain safeguarding records in-line with the requirements of current statutory guidance.

We have recently implemented an online record keeping system (Bromcom) in-line with statutory guidance and industry best practice.

Action point 4: The school must ensure that, when appropriate, it carries out checks of the barred list and the lists of those prohibited from teaching or management before staff commence working at the school.

The school do check all barred lists prior to staff commencing work. The historical systems at Fosse Bank School however were found to have some gaps and these have now been rectified – we would however also wish to make clear and most importantly, to reassure you, that no staff at Fosse Bank school have ever appeared on any barred lists.

Action point 5: The school must ensure the appropriate monitoring of safeguarding, including through a suitable annual review.

*This action is again linked to the large change in school governance which has recently occurred/is underway. We have now **appointed a new and highly experienced safeguarding governor**; and in order to confirm our systems and procedures are appropriate **we have also commissioned an external safeguarding review to take place as soon as possible**. This will happen in addition to the return of the ISI Inspectorate and we will be sharing the results of that independent audit with you all upon its completion.*

Action point 6: The school must ensure that required recruitment checks on staff are made prior to their start date. *All staff at Fosse Bank School do undergo all the required recruitment checks prior to their start date at the school and our systems have now been updated to reflect this. For clarity we would wish to confirm that - If checks were not to reach the school before a start date, the relevant member of staff would be unable to start work until all checks had been satisfactorily completed.*

Action point 7: The school must ensure that recruitment checks are recorded accurately on the single central register of appointment as required. *Prior to the inspection the school had purchased a new computer system to record the Single Central Register. We were mid-implementation upon inspection. This work has now been completed and will ensure that, moving forward, all records are maintained in compliance with all regulatory requirements. All historical gaps have now been rectified and as a matter of good practice this system will henceforth be regularly monitored.*

Action point 8: The school must ensure that the proprietor, leadership and management demonstrate good skills, knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the standards are met consistently, and they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

As the school is now able to establish itself post-covid, we are confident that the leadership and management at all levels are working cohesively to promote the wellbeing of all of our pupils. We feel this is a real strength of Fosse Bank School and we prioritised this area of our provision when the children returned and we will continue to prioritise positive relationships and role-models whilst supporting the individuality of our children. Our curriculum, relationships education and personalised approach will most certainly allow the school to go from strength to strength into the future.

As a Governing Body, we hope that the above has been of help and that it has given you some insight both into the technicalities of the recent inspection report, but more significantly into the resulting actions.

Please be assured that this report marks a starting-point on our journey together to rectify any flaws in our historic provision and to ensure that Fosse Bank School continues to grow and develop as a beacon of high-quality education and care where *each and every child is genuinely valued and where their talents are nurtured.*

YES, we are naturally disappointed in some areas of the report, but rather than be reactive we seek to embody and enliven the proactive spirit that Fosse Bank School has been known for over the past 130 years. We plan to work together with the Fosse Family and community to *build-back-better* and we are working to reinvigorate our long-term strategic and operational planning to ensure that our children receive the very best possible education, care and support at Fosse Bank School.

Will and I would like to sign off by stating how exceptionally proud we are of our amazing school, of its children and its staff and we are sure that you would wish to join us in **thanking all of the staff team** who have worked so hard to rebuild the school following the terrible impact of the pandemic.

We would encourage you to pay close attention to the school website as we begin announcing our exciting programme of events and initiatives that will form part of our *Celebrate 130* anniversary celebrations in 2022 and **we cannot wait to work with you** to make our Fosse Family a stronger, and healthier community.

With our kindest regards,
Mrs Jenna Crittenden (Chair of Governors)
and Mr Will Glover (Vice-Chair of Governors)