

Vallis First School Ofsted Response

Hopefully, you will have all had a chance to read our recent Ofsted report. I would like to firstly say thank you to everyone for their support and hard work during the inspection and for those of you who managed to fill out one of the questionnaires.

There were many things to celebrate in the report which we are all very proud of. They recognised that pupils at the school are happy and the warm, nurturing and trusting relationships we have in school which are something we cherish. Our new relationship rules of 'Ready, Safe and Care' were noted even though these have only been recently introduced. They complemented us on the work we have been doing on early reading and phonics and the 'love of reading' culture we try to develop in school. Maths was a particular strength as was our support of our special educational need's pupils. Safeguarding was highlighted as being effective and supportive.

As with all reports, there are areas highlighted that need improving further and it was reassuring that the three key points raised are already ones that are on our School Development Plan (SDP) and the governors and leadership team were already working on. At our last Governors meeting we talked through these points against our 1, 3 & 5 year plan and discussed what was already taking place and our plans going forward.

Here is a summary of ongoing and initial future plans against each point:

Point 1

Some staff do not feel well supported with their workload and well-being. This is having a negative impact on staff morale. The school should work with staff to develop more positive working relationships so that all staff feel valued and their workload is considered.

- Staff surveys are completed regularly by the governors and outcomes shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who then plan appropriate actions where needed.
- Governors hold regular drop-in sessions for all staff.
- A range of teamwork sessions have been held with staff to discuss issues raised e.g. workload, working as a team. As a result of this, a summary of actions has been written. More training is planned.
- A staff team group has been set up and meets every half-term. The initial focus is to address the issues raised regarding working as a team and the first meeting has been positive.
- Plans are in place to release staff so leadership responsibilities can be done during the school day.
- The office staffing, responsibilities and work processes have been reviewed and changed with many plans in place to develop its effectiveness and support for staff and parents.
- Leadership structure and responsibilities is in the process of being reviewed.

Point 2

In some subjects, the school has not set out the knowledge that pupils need to remember in enough detail from the early years. This includes the key stage 2 reading curriculum. This means pupils struggle to recall their learning. The school should ensure that all curriculum planning from early years to Year 4 precisely defines the knowledge that pupils need to learn.

- For the past 18 months, we have been working with the English Hub to develop phonics and reading across the school. We are now using a new phonics scheme and reading books now align with the level of the child's reading.
- Staff have been trained in delivering phonics interventions to ensure all children achieve their full potential against the milestones they need to achieve.
- Vallis has been working with the curriculum team at the local authority since the Summer to develop the skills and knowledge progression and how teachers plan units of work.
- Teachers are already implementing many developments in their daily classroom practice e.g. quiz boxes to gauge knowledge and understanding and these were reflected in the Ofsted report.
- There has been a huge amount of work in developing the EYFS provision, including moving the provision downstairs, with a clear action plan for future development.
- Pupil voice is now an integral part of the monitoring and practice in school.
- New termly assessments have been bought to support teachers in making accurate progress and assessment decisions.
- The two-year rolling program has been reviewed and updated. All curriculum statements were updated and are now on the website.
- Trips and visitors are now back as an integral part of the curriculum and this was reflected upon in the Ofsted report.

Point 3

Some leaders are new to their roles and have not yet monitored their areas of responsibility. This means they do not yet know the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning. The school must ensure that all leaders have the knowledge and support they need to monitor the quality of education from Reception to Year 4.

- As mentioned above, we have been working with the LA on our curriculum and as part of this, all subject leaders are working with our LA contact and colleagues on their monitoring and evaluating of their subject area.
- Release time during the school day, budget permitting, will be given as regularly as possible for subject leads to carry out their monitoring.
- Leaders across the school are being supported through the performance management system in order for them to have the knowledge and skills to lead their area effectively.
- All leaders are encouraged to attend relevant professional development courses and events to make links with other professionals and to develop their knowledge and practice.
- A timeline of key events and milestones is being developed regarding curriculum development.

Thank you all for the continued support of the school and your active involvement in making it the best possible school community. Our Governing body works with and supports the senior leadership team of the school to help drive improvements. If you'd like to be part of it, please contact the school office.

Regards

Nick Firkins
Headteacher