

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

Our most recent Ofsted Inspection took place on the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and we have now received the final report. The report will be published on the OFSTED website on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January. However, the school is now able to share it with parents/carers and it is available on the school website.

This inspection was carried out under the new, even more stringent OFSTED Framework for Inspections which was most recently updated (prior to our inspection) in Aug 2017. The school has been given a grade for 'Overall Effectiveness' as well as grades for 5 areas: Leadership & Management, Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare of Pupils, Quality of Teaching and learning, Outcomes for Pupils and Early Years Provision. The grades that can be awarded are Outstanding (1), Good (2), Requires Improvement (3) or Inadequate (4). Requires Improvement replaces the previous grading of 'Satisfactory' in this new framework.

The inspection took place in the penultimate week of the Christmas term, when, the usual timetable was not adhered to, because the children were busy with Christmas activities and productions. Four different and very successful nativities took place during the two day inspection.

We feel it is important to stress the positive comments relating to Leadership and Management within the school; with Ofsted recognising the success of the school's amalgamation process to become a new school, the improvements that have been made so far and the action points and strategies for further improvement that are in place. These comments reflect Ofsted's confidence in Leadership provided by the Senior Leadership Team. The report also acknowledges that there have been a number of changes to the governing body and I would like to reassure you, that the governors and those new to the governing body, are keen to ensure further improvements and that our school continues to move forward.

Inspectors were very impressed by pupils' personal development, welfare, the warm and welcoming school ethos and the way in which we strive to ensure that pupils are always safe and well looked after. We appreciate that it has been recommended that we do further work to strengthen a small minority of learning attitudes and behaviour, and this will be addressed immediately, working closely with the Local Authority and Diocese.

As can be seen from the report, the school has been judged as Requires Improvement. As a school, (staff, governors, Local Authority and Diocese) we are very disappointed with this judgement. The report and the judgements, we feel, do not do the school and the children justice. Because of this, both the Diocese and Local Authority will be supporting the school's response and complaint to Ofsted.

The vast majority of improvement points had already been identified by the Leadership Team and governors, and this is reflected in the current school improvement action plan. We will continue to strive forward to make rapid improvements in these identified areas of improvement.

All schools need to improve. Following a complex amalgamation process, this report shows that the school is already doing so, and that we are well equipped to address any further improvement areas to keep moving forward. We have a very skilled, experienced and caring staff team, who are fully committed to the school and your children; I would like to take this opportunity to commend them for their hard work and professionalism, not only during the inspection week but during the last three years of change, as we worked to bring two schools together successfully.

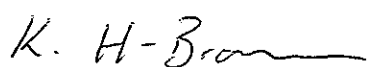
There is much to be proud of in the report: clearly much of what we are doing is working and delivering results. We are incredibly proud of our pupils, who work hard to achieve a high standard, and this was demonstrated by the school being in the **top five schools in County Durham for academic achievement and 722<sup>nd</sup> in the country, out of 15,500 schools, for progress in Reading by the end of KS2**. We are very proud that the school was featured as a top performing school in the Chronicle on the 15<sup>th</sup> December.

Our results for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 over the last two years have shown year on year improvement and are above the National Average in all subjects.

Finally, we would like to thank those parents/carers who provided their supportive views to the inspectors during a challenging two days in the penultimate week of term.

If you have any questions about the report, you are very welcome to make an appointment to discuss these with me. As always, many thanks for your continued support.

Best Wishes,



Mrs Harrison-Brown (Head Teacher)  
Mr. Mallard (Chair of Governors)