

Open Discussion Parent Forum – Ofsted Report (17th January 2018)

Questions were taken from parents/carers present and were answered by Tim Edwards-Grundy (Headteacher) unless indicated otherwise.

KW – Kathy Winrow, Chair of the Trustees at the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust

EK – Elizabeth Knowles, Chair of Governors

PF – Phil Fowler, Vice Chair of Governors

Can we see evidence of the improvements that are being made?

- The best piece of evidence is the Ofsted report itself.
- The Ofsted report states that the children in the building are making good progress.

It sounds like there was a level of complacency, are governors adequately trained?

- You will note from the report that there are a lot of new governors, eight governors have joined since 2015. (EK)
- There is a very good record of governors taking part in training and ensuring they are equipping themselves with the right level of expertise. (EK)
- It is important for governors to really scrutinise the school's data, I know that new governors are doing this. (KW)
- Complacency has never been part of the culture here and was not in the report.
- Target Tracker is a new assessment tool, it is a good tool which is now embedding.
- We flagged up the poor data two years ago. When we first raised concerns only 11% of children were achieving expected levels, two years of hard work increased that to 26%. The ODST advisors looked at and endorsed the plans for that cohort of children.

How do you know what children are achieving?

- Progress is measured from Year 2 to Year 6 and whether children reached the level that would have been expected given their Year 2 results.
- Attainment is a comparison with the national data and how the school's data measures against that – it is measured using the results from the end of Year 6 SATs.
- We run briefings for Year 6 parents regarding what the SATs look like.
- There are always children who we know can 'do it', but they don't always show it in the test.
- We are scrutinising ourselves as to how we can get better at testing including trialling other formal testing to help us get smarter in terms of preparing children to sit formal tests.

Do you look at other schools?

- Yes, we moderate with other schools locally. We have kept our links with the partnership schools and have some more moderation coming up with them soon.
- We also benefit by being part of ODST as we can moderate much more widely, including with schools who are out of county, it gives us a much broader picture.
- As part of Target Tracker governors are able to look at the data from all other schools who use the tool. Governors are checking to make sure that the data is accurate. (PF)

What do other schools do?

- There is a reluctance to teach to the test, but there are tricks of the trade. (KW)
- With younger children you don't want them to be tested all the time, but an increase in testing may be necessary. (KW)

- If more time is given to practicing testing, then other things would have to go. (KW)
- The school's current data indicates that necessary improvements in data outcomes can be achieved whilst retaining the breadth of curriculum that is being offered.
- As a Trust we have identified another head who is working very closely with Tim and senior leaders on this. (KW)
- When our school advisers go out to schools they report to the ODST Director of schools and he produces a detailed report for the Academy Improvement Committee (AIC). As a Trust we know where support is needed, and can look at how to get the balance between preparing children for the test and retaining all the lovely things. (KW)

What is the learning to make sure that when the national goalposts move again you can react more quickly?

- A large group of children came late to the school and so weren't in the school to be measured earlier. It wasn't that we hadn't measured them to find out, they weren't here to be measured.
- Reacting more quickly is a key learning point for us and we accept that, but we also need to avoid the knee jerk reaction to every change that comes from Ofsted, or the Department of Education.
- ODST are very plugged in to national changes and we can benefit from that to ensure that we can respond more quickly in the future.

Do you see ODST as part of the solution?

- Yes, absolutely.
- Being part of ODST is hugely valuable. (EK)

Was the situation last year a 'one-off'?

- Yes, it has got to be a one off!
- When the Ofsted inspectors arrived I explained to them the conundrum of last year, that the data they have will not fit with everything else that they will see in the school.
- The level of national change that has happened over the past two years will not happen again any time soon.
- The data coming through the school supports that this was a one-off.
- There are other formal data points through the school in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 and none of that data raises similar concerns.
- The data coming out of EYFS is much more consistent – there has not been the level of change in EYFS that there has been for the rest of the school.
- We could publish the summary data from Key Stages 1 and 2 going back several years in order that you can see the data blip.

How many schools are in ODST?

The Trust has just accepted its 30th school.

What do you expect now from Ofsted?

- We don't know when they will come again, but they have to do a monitoring visit within two years. Ofsted will only notify us the day before they visit again.
- On the basis of that monitoring visit they will decide when to carry out another full two-day inspection.

Is the data available for us to look at?

- Inspectors looked at books for each level right through the school and they heard readers at each level to make sure that what we are saying in our current is accurate. Every single book and every reader was at the level that we said. You can be confident that the data that we are reporting to ODST is accurate.
- The inspectors as well as ODST support the data, which gives me confidence that the predictions are strong.
- The data from the Year 6 SATs is available on the school website.
- The Government also publishes data to enable parents to compare data between schools.

Is the data available for KS1 as well?

Yes, it is.

For last year The Blake is in the bottom 10% of schools in terms of data, is the Trust satisfied with that?

- We are never satisfied, but this is something that can be rectified, we genuinely believe the school will move on; the change has already started. (KW)
- Being a head is the best job in the world, but the buck stops with the head. Mr Grundy could have covered everything up, or he could have been transparent, and he has been transparent. (KW)
- ODST is putting in challenge and support. (KW)
- Already a lot of the fixes are in place and results are better.

Given the results achieved last year, why should I be reassured?

- Ofsted said in their report that current pupils are making faster progress.
- The national tests don't take place until May, but the results from those will reflect the change.
- Data is the starting point for asking the right questions and Ofsted have asked the right questions.

Was it time for the school to have an Ofsted inspection?

- Yes, it was time both since our last inspection and because schools are inspected within three years of conversion to an Academy – we converted on 1st March 2015.
- Over the next term the Department of Education (DoE) will come and visit the school and go through the school's development plan. This is another check on the school.

Will the DoE write a report?

- No, but they will report back to the school and to ODST.
- Staff from ODST meet regularly with the Regional School's Commissioner who will raise any concerns about the school as part of their meetings. (KW)

Will you report back to parents on the DoE visit?

- Yes, I can let you know that this has taken place.
- We often put a lot of information about the school in the monthly Governor newsletter, I would anticipate continuing to use that as a way to provide feedback to parents.

What is going to happen to make sure that existing good practice is shared?

- There is a lot of sharing of good practice that is already taking place.

- Good practice is shared in staff meetings and through release time.
- We recognise that this could be done even more.

I would feel more confident if I could see evidence of the progress that children are making.

- I don't want to generate work for staff that will detract from what is useful for your children.
- There is a much more complex School Development Plan than the summary document that is shared with parents, every governor has an area that they are responsible for monitoring. As a governor I have to submit a report on my monitoring to the governors so that everyone knows what actions are taking place. (PF)
- The best evidence is look at your child's books and listen to what your child's teacher is saying about their progress and attainment.
- We will think about how we can communicate this sort of information well with you.

The comments below were made by a number of parents during the course of the open discussion

- When my eldest child was in Year 6 two years ago the school were brilliant, they made it very clear that they weren't going to add pressure to the children. My child is now in Year 8 and has a really good approach to work and learning, she is thriving at secondary school and is achieving well.
- Your children are in the right school, there is not so much pressure on them as there would be if they were working to a narrow curriculum.
- I can see loads of teachers dotted around the room, your team are here with you.
- We are very happy with the school and the experience of our children.
- I appreciate the transparency.
- As parents we have a responsibility to work with the school.
- The EYFS is a fabulous place.
- My child has had an incredible amount of support to help him maximise his potential, I have no worries that he is getting the support he needs for SATs and beyond.
- There is real strength at the end of KS2.
- Thank you very much for hosting the meeting tonight.
- We are really pleased with the school.
- I feel confident that you have the fight in your belly to take the school forward.