



## Ackworth Howard Church of England (VC) Junior and Infant School

Station Road, Low Ackworth, Pontefract,  
West Yorkshire, WF7 7HH  
Tel: 01977 612124

Web: [www.ackworthhowardschool.co.uk](http://www.ackworthhowardschool.co.uk)  
Email: [admin@howard.wakefield.sch.uk](mailto:admin@howard.wakefield.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mr. M Walker - BA (Hons)  
Chair of Governors: Mrs L. O'Brien

**Educating 'for life in all its fullness.'**

Growth in MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

13<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### Ofsted Inspection Report

Dear Parents/Carers

As you will be aware, our school was inspected by Ofsted on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, in the days prior to school closures during the pandemic. Owing to strict rules surrounding the confidentiality of inspection outcomes, today is the first time that I have been able to talk to our school community about the outcome.

The report is not in the public domain and Ofsted have made it clear that the report must not be published or discussed as such however I am able to share it with you. As the school is closed, we have issued a copy to the 1<sup>st</sup> emergency contact held on our system for each child who attends.

The findings of the inspection resulted in a 'requires improvement' judgement. This is a conclusion that we find extremely disappointing and one we do not feel portrays a full and accurate picture of our school community or the journey we have been on over the last few years. As a result of this judgement, we will be inspected again within 2 years.

The past three and a half years have seen a huge transformation at our school. Following a number of years of instability at the time of the last inspection, strong recruitment at all levels including an expansion of the leadership team, the introduction of a nursery class, refurbishment of the school and development of learning areas, investment in technology, a vastly improved teaching profile, a significant improvement in attainment and outcomes across the whole school and the development of an extremely positive school culture have received regular positive praise, particularly from external sources.

Anyone who spends time at our school or visits is immediately struck by our culture and what we offer here. This is the reason why numbers have increased and we have become oversubscribed. We are not a school that has a focus on ticking boxes, our firm belief is that we develop the whole child - 'educating for life in all its fullness.' These values will not change and are highlighted positively in the report.

As you will see within the report, Ofsted are highly complementary about the work that takes place in respect of behaviour and attitudes and personal development. Ofsted commended us on our vision, the enrichment opportunities offered, the leadership opportunities we provide for children, the opportunities we provide in developing respectful and tolerant citizens of the future who are thoughtful and caring, the teaching of early reading and the school's work on attendance. We endeavour to ensure that we are outward looking and provide new experiences at every opportunity for our children and I am glad that this was recognised.

We recognise that our curriculum needs development but can assure you that this has been a focus. However, rather than continuing to develop our current curriculum, we have made the decision to use the opportunity the current circumstances have afforded us to rewrite our curriculum, taking it right back to the national curriculum and rebuilding it so that we have an innovative and inspiring curriculum to take the school forward. We are excited to share with you the outcome of this. We have also reflected on the points raised in relation to SEND.

I am disappointed about the inspector's views on our Governing Body. The governors are fully informed and aware of the school's position and contribute significant time on a voluntary basis for the sake of our children.

Compassion  
Forgiveness  
Friendship  
Trust

It was pleasing that the personal development judgement was very nearly an outstanding judgement as this is something we feel is strong in our school and we are passionate about this area. As you can see, Ofsted challenged children and questioned them on their understanding of radicalisation and extremism. We will ensure that this is added to our personal development curriculum so that children are better prepared for questions such as this.

I would seek to reassure all of our community that whilst the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection was not what any of us had hoped it would be, day in, day out, your child continues to receive the very highest level of teaching, care and opportunity at The Howard School. This is a view not only held by me as Headteacher but also by our staff, parents, children, other schools across our networks and our many external advisors. During our Inspection, children, staff and parents were spoken to by Ofsted Inspectors, with online questionnaires also completed and the overwhelming view was that they were well cared for in our Howard Family and that overall The Howard School is a fantastic place to be! We are immensely proud of our children for the way that they conducted themselves throughout our Inspection and for the support parents have shown us in recent months in particular.

Leadership, Governors and Staff will continue to strive to achieve the best outcomes for the children whilst taking on board the recommendations. There were some things that we didn't agree on. Whatever the outcome of this inspection had been, we would have always looked to see what the next steps were to improve the quality of education for all of our children. This is exactly what we are going to do. I will keep you informed of progress regularly through my weekly newsletters when we return to school.

From a personal point of view, I have genuinely given my life to this school. I'm so proud of what we have achieved here. This is a special place and although the job of a headteacher is at times absurdly and overwhelmingly challenging (as it is at this time having to deal with Ofsted and then straight into managing the Coronavirus pandemic), for many reasons, I have found myself in a position where I love my job, my school, the children within it and the whole school community. The comments from parents, gifts and messages of support during the inspection, the determination of the staff and above all else the children's ability to keep everyone smiling was ultimately what got us through it and will keep us focussed. We will strive to address these recommendations but will not let the paper it is written on define us!

I will not let this change the inspirational and positive culture that has been developed over the last few years. We are the same school and what is clear is that everyone has the same goal – to make our school the best it can be for our children and our community: this continues regardless of the latest report. Most importantly of all, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that wonderful things happen in this school all day, every day for our children.

I would like to thank the children for their tremendous efforts during the inspection, generally and when talking to inspectors. They were all excellent and positive role models for our school.

If there is anything in the report that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your continued support of our school, your efforts are always appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Walker

Headteacher



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