



Date 25/4/23

Ofsted Report Following The Inspection in Spring 23

Dear Parents/carers,

With this letter you will find a copy of the report following the 'Ungraded Inspection,' which took place on March 8th and 9th last term. The report is also available on our website and will be published on the Ofsted website in a week or so.

All schools which are already deemed to be 'Good' like ourselves, receive an 'Ungraded Inspection'. For more details about how an ungraded inspection works, follow this [link](#) to the School Inspections Handbook.

I am very pleased to inform you that the key finding of the inspection is that The Firs remains in the 'Good' Ofsted category.

Key Findings:

- Caring for all our children is the most important thing of all to us at The Firs and this was reflected in the report, which opens by saying that *'pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel happy and safe as all staff care about pupils' well-being'*.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are *'effective'*.
- The report refers to the *'high expectations'* we have for *'pupil's education'* and the *'high quality learning through their play'* in the Early Years.
- As a school we are passionate about children's achievement in and love of reading and the report notes that we *'ensure that all pupils learn to read fluently'*. The inspector saw RWI in operation, the way we organise our teaching of reading and the impact this and 'Accelerated Reader' was having and this is reflected in the report, which comments that books are *'closely matched to the sounds they learn'* and that our approach *'ensures that pupils keep up, rather than fall behind'*.
- The report comments that The Firs has *'embedded effective teaching in English, mathematics and science.'* As science was a previous development area for us, it is important that the report adds that *'pupils now have rich opportunities to work scientifically'*.

Adam J.G Campbell (Headteacher)

The Firs Lower School • Station Road, Ampthill, Bedford MK45 2QR
Telephone: (01525) 402735

Email: office@firslower.org • Web www.firslower.co.uk



- Looking after all our pupils, including the most vulnerable, is so important to us and the report reflects that *'pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs effectively identified and reviewed...consequently, pupils with SEND learn well.'*
- Developing children in the widest sense is very important to us and the report notes that *'pupils have a rich and varied range of broader experiences.'*
- The report refers to our *'broad and balanced curriculum'* and *'knowledgeable teachers'* which is very pleasing and the 1st development area, which concerns the further enhancement of some of the foundation subjects, is very much in tune with our current school improvement work and this feedback will be very useful in guiding us in our future development planning.
- The report sets out that *'children in the early years experience a rich learning environment'* and goes on to add that The Saplings pre school has been *'effectively developed'*, building on *'the established good practice in Reception'*. The 2nd development area concerns the plans we already have in place, to further enhance the opportunities offered in the Saplings outdoor area. At the time the new Saplings was completed, the LA funding was only enough for the building itself and we are having to fund the outdoor area ourselves. We have however, already made improvements with the support of the PTFA and grants we have applied for and as an existing 'Key Development Area' in our current School Development Plan, this again coincides well with our future development planning.

As I already mentioned in a newsletter last term, I would like to thank all of the parents / carers who participated in the Ofsted parent survey. I would also like to thank the many parents / carers whose kind words of encouragement, both in the Parent View comments shared with us by the inspector and in emails and conversations with staff over the two days, really meant a great deal to us all.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff and governors, who responded so positively in what was a very demanding and pressured event (as all inspections always are!) The spirit of teamwork and dedication, which is always a strength at The Firs, was strongly in evidence throughout the two days: it was a great team effort!

Finally of course, the last word should be about our fantastic children. The inspector commented on how articulate and positive our children were about the school and their learning. This did not surprise us; we are intensely proud of all our children at The Firs. I would like to thank all of them for their hard work and their fantastic attitude to learning, that never ceases to impress!

Yours sincerely,



Adam J.G. Campbell
Headteacher