



YORKE MEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER



July 2019

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff at Yorke Mead,

Now we have arrived at the end of another highly successful year at Yorke Mead, it is worth reflecting for a moment on the challenging world our children are growing up into. The School recently held a timely and inspiring 'Health and Well-being Week', looking at how we can promote the mental and physical health of our children, and, at the same time, of course, do some good to ourselves. Over the Summer there are great opportunities to get out and enjoy the fresh air and the beautiful countryside that surrounds Croxley. If you haven't already seen it, why not take a look at the National Trust's '50 Things to do before you are 113/4' (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/50-things-to-do>) which is full of ideas for stimulating activities and days out.

Getting out into the big outdoors is one thing, but we also need to deal with the networked world we live in, a place of huge opportunity for connectivity and acquiring information quickly from the internet, which can be accessed from the palm of your hand, even a small child's hand. Unfortunately, that ease of access also brings huge risks to our children. So, if we may leave you with one serious message for the Summer break, it is to think about children using the internet safely. Yorke Mead has from time to time organised briefings on this subject, and will continue to do so, but why not, over the Summer, check out some of the websites that provide helpful advice, like that of the NSPCC (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety>).



Looking back for a moment, when we wrote to you at this time last year, at the end of our first year as Co-chairs, we focused on the school's strong performance at Yorke Mead's last Ofsted inspection, in May 2018. This year it was revealed that Ofsted is making extensive changes in the way it inspects schools from September. What can we expect to be different from our recent experience? Well, last May we were visited by one inspector for a one-day short inspection and his judgement on the school was based essentially on performance data, with only very limited observation of lessons. Ofsted now say inspectors will visit schools for two days and they will do a 'deep dive' to inspect 3-5 subjects (in a primary school), attending 4-6 lessons for each subject and holding extensive interviews with senior leaders, subject leaders, class teachers and pupils, including the inspection of a sample of their workbooks. Indeed, Ofsted say they want to make judgements based on the education that pupils actually receive day-to-day in their classes, summed up neatly in the phrase 'let's see that in action together'.



We are reviewing the implications of this new approach for the school, but our initial reaction is to wish Yorke Mead could have had such a thorough inspection last year; we have every confidence that the inspectors would have seen teaching and behaviour that can justly be called 'outstanding'. In passing, it is worth noting that the Department of Education recently announced that only 16% of the 'outstanding' schools Ofsted have inspected this year have retained their status. Of course, it will now be several years before Yorke Mead is due to be inspected again, but our feeling is positive about the direction Ofsted are taking: bring on the deep dives!



As ever, the end of the academic year means saying goodbye to our oldest pupils and to some of our staff. So, we offer our best wishes to the Year 6 pupils who will move on to the new challenge of secondary school in the Autumn: good luck to you all. On the teaching front, we send our best wishes to Mrs Leondiou, Mrs Styles, Mr Walterus and Mrs Wilde, who are all moving on, and last, but certainly not

least, we give great thanks and good wishes for the future to Mrs Yates, who has served the school, but particularly the Governors, so well as Secretary to the Board for many years.

Finally, we always like to remember with thanks the Friends of Yorke Mead, who do so many good things to support our school, recently holding a very successful summer fayre. Earlier this year Mrs Pollard reported that a whole raft of new equipment for the school had been acquired with the help of FOYM. Please continue to give your support to FOYM all year round.

Thanks to everyone in the Yorke Mead family for all your efforts throughout this academic year; do have a very enjoyable Summer break.

Charlotte and Derek

Co-Chairs of Governors

