



The BAWB Collaboration
Bainbridge, Askrigg, and West Burton Primary Schools
Mid-Dale Excellence in Education
Executive Headteacher: Miss Charlotte L. Harper

Monday 30th November 2015

Dear Parents and Friends,

On November 5th, Ofsted came to Askrigg to carry out a new Section 8 one-day inspection. Thank you to every one of you that contributed to Parent View. Your overwhelmingly positive responses ensured that the inspector (HMI) understood how extremely well you regard our school.

A Section 8 inspection (new from September 2015) is to confirm that the previous 'good' judgment about a school still stands.

In 2012, we were judged to be 'good' in every area of school effectiveness. Our 2012 Inspection report is available on the school website.

Our previous inspection was a Section 5, using the previous Ofsted framework. These are generally 2-day visits, and schools are judged to be:

Outstanding (1), **Good** (2), **Requires Improvement** (3) or **Inadequate** (4).

I apologise if this is confusing, but this is the current situation with Ofsted inspections.

Since 2012, Ofsted have 'raised the bar' in their expectations of schools more than once, demanding further improved pupil outcomes, more effective leadership and management, better quality of teaching, etc. In a nutshell, a school that was rated 'good' three years ago, if it had merely 'maintained' the current practice, would have probably become a 'requires improvement' school today, because Ofsted have raised their overall expectations.

As parents, you will know how much our school has improved in the last two years. It is hard to believe that it was only in 2013 that Miss Harper took up the reins at Askrigg and Bainbridge, because so much has changed. As Governors, we have raised our game as well, by undertaking a rigorous training programme and recruiting new governors based on their skills. We hold the school to account more effectively than ever before, and undertake in-depth monitoring every term.

Our school will not receive an Ofsted report for this new Section 8 inspection. The inspector has written a letter to Miss Harper, to which this letter is attached. Because we know how much has changed and improved in the last two years, we are somewhat 'underwhelmed' by the Ofsted letter. We are aware that inspectors are constrained in how they can express themselves but we do not feel the letter truly reflects our improvements. However, we are pleased with the positive language that has been used throughout, and especially in the section **Inspection findings**.

We do not feel that the leadership team has just '*maintained the good quality of education*', as the inspector has written in his opening sentence. We believe we have significantly improved every aspect of educational provision and our pupil outcomes demonstrate this. We are very proud of our track record in supporting the excellent innovations that Miss Harper has brought to the school. As governors, we are privileged to work with such an inspirational leader as Miss Harper, who is held in high regard across the County.

Although this inspection was only for Askrigg, the inspector recognised the inextricable links with Bainbridge, and therefore spent time visiting the EYFS and KS1 as well. He was also very pleased to see staff working across the collaboration (e.g. PE and French being taught at Askrigg) and also to meet our shared subject leaders. During his verbal feedback, Mr Evans was very complimentary about the way the collaboration works

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and about how governors and leaders have kept focussed on school improvement during a period of considerable change. Verbally, he recognised the exceptional leadership of the school with particular reference to Miss Harper and the governors.

There were no surprises in his findings. The two points in the section **Next steps for the school**, are already in our School Development Plan and in both areas we are making very good progress.

The outcome of this inspection at Askrigg is both pleasing and very positive, and is a recognition that our school, (in collaboration with Bainbridge and West Burton) is on track to be a place of excellence for all our pupils to learn, flourish and achieve.

As governors, our strategic priorities state that we aim for the BAWB schools to become 'Outstanding' in every area of school effectiveness. We believe that we are good / outstanding in many areas today and will continue to work relentlessly to achieve the highest possible recognition for our provision.

I hope this goes some way to help explain the current Ofsted process and the outcome of this recent inspection. Please do get in touch with me, or Miss Harper, if you would like any more explanation or to discuss anything else about it.

Yours sincerely,

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