**RUSSELL LOWER SCHOOL**

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Dear Parents,

**Ofsted Report**

Following our recent Ofsted inspection we are delighted to attach a copy of our Ofsted report.

Since September 2015, Ofsted have introduced ‘short inspections’ for previously ‘good’ schools. Under this new Ofsted framework it is now incredibly challenging to retain a ‘good’ rating. The proverbial ‘bar’ has been raised very significantly since the school was last inspected in 2011.

The report is extremely complimentary and the Inspector was staggered that we had managed to keep the standard so high throughout major building and renovation works. We are delighted that everyone’s hard work has been recognised and the children’s achievements and successes celebrated. The report is full of praise for our fabulous children, staff, governors, parents, school and environment.

*“Pupils say they love school…they say teachers are good and fun, they get support if they need it, teachers encourage them to do high-level work and they learn a lot, everyone gets along and any bullying is dealt with very quickly.”*

*“Children’s behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. Consequently they make good progress.”*

*“A rich curriculum and the wide range of extra-curricular activities bring learning to life.”*

*“Accurate tracking of pupils’ progress and robust monitoring of teaching ensure that most-able pupils are identified and challenged to achieve as much as possible.”*

*“Learning in the early years is exciting. Parents said their children were very happy, safe and thrilled to be at school. I can see why.”*

*“Parents, pupils and staff say that the best characteristics of this school are exemplified by ‘The Russell Way’ and ‘not-a- second-wasted’ approach through which everyone is valued and stimulated to make the school even better.”*

*“There is a well-managed buzz of excitement at the start of the day.”*

*“There are high expectations for conduct around the school.”*

*“Pupils are very proud of their school and keen to take on responsibilities. Their personal development is a strength.”*

*“Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary about your energetic, knowledgeable and dedicated leadership”*

*“Governors are highly knowledgeable and bring a wealth of expertise to the school.”*

Staff and Governors are delighted that our hard work and commitment to high quality learning, teaching and excellent pastoral care and support has been recognised and feel that the Inspector made sound judgements and valued points that define our school ethos.

There are many highlights within the report:

* School is extremely welcoming
* Pupils feel extremely safe at school
* All groups of pupils are making good progress including pupils with special educational needs or disability and pupils supported through the pupil premium grant
* Children with SEND receive excellent care and attention
* Good teaching of reading and improvement in boys’ writing
* Sharing of effective practice with other schools
* No one is complacent
* Tracking systems and progress meetings ensure that any gaps in pupils’ learning are identified and needs met promptly
* Curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched with many extra-curricular activities
* Safeguarding systems and policies are implemented thoroughly and consistently. Staff are extremely vigilant and there is a strong culture of safeguarding
* There is rigorous attendance monitoring
* Governors support and challenge all aspects of school work

**We are delighted that the HMI** (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate) **has judged Russell Lower School to be a ‘Good’ school under the new significantly higher expectations of the new Ofsted framework**. No school in CBC has become Outstanding under the new framework. The report acknowledges that school has continued to progress well since its last 2011 inspection.

The report recognises that *“much has changed since September 2015”* and that both the school leadership and Governors have *“galvanised the whole school community to improve the good practice already established at the school” and* have *“successfully tackled Inspectors’ recommendations from the previous inspection.”*

The HMI identified only two ‘Next Steps’ to continue to develop our school further so that we can progress towards outstanding:

* Subject and phase leaders develop their evaluation skills to improve pupils’ learning and outcomes across all curriculum areas
* Communication between teaching assistants and class teachers is more effective to maximise the impact of all additional support on pupils’ progress and achievement

It is reassuring that we had already identified these areas ourselves and that these were already planned developments within our 2016/17 School Development Plan.

The HMI recognised that the school’s leadership is extremely strong and is positioned to move the school to outstanding. At the end of the inspection, the Inspector took the unusual step of inviting Mrs Walker to join the Head Teacher’s Reference Group for Ofsted which meets regularly in Cambridge, in recognition of the contribution she believes Mrs Walker can make to moving schools forward. We consider this a great compliment and honour.

Thank you for your support during the inspection, for taking the time to read the report in full and for your continued support which is accelerating our progress towards meeting our ambitious vision for the Russell Lower School’s future.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Allison Nicki Walker

Chair of Governors Headteacher