



**Smart Money
Award 2023**

Yorke Mead Primary School

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Dear Parents, Carers and Staff of Yorke Mead,

We are coming to the end of yet another academic year at Yorke Mead, a year that might well be viewed as a year of recovery. When we wrote to you at the end of each of the last few years, it is no surprise to find that our comments were naturally focused on the impact of Covid on all our lives and, above all, on the education of our children. There is, of course, now an official inquiry going on into the UK's response to Covid, one that we are all able to, should we wish, contribute to, but apart from that investigation, it is clear that public figures and the media now regard the pandemic as over and done with; other issues such as the Ukraine War, inflation and the cost of living, have become more pressing. However, at our recent Governor's meeting, we were reminded by Senior Leaders of the continuing impact of Covid on the development of our children, who were in their formative early years during the pandemic (Wikipedia suggests the pandemic in UK lasted from January 2020 to April 2022). A recent meeting of Governors from a group of Hertfordshire schools confirmed that this is an ongoing concern for all primary schools across the County. We know that the staff at Yorke Mead are fully focussed on getting all our children back on track and recognise this will be a continuing task for the next year and beyond.

In this last year, one of relative normality, Governors have been glad to be able to resume visiting Yorke Mead on a regular basis, and our perception is that the staff at Yorke Mead have done a fantastic job in 2022/3 at getting the school back into good working order; Governor visits have revealed a school that is flourishing with an excellent standard of behaviour and, as a recent meeting with the School Council confirmed, children who are full of bright ideas. We were also delighted to see a lot of positive comments from parents and carers in the responses to the recent parent questionnaire, really underlining how much the efforts of staff are appreciated. We would encourage parents and carers to pass on those positive views throughout our community; it is important that we spread the good news about our outstanding school: let's all show support for the Yorke Mead way!

Of course, there are always things that can be done better, and all constructive proposals made in the parent questionnaire will be looked at to see if there are ideas that can be adopted, as, indeed, Governors also do for the suggestions put forward in the companion survey of staff which has taken place over the last term. Governors and Senior Leaders at Yorke Mead firmly believe that we must always work to make things better for our children, and for our staff, and we do what we can within the limits of the resources available to us. We cannot disguise that this has been a tough year for budget management; general funding for schools has been tighter, costs have increased, notably, of course, energy costs, and we have also felt that the support available for our children with special needs has become more restricted. These financial pressures are

unlikely to get any easier as we move into 2023/4 but we are determined to maintain standards and ensure we use our resources as effectively as possible.

Talking about resources, leads neatly on to the question of environmental sustainability, an issue every organisation must grapple with, and Yorke Mead has formed a working group of Governors and staff which has drafted the set of objectives you can read on the school website, designed to work towards Yorke Mead being net zero in 2030. We are very fortunate in having a very active set of eco-warriors in the school Eco Council who are already forging ahead in developing new ways of making the school more sustainable, last month they were voted Eco Forum Champion by students at other schools! You can follow their activities on their Twitter feed: @ecoyorkemead

Reading the Yorke Mead School Newsletter over the last year (an essential read!) as well as many entries for the Eco Council, we have noted the headline 'Sporting Success' appearing ever more frequently; congratulations to all those boys and girls whose achievements have been celebrated week after week over the last three terms. This all came to a climax recently in a memorable Sports Week that was graced by three of Britain's finest Olympic athletes, Steve Backley, Roger Black and Mark Foster. It was a tremendous inspiration for the children to have these famous athletes here at Yorke Mead giving talks and master class sessions and encouraging the children in their sporting endeavours. We should also not forget to mention the sterling efforts of the Friends of Yorke Mead to make Sports Day so enjoyable. As ever, FOYM have been supporting the school strongly throughout the year with their fundraising activities, supplying refreshment at events, and enabling the acquisition of new facilities; new members are always welcome, please consider joining if you haven't signed up already.

The end of the school year always means saying goodbye to our oldest cohort of pupils, Year 6, and we wish them all the best of luck in starting at their new schools in the Autumn term. We are also saying farewell to a number of members of staff: Mrs Walke, whose work as our mental health lead was greatly valued, Mrs Smith, Miss Watson, Mrs Harman, Mrs Haynes and Mr Roberts, and we wish them well in their next steps too.

Thanks to everyone involved at Yorke Mead for your efforts to make this a successful school year and we wish you all a very enjoyable summer break. We keep reading that another heat wave is about to break out, but it looks like we might get to the end of term with the more traditional British summer weather of sunshine and showers, but if the big heat should return during the holidays, make sure that you stay cool!

Kind regards,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left is 'C. Gomes' and the signature on the right is 'D. Marshall'. They are positioned side-by-side on a light blue rectangular background.

Charlotte Gomes and Derek Marshall

*Co-Chairs of Governors
Yorke Mead Primary School*