



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Dear Parents and Carers of pupils at Yorke Mead,

As we rush rapidly towards Christmas, and, for most people, a much-needed break, it is a time to reflect on how another year has slipped by, and on all that has that happened over the last twelve months.

Looking back at what has been going on, 2023 will surely not be remembered as a good year: the main headlines seem to have been that inflation eroded most people's standard of living; industrial action disrupted transport and other services; Covid lingered and how it was dealt with is still mired in controversy, while deadly conflict broke out in the Middle East and continued in Ukraine and elsewhere. Watching the news was only rarely a positive experience.

These are, indeed, difficult times, both in the UK and internationally, and these problems impact on all our lives, making it more difficult to just get on with things. With this background, it is always a delight to come to Yorke Mead and see the calm and orderly way the staff get on with the vital task of progressing the education and personal development of the children. Most of the Governors came for a visit to school late last month and we were again impressed with how happy the children are, and how welcoming to visitors too, even if they do think the Governors are 100 years old! The joy of learning at school is evident to everyone who comes through the door and is a huge credit to the staff for maintaining this positive educational environment; we all know how tough it is to keep to the highest standards, day in, day out. If you spend any time talking to staff at Yorke Mead, you soon realise how committed they are to promoting the joy of learning and the well-being of the pupils.

The Governors of Yorke Mead are very proud of our school, and we feel it should be graded outstanding, but our opinion is not independent. When we heard that an Ofsted Inspector was coming to Yorke Mead on 13 and 14 September, with hardly any time for the staff to get things settled down after the Summer break, we naturally wondered how far she would share our positive view. Well, when her report eventually came out it was gratifying to see that she was entirely of the same view, in that she might well have given the school an outstanding grading had not the Inspection been an ungraded one. She clearly found visiting the school as enjoyable and inspiring as we do. Her conclusions mean that the next Inspection of Yorke Mead, within two years, will be graded, and offers the hope that the school will be recognised formally as outstanding; that is, if the current furore about Ofsted hasn't led to a change in the grading system or, indeed, there hasn't been a General Election and a new government has introduced a different system. We live in an age of continuous change and the school has to adapt constantly to new measures from Government

and the local authority, but, whatever happens, this September's snapshot by His Majesty's Inspector shows a school that is thriving, and where, as the report says: "There is a strong sense of community among staff, pupils and parents." At a time when many schools long graded outstanding are being regraded as good, it is very encouraging to know that Yorke Mead has the opportunity to move in the opposite direction in the near future.

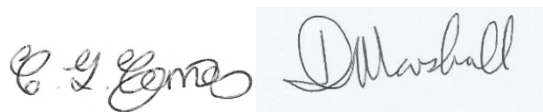
If, by any chance, you haven't yet read the report then please log on to the Yorke Mead website and take a look. It is a relatively short document, but it contains many splendidly positive comments about the school, and it is moving to read a document that captures the essence of the school so well, written by an independent Inspector, who clearly did a very thorough job of understanding how the school works over the two days she was here. The Governors were also delighted that 154 parents took the trouble to submit comments on the school to Ofsted Parent View, the support you have shown for the school was clearly a major factor in the Inspector writing such a positive report, combined, of course, with what the children said, and the Inspector spoke to many of them. This very encouraging report will also help attract prospective parents to choose Yorke Mead; last month the school had another successful open morning, thanks especially to the involvement of pupils and staff who gave their time to support the event.

Our warm thanks go to the Friends of Yorke Mead, who organise so much for the school: the fantastic fireworks display, Christmas Fun day, Halloween Disco, Father Christmas letters, second hand uniform and costume collection and sales, Christmas jumper sale and so much more! All they do, and the money raised, support our children to have the very best during their time at Yorke Mead and support vital improvements at the school. They would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to join them in their work.

As usual we have to say farewell to some members of staff at the end of this term, Mr Parr, our Year One Teacher is leaving us: we offer him our best wishes for the future.

We should end by thanking you for all you do to support your children in making the most of their days at Yorke Mead, and for your continuing support for the school. We wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and look forward to working with you again in 2024.

Merry Christmas

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'C. G. Emma' and the signature on the right is 'D. Marshall'. They are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlotte and Derek (on behalf of all the Governors)