

Yorke Mead Primary School

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Smart Money
Award 2023



16th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers of pupils at Yorke Mead,

We are already racing towards the end of 2024, doesn't the time fly by! It seems only a short time ago we were writing to you explaining that an Ofsted inspector had visited the school, given extremely positive feedback, effectively telling us the school merited an Outstanding grading, but that the inspection was "ungraded", meaning that a change in the Ofsted grading would have to await a further "graded" inspection. Well, that was the highlight of our letter to you last year; this year we are delighted to be writing after the promised graded inspection has taken place, on 12 and 13 November, and to report that the outcome has proved just as brilliant as we had hoped, rating the school as Outstanding in all aspects of its work.

As longstanding Governors at Yorke Mead, we have always believed that the school should be rated as Outstanding, and we know from our regular monitoring visits that the school delivers this level of performance day-in, day-out, not just on the days when the Inspector calls, and has been doing so for many years. However, the view of the Governors is not the one that matters to the outside world and, in particular, to parents and carers deciding which school to choose for their children. Yorke Mead finally getting its long-deserved recognition as Outstanding from Ofsted was a massive achievement for our splendid staff and one that is absolutely vital for the future of the school. Just to clear up one detail, when the Inspector visited the school in September 2023, Ofsted was still giving schools it inspected a one word grading. The sad death of Headteacher Ruth Perry in Caversham, Berkshire, after an inspection there, led to a reappraisal, and Ofsted's decision that schools should in future be judged on a report card consisting of 5 attributes: the quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; leadership and management; early year provision. We were very pleased, but not at all surprised, that the team of Inspectors who came this year found Yorke Mead to be Outstanding on all five counts.

We like to call the ethos of our school "the Yorke Mead Way", by which we mean providing education to the highest standards with a firm commitment to no child being left behind. The school's progressive culture shines through in the Inspection report, just as it did in the Ofsted report last year. The main focus of this year's report is, as it should be, on the children, and as

frequent visitors to the school, we are always impressed by how happy the children are, how welcoming to visitors and how focussed they are on learning. This is, of course, also a tribute to the wonderful work done by the staff. But the report further highlights the strong inclusive sense of community at the school: "Parents, staff and governors are very proud of their school and how it prepares pupils exceptionally well for both future learning and life in modern Britain." You, the parents and carers, are the bedrock of an Outstanding school. As the old saying goes 'we can't do it without you', the children's personal development is built upon the love and support you give them at home, and, in addition, many of you have been kind enough to write to Ofsted Parent View expressing your firm support for the school, which was greatly appreciated by the staff and governors. So, over the coming Christmas, please read the Ofsted report and give yourself a pat on the back for the role you have played in achieving Outstanding for Yorke Mead, and also, don't forget to recommend the school to any family or friends who may be looking for a nursery or school place in 2025!

When we wrote to you a year ago, we remarked on how the world has become a very dark place and what a joy it is to escape the gloomy news headlines, to come into school and witness educational development in action, to observe it going on between our excellent staff and their pupils. Well, that contrast seems almost more severe this year, for while the world suffers ever more strife, instability and extreme weather, our community at Yorke Mead grows stronger and better recognised. Apart from being able to trumpet the Outstanding grading given to us by Ofsted, what about the new glass cabinet in the school foyer, chock full of sporting trophies! We have to admit that Yorke Mead does not have a long history of sporting achievement, but things have changed, and our children are now bringing home the cups on a regular basis.

We must also, as ever, pay tribute to the sterling work of the Friends of Yorke Mead, also a key part of our community, organising fantastic events such as the Christmas Funday, school discos and treats for the children at Christmas, while also raising funds so that we can afford to make improvements to the facilities at the school. As was pointed out in a recent edition of the Newsletter, FOYM is only now being supported by a very small number of parents, so we need more kind volunteers to step forward and play their part. The time involved is very small while the benefit to the children can be significant e.g. helping to fund new equipment. So, over the Christmas break, please consider if you could spare a few hours for the benefit of the whole school, and if you would like to help FOYM, please contact foym@yorkemead.herts.sch.uk

As usual we have to say farewell to some members of staff at the end of this term. Mel Hunt, one of our MSAs is leaving us, and we offer her our best wishes for the future.

Thank you for your continuing support for Yorke Mead. We wish you and your family a very merry Christmas, and a happy New Year. Have a very good holiday break and we look forward to working with you again in 2025.

Merry Christmas

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'C. G. Long' and the second is 'D. Marshall'. They are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlotte and Derek (on behalf of all the Governors)