

St Ives Junior School

Headteacher - Mrs Ali Watts

Monday 15th January 2024



OFSTED INSPECTION – 29th-30th November 2023

Dear Parents/ Carers,

We have now received the final report from OFSTED following our inspection in November which accompanies this letter. The full report will be published on the OFSTED website around the 22nd January 2024. However, we are allowed to inform parents and carers of the outcome in advance. The school's last inspection was 12 years ago.

The inspectors found many positive strengths within the school and were aware of the significant changes that have taken place over the past two years (since January 2022). The inspectors were confident that every suggestion for improvement they made, the school is already implementing. They recognise that time is required to see long-term impact of new initiatives and actions.

The Lead Inspector met separately with representatives of the governing body. He was impressed with many aspects of the school as is evidenced in the report. He was at pains to stress that the management team of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher were both professionals of the highest calibre and undoubtedly the best people to carry on the job of school improvement. Indeed, he was of the opinion that the current school improvement plan had identified and was already addressing the issues that the inspectors had themselves identified as priorities. The inspection team clearly felt that in some ways the inspection had come too soon for the school inasmuch as it is too early for all the changes and improvements that have been and are being made to be embedded and bear fruit. The Head and Deputy already had the full confidence of the governing body and this has only been reinforced by the comments of the lead inspector. The governing body feel that the school will continue to thrive and improve under the current leadership and plans for the future.

OFSTED identified that:

'This is a school that focuses on the development of the whole child.'

'Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.'

'Pupils are kind and respectful to each other and the school's work on pupils' personal development is a strength.'

This shows that the SIJS vision of 'Together, we thrive in a nurturing, inspiring community' is being lived by all.

OFSTED also praised the work the school is doing and the rapid improvement over the last 18 months and that:

'The school's self-evaluation is accurate,' and as a result 'action plans show the right issues are being prioritised.'

'The school is now moving in the right direction.'

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The school made the right decision in June 2022 to overhaul the curriculum and OFSTED state: 'The school has now radically overhauled the curriculum. It did so through a shared process with staff. The curriculum is now well sequenced and ambitious. It precisely identifies the knowledge that pupils should know and when.'

We are very proud of our Roots and Wings curriculum and OFSTED recognised that it is 'ambitious' and that we are currently in the implementation stage (embedding as standard practice) of our curriculum and that 'it is too early to have had an impact on how well pupils learn over time.'

Throughout the whole inspection, the children and staff were a credit to our community. They were eager to share their work and what they have been learning.

The grades that can be awarded are Outstanding (1), Good (2), Requires Improvement (3) and Inadequate (4).

The findings in the report were no surprise to us and align with our own school self-evaluation. There are three areas for improvement identified in the report. These key areas of improvement are already part of our school development plan and we are now going to continue to show the impact and improvement in order to provide an even better education for the children of St Ives Junior School. The inspectors were pleased to share that feedback from parents, pupils and staff indicated that children are happy and make good progress at the school.

There has been a lot in the news lately about OFSTED and how it handles inspections. For us at St Ives Junior School, the days were intense and thorough but a positive and constructive experience, providing a useful springboard to the future.

We must say a massive thank you to the whole staff team. Everyone at SIJS always strives to improve and we will continue to do so. Many thanks also to the governors, our external support, our fantastically supportive parental community and our brilliant children. Thank you!

If you would like the opportunity to discuss the findings of the OFSTED report and all the progress that we are already making in improving the school, we would like to invite you to an open parents' meeting at school on Wednesday 17th January at 5.30pm in the school hall with senior leaders and governors.

As a school, we thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ali Watts and Mr Eric Nicholas
Headteacher Chair of Governors

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