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Your ref:
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Dear Parents/Carers

As you are aware, Marwood has recently undergone its first OFSTED inspection for over 14 years. The school has changed massively in that time as has the inspection framework but the quality of education and the inclusive ethos of the school has remained a constant. OFSTED has returned a judgement of 'Requires Improvement' for Marwood school. Naturally, the staff and governors are very disappointed with this outcome after what has been a very challenging period in education. This judgement means that we will have another inspection within 30 months.

As governors, we wanted to take this opportunity to explain some of the findings and hopefully clear up any misconceptions. We see first-hand how the pupils at Marwood develop a love of learning and an enthusiasm for their work which is altogether enriched by the school's unique setting and environment. The challenges of the past 2 years cannot be underestimated, but Marwood has returned to 'normal' teaching and learning sooner than most and any long-term negative impact on pupils' education has been mitigated through our interventions and quality first teaching.

As a small, rural school, the opportunities and learning experiences that our pupils have access to, within their day-to-day education are fantastic. These rich opportunities are underpinned by the excellent relationships with our families and the wider community. Furthermore, in the OFSTED questionnaire, 98% of parents said that they would recommend Marwood to another parent. One verdict from the inspectors was that Marwood Primary School provides "a supportive and nurturing environment".

Indeed, the inspection has highlighted a number of other positive areas at the school:

- In reading and mathematics, the school was found to provide "an ambitious curriculum that is well taught."
- The report recognises that "children in the Reception Year are learning to read more quickly than before. They are meeting the raised expectations of staff well."
- Pupils are praised, with inspectors saying that "pupil's behaviour is good. They listen well in class and get along well during social times."
- Pupils benefit from the lessons and assemblies, "where they learn to respect one another's feelings", and the children and parents are made to feel welcome at the school with "a focus on kindness."

However, we recognise that there are always areas for improvement within education and the inspection highlighted some of these things:

- The report found that the wider curriculum needs more thought and that assessments should be more purposeful.
- Although inspectors state that pupils enjoy their learning, they say that "they do not remember important subject knowledge well enough. This makes it hard for them to build up secure knowledge over time."
- Although leaders gather information, they do not ask the right questions to gauge the school's effectiveness indicating a lack of strategic oversight.
- Some key stage 1 pupils have also fallen behind with their reading, which has affected pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) the most.

Nevertheless, the school is applauded for the strong relationships with parents of pupils with SEND. This helps support to be refined and adapted which "helps pupils with SEND to make the most of learning, both inside and outside of the classroom."

Headteacher Alun Dobson responded to the inspection report by saying: "The inspectors have recognised that much of what the school does is good and I'm pleased that our pupils received warm praise in the report – it's thoroughly well deserved and we're extremely proud of them. There has been

quite a long gap between inspections, and because our last one was under a different inspection regime, it's difficult to compare with our previous report. But we're always looking at ways to improve. We are committed to addressing the areas where the inspectors said we could do better and action is already being taken to introduce effective changes as quickly possible."

Since the inspection in September, Staff and governors have already begun taking action to:

- Develop the specialist knowledge to support pupils with gaps in reading skills;
- Deepen children's knowledge year on year through a well-developed curriculum;
- Improve assessment to help children develop their knowledge and understanding;
- Strengthen systems for evaluating the impact of school policies and practices.

As governors, we are very proud of our school. We are therefore committed to supporting Alun and the staff to make any developments and improvements that lead to positive outcomes for our children and ultimately a more positive outcome in the future. But rest assured that the quality of education, pupil development and wellbeing will always be at the forefront of everything that Marwood does, regardless of the outcomes of an OFSTED inspection. We also remain wedded to our vision and ethos below:

Our Vision for Marwood

Our vision is to provide great teaching and learning through our ambitious curriculum delivered by skilled and enthusiastic staff in superb premises and surrounding facilities. This will enable all pupils to reach their maximum potential and become lifelong learners who will live healthy lives, which are socially and intellectually fulfilling.

Our Ethos at Marwood

The school's guiding belief is that it will provide the foundation for life-long learning and personal development in a nurturing, caring, stimulating and inclusive environment where individuals feel valued; where endeavour is encouraged and fostered; where promotion of emotional wellbeing and good behaviour is considered important and where children become curious, ambitious and responsible for their own learning. Working in partnership with the Braunton Learning Co-operative and parents, our aim is for children to be confident, caring, thinking people, capable of independence.

If you have any questions about the inspection or wider issues or any concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Alun Dobson, Headteacher (adobson@marwood.devon.sch.uk) or Liz Quick, Chair of Governors (chair@marwood.devon.sch.uk).

Lastly, we want to thank you all for your ongoing support.

With Best Wishes

Marwood School Governors