



The Royal School

Wolverhampton

18th December 2018.

Dear Parent,

The Department for Education publishes data about all schools each year, commenting on progress and attainment of children. As you would expect The Royal School has been included in this data for the second year. I am disappointed at how this information may appear to reflect on the school. The progress data from the DfE does not consider two critical factors here at the Royal School:

Firstly, the change in pupils at the school. The data shown represents children who were at the Royal School in year 6 but very few of those children were here at Key Stage 1 and more than 75% joined the school within the last two years of their Key Stage 2 journey. This then does not represent their progress across the whole Key Stage at the Royal School but from more than 20 different schools that they came from.

Secondly, this progress data would indicate that more than 50% of the children were attaining at the highest level at KS1. In over 20 years in primary education I have never come across a cohort that this would be true of and I believe that this reflects a level of inaccuracy in the assessments conducted at Key Stage 1. Similarly, it would suggest that only 1 of the 75 children was a lower attainer at Key Stage 1 and this is also in conflict with what we see the profile of pupils being. At the point that children join our school we conducted baseline tests which enable us to capture the progress being made during time at our school and this evidences strong progress is being made.

For both of these reasons the progress data published is not a true or fair reflection of the standards of learning and teaching.

This apparent underperformance is something that the senior leadership team, governors and Department for Education advisors have closely scrutinised alongside the current practice and in-school data since our conversion to being an Independent Free School. As our school population is now stable we will see the evidence of the strength of practice here at the Royal School emerge over the coming years.

The report also comments on the attainment at the end of each Key Stage. At Key Stage 2 I have been pleased to see not only the school meeting or exceeding the National benchmarks for Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Grammar in the average points score but the combined strength of the children's abilities. Nationally

64% of children reached the expected standards in Reading, Writing and Mathematics, while here we achieved a score of 69%. Our attainment is also above schools Nationally in the individual subjects of Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Grammar.

This is obviously the conclusion of the primary phase of education but the school is also performing very strongly from the early years upwards. 77% of children in the Reception classes achieved the threshold to be judged to achieving a 'Good Level of Development'. This is far above the national and local data.

Last year, having been moderated by the local authority, 89% of children at the school reached the phonic screening threshold in year 1, compared to 82% nationally. The average score was 37 out of 40 on the assessment, with the threshold being 32. This was an increase of 9% on the previous year, representing a significant strengthening of our outcomes. While this is only a snapshot of one element of their development in year 1, it is a strong indicator of the good practice at the school. This has been further validated by visits from the DfE through the past two years, since our conversion to free school status. They have remarked on the raised standards and have strongly advocated the approaches we have taken through every phase of the school.

Outcomes from year 1 have then converted to very good outcomes in year 2, which last year were 84% in reading, 79% in writing and 80% in maths, working at or above the expected standard. All of these outcomes are well above the national benchmarks, as you would expect.

Of course this end of Key Stage data is not the only priority here as we strongly believe in the holistic personal development of the children and know, that as they continue on into the secondary phase, the personal characteristics they will have developed will enable them to succeed in their GCSE's, 'A' levels, universities and ultimately the career of their choice.

We regularly review children's progress at every stage of their learning through our scrutiny structures and this is reported to governors at the Data Standards Committee, and during interim governor visits to the school. The outcomes of the children at every stage are obviously our highest priority alongside their personal wellbeing, development and growth.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M. Mitchell