



19 October 2017

Ref- LA0399

Dear Parent/Carer

As you may be aware, the school took part in a full Section 5 Ofsted Inspection on 20th and 21st September. The full Ofsted report has now been published and a copy can be found on our website at -

<http://www.leightonacademy.com/page/ofsted-reports/1398>

If you do not have access to the internet or would like a hard copy of the report please call into the school office.

I would like to draw your attention to some of the strengths the report has commented on; strengths we feel are just as important as figures on paper!

"Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Staff offer excellent care, guidance and support to vulnerable pupils and their families."

"There are few recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils agree that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and when they do occur, staff address the issues quickly and effectively. Pupils have complete confidence in the staff, especially the welfare team. In discussions, pupils stated that bullying is 'disappearing'."

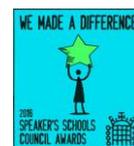
"Pupils appreciate each other's differences and have a good awareness of equality. They are respectful of each other's views. A typical comment was, 'Everyone is different in some way, but we need to be the same in kindness' "

"The head teacher has the support of staff to make the necessary improvements. She and her dedicated senior team have been successful in improving outcomes in mathematics and reading, in maintaining pupils' good personal development, behaviour and welfare and in improving overall attendance."

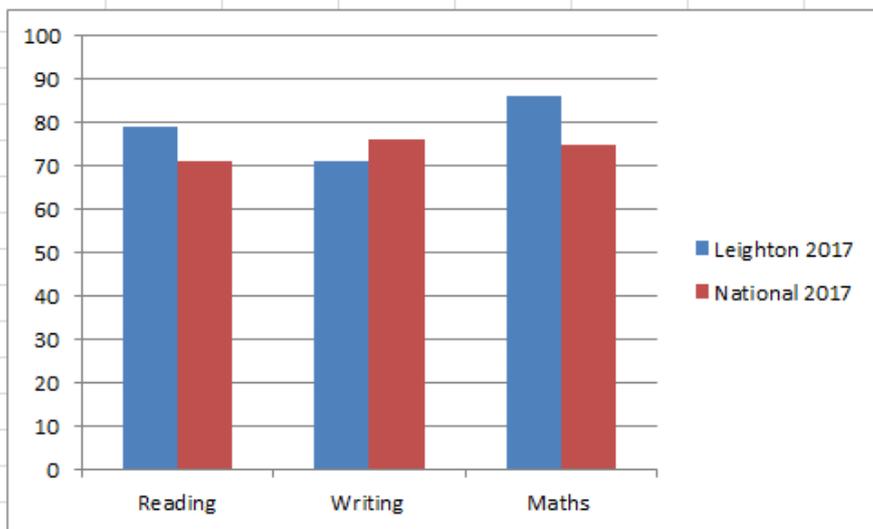
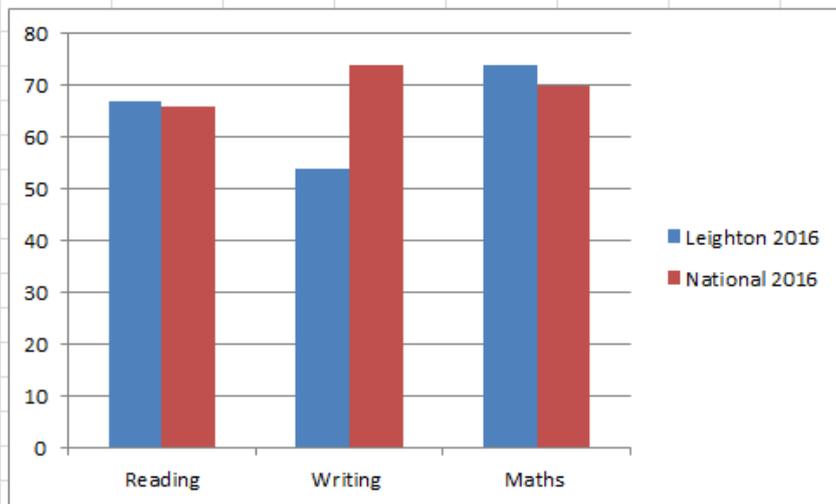
"Quality leadership, teaching and a stimulating curriculum underpin good outcomes in the early years."

However, the full report is **not** the way the governors, staff or external partners believe the school should be represented. When reading the report we don't feel it is a true reflection of the school and its achievements. We would like to reassure you that the judgement was made based on a snapshot of a school day (in some cases less than 15 minutes in a lesson) and published writing results that do not reflect our children's abilities. As we have informed you in the past, the way writing is assessed was significantly changed in 2016. We were told, through the moderating process, that pupils who could not spell high frequency words correctly or write in well-presented, joined writing could not achieve expected level. As a school we stuck firmly to these guidelines and consequently reported fewer children achieving the standard required. What this doesn't mean, however, is that our children's writing is any weaker. If anything, we feel writing standards have risen in response to the challenge but on paper this is not yet reflected. We have also seen that, when moderating across other schools, our children's writing is of a higher level than many. This year, the assessment framework has changed yet again and as a result, our predicted outcomes are significantly higher.

'Making Learning Real and Unforgettable'



Our results across the board are better than most schools in Crewe and, in reading and maths (both assessed by a test without the subjectivity of the writing assessment), were significantly higher than national in 2017 (see below).



This Ofsted visit took place two and a half weeks into a new school year and although sight of books is not necessary for evaluation, the inspectors didn't speak to the children about the curriculum and made their judgments on what they saw in books after very little teaching.

We have considered complaining not only about the conduct of the inspection but also the outcome. However, we have decided to focus on how we move the school forward. We are very clear on what we need to do to improve (with a focus on history and geography) and although very disappointed with the outcome of the report, we are committed to providing the best education for your children.

'Making Learning Real and Unforgettable'



Below is a message on behalf of the Board of Governors:

"Governors do not recognise the picture painted in the report and are shocked and very disappointed at the outcome of the recent inspection. We note that the inspection was probably triggered as a result of data that has been widely discredited, including by the DFE itself: a nationally contentious issue.

We consider judgements were made on the basis of inconsistent observation and evaluation of teaching and following selective and often inappropriate and aggressive questioning of staff. Inspectors apparently took little notice of the exciting and rich curriculum embedded in the school, the opportunities given to our pupils and the successes achieved by them. However, it would be naive and complacent to believe that any school is without weaknesses. Indeed the Board recognised 18 months ago that the way we taught writing throughout the school was being challenged by the new national assessment regime and supported a complete change in the approach to teaching this key skill: an approach that is already showing signs of success. The Board will therefore now evaluate the mechanisms by which it previously sought assurance as to standards of teaching and learning and obtain further independent validation of our internal assessment processes. We need to ascertain if this needs to change as there was **no** prior evidence of any significant problems in the school that are not already being successfully addressed.

The Board will support our loyal, dedicated and hardworking staff to address head-on the criticisms of the inspection team. We are confident that a school that is widely held to offer children the opportunity to achieve success and thrive in a caring and secure environment will soon prove that it is once again at 'the top of the class.'"

We hope that what you have seen during parents' evening this week backs our evaluation of the school but if you have any concerns about this report or would like to discuss any specific elements, the senior leadership and governors are available at Leighton Academy after school on Monday 30th October. Alternatively you can contact the office to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mrs J Young".

Mrs J Young
Principal

Helen Morris
Chair of Governors