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Dear Parents

Following our recent Ofsted inspection, please find a copy of the report attached. It had been 14 years since the previous inspection and the grade thresholds have shifted significantly so we were pleased that many of the recent, and necessary, developments in school were so well received. It's rare that a written report captures the effervescence of the inspection dialogue, so I am keen to share some of the notes I took during meetings with the inspectors, to shine a light on how our school, and your children, were perceived.

The lead inspector compared your children's thirst for learning to insatiable baby birds chirping in the nest, greedily devouring the learning that is imparted. She noted that poor behaviour could not be found and that a culture of 'everyone welcome' is pervasive. The children wowed her with their attitude to challenge, sharing the school mantra, "When the going gets tough, Thornborough gets going," genuinely causing her to pause and smile. She praised the determination of leaders to ensure that all pupils accessed extensive curricular opportunities, noting that she had never been to a school with such breadth of activities for such young pupils.

The curriculum, which we completely revised in January, was highly commended and recognised as ambitious, providing pupils with a rich and stimulating education. Our resolve that pupils will know and learn from the best that has been written and spoken was applauded and the lead inspector acknowledged that our small school is on the road to offering a bespoke curriculum, personalised to the individual.

However, the most compelling feedback we received was from the additional inspector. When I spoke with her about how Thornborough had drawn me in, she replied, "Some schools are special and you can feel it as soon as you step through the door." I joked that we had space in both classes, and she replied, "If I lived a bit closer, I'd take you up on that."

Overall, the inspectors found Thornborough to be a **Good** school, with many outstanding features. We were left with one development point, rather than the usual two or three, and it was one that we had already identified within the school development plan.

We were judged **Good** for Quality of Education.

*The inspector advised us that the Quality of Education grade is now a limiting judgment. If Quality of Education is judged good then Leadership and Management and Overall Effectiveness cannot be awarded outstanding.*

We were judged **Outstanding** for Personal Development

We were judged **Outstanding** for Behaviour

We were judged **Good** for Leadership and Management

We were judged **Outstanding** for Early Years.

In relation to Quality of Education, the Inspector felt that, as the curriculum is relatively new and we are continuing to refine some activities, the Quality of Education it is not yet exceptional (as is now required for each outstanding judgement). The lead inspector acknowledged that we are doing absolutely everything we should. She observed challenge for the most able and support for those who need it but felt that, *occasionally*, we could take this even further (such refinements are already ongoing). She conceded that once we have run the curriculum through for a full cycle, she anticipated that it would likely be outstanding but would not award an outstanding judgement based on this. We did challenge this but were unsuccessful.

The lead inspector advised us that while they recognised leaders' clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education, and the significant work undertaken since joining the school, that a Good for Quality of Education was prohibitive to an Outstanding judgement for Leadership and Management.

While we are a little disappointed not to secure the overall judgement of Outstanding, we'd like to thank the phenomenal team for their hard work and support over the last 11 months. They have worked exceptionally hard to move the school forward, at pace, and ensure that our children enjoy an excellent start to their school lives.

Finally, we'd like to thank you. Between us, Laura and I have about 40 years of experience in schools and we have never felt so well supported by a parent body. Thank-you.

Yours faithfully,

*Carol-Anne McCollum   Laura Passenger*

**Carol-Anne McCollum & Laura Passenger**