8 May 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am delighted to share with you the outcomes of our recent OFSTED inspection, which took place on the 1st and 2nd of April 2025. The inspection was a thorough and rigorous process, and I am pleased to report that Appleton Thorn Primary School has received very positive feedback.

**Key Highlights from the OFSTED Report:**

* **Quality of Education:** Rated as **Good**. The inspectors praised our ambitious curriculum and the high-quality training provided to our staff. They noted that pupils achieve well and are excited to come to school each day.
* **Behaviour and Attitudes:** Rated as **Outstanding**. Our pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they show a strong commitment to their learning. The calm and nurturing atmosphere in our school enables pupils to focus completely on their studies.
* **Personal Development:** Rated as **Outstanding**. The wide range of enrichment activities, including outdoor learning and residential trips, helps our pupils develop their interests, talents, and skills. Pupils are also well-prepared for life in modern Britain, showing empathy and respect for different cultures and beliefs.
* **Leadership and Management:** Rated as **Good**. The report highlights the effective leadership and management at our school, including the support from The Challenge Academy Trust. The trust's resources and expertise have been invaluable, while we have retained our unique village school character.
* **Early Years Provision:** Rated as **Good**. The early years provision at our school is exceptional in laying a strong foundation for future learning. Children enjoy listening to and sharing stories and rhymes, which fosters a love for reading from an early age. Our staff have developed expertise in teaching phonics, ensuring that pupils who find reading more difficult are well supported to catch up quickly. By the end of key stage 1, most pupils are fluent readers, and older pupils are enthusiastic readers who understand the importance of reading in their wider learning.

The report also identified areas for improvement, which matched our self assessment prior to inspection and we are already addressing:

* Ensuring that all lessons in all subjects are aligned precisely with the intended curriculum to help pupils build their knowledge securely over time.
* Refining our processes to check on what pupils know and can confidently remember in a few subjects to support their progress.

**Changes in the OFSTED Framework**:

You may notice that the report does not include an overall effectiveness grade. This change is part of a new OFSTED framework introduced in September 2024, which aims to provide a more comprehensive and detailed picture of school performance. Instead of a single headline grade, schools are now evaluated across four key areas: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management. This approach ensures a more nuanced understanding of a school's strengths and areas for improvement, offering greater transparency and insight for parents and carers.

As parents, you can be assured that the next steps identified were already part of our priority action plan and are being implemented. The inspectors recognised this, but due to the Ofsted framework, they could not award ‘outstanding’ for the Quality of Education as it requires there be no areas for development. Additionally, if the Quality of Education is graded as ‘good’, Leadership and Management cannot be graded as ‘outstanding’.

We are incredibly proud of our pupils and staff for their hard work and dedication, which have been recognised in this report. We will continue to strive for excellence in all areas of our school.

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in your child's education. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the report further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Jones
Headteacher