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Thursday 18th November 2021

IKB Department for Education External Expert School Improvement Review - Term 2 – 2021-22

Dear parents/ carers,

Since beginning in my post as Headteacher of IKB I have found communication with yourselves incredibly valuable in terms of continually looking to improve the school and ensuring progress in all areas as we continue to grow. One aspect that I am particularly passionate about is ensuring transparency between IKB and our learning community and I have been pleased that this is something that has also been expressed by our parents and carers. With this in mind I want to ensure transparency concerning the performance of IKB on an academic front and in the progress towards our school targets, so throughout the year I will be letting you know about our priorities and how we are performing in relation to them.

In early November of this term we had our latest Department for Education (DfE) review since the same time last year with external expert Jeff Hart. The review was to detail the progress of IKB from his last visit to present and we are so proud to let you all know that the review and subsequent report was a very positive one. [Please read on for some of the headlines in more detail.](#)

Overall:

- The school is progressing well with assessment indicating good outcomes for children and considerable interest for parents interested in applying for school places.
- Strengths include: a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum with strong opportunities for developing cultural capital; attendance exceeding national averages; and a high level of parental and community engagement.
- Staff morale is high.

Vision, Curriculum and Assessment:

- The vision set out by the school before opening is being delivered well as IKB develops into a school for the community.
- The six 'IKB attributes' and understanding of them are being developed for all pupils.
- Curriculum planning ensures National Curriculum delivery and reflects an ambitious, carefully sequenced programme.
- The school is not complacent and wants to further improve the curriculum to relate to the world and the local community, and to increase and strengthen cross-curricular links.
- Knowledge organisers help pupils internalise knowledge well, with half termly formal assessments taking place. Assessment carousels help assess foundation subjects.

Leadership:

- Secure leadership with a highly experienced staff.
- The Trust Senior Leadership Team is monitoring teaching and learning regularly.
- Moderation of work takes place through links with other Trust schools, and curriculum sequencing is well planned between year groups.

- The school has good links with schools beyond the Trust.
- Governors have a good level of expertise, and experience in safeguarding and education.

Safeguarding:

- Effective safeguarding and the Trust's twice annually safeguarding reviews as well as half-termly meetings ensure consistency and quality of provision.
- At the safeguarding reviews to date the school has exceeded agreed targets for improvement.

Pupil Premium and SEND:

- Findings indicate that pupil premium pupils are well supported and helped to access all parts of the curriculum, as well as clubs and visits.
- Pupils with SEND are also well-supported. The Trust SENDCo spends a day each week in the school to provide specialist input. A new governor is leading on SEND. The trust SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) coordinator also visits the school twice per half-term.

The Role of The Castle Partnership Trust:

- The Trust is effective in challenging and supporting the school.
- There are specialist Trust advisers who report on progress in key areas.
- The new Trust school improvement lead, who is a trained Ofsted inspector, is helping all schools in the Trust with the new Ofsted framework, and governors receive comprehensive support.

Next Steps and Priorities:

- Further development of the curriculum to relate to the world and the local community, and to increase and strengthen cross-curricular links.
- Implementing strategies to link the oldest pupils with peers from other schools and older children.
- Successfully scaling up provision as the school grows.

As a team we have embraced working together to achieve strong early outcomes for our children in all areas at IKB and we really hope that you have noticed this too. By sharing our successes and our development points with you we hope that we can continue our transparent relationship between IKB and the community so that we can work together to continue to improve. Thank you all, as always, for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Healey
IKB Headteacher
Primary Executive Headteacher of The Castle Partnership Trust