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Miss D.Dewhurst  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
50 Bournes Row,  
Gregson Lane,  
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PR5 0DQ

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Dear Miss Dewhurst,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to visit you this week, I thoroughly enjoyed working with everyone and it was a genuine pleasure to deliver the workshops at your school.

Having worked at over four hundred and fifty different schools nationwide, I have a genuine appreciation of what I consider usual and average standards with regards to a wide range of attributes which pupils possess, so with that being the case, I thought this letter and my feedback may prove insightful and informative.

I would like to start with the resilience and perseverance levels please if I may, they were collectively at your school so impressive, I would say that outstanding would be a fair and genuine descriptive word based on what I witnessed yesterday.

To elaborate on that further, I saw no children get teary, I heard virtually no fixed terminology like "I can't do this" and nobody gave up.

I see those aspects in most schools I work at and sometimes they are visible in multiple classrooms, even the very small percentage of your pupils who found the sessions challenging bounced back well and still completed very good pictures.

I believe that the reasons why your pupils impressed me so much in every classroom with regards to the resilience and perseverance levels are due to the consistency and quality of your teaching methods.

I noticed on your website that you promote a 'never give up' and 'everyone will get there' approach for the children's learning, as an outsider and based on the amazing resilience levels at your school, that promotion is paying huge dividends.

I mentioned the completed pictures above and I would estimate that in every classroom that I worked in at your school, that there was a good percentage of your pupils producing completed pictures which were comparable to children twelve months older than what they are.

From both an individual and collective aspect, the completed pictures were generally of a very good standard, which reflects not only that your pupils have great work ethics but also excellent attitudes to learning.

I was impressed with the manners and behaviour of your pupils, and those elements were exemplary in every classroom that I worked in.

At some schools I am impressed with how the pupils have worked with me, at others I am impressed with the way that the pupils conduct themselves in the classrooms and around their school but at your school I was greatly impressed with both of those elements.

As I am commenting on conduct, I must also highlight how impressed I was with just how kind and respectful your children are.

Many of them thanked me for teaching them, that was unprompted and was fantastic to witness from my perspective as an outsider.

Another aspect that greatly impressed me was the natural progression of all the positives at your school as I worked my way through your classes and as the children get older at your school.

To elaborate on that further, at some schools I am impressed with Key Stage One but then there is a drop in standards as I work my way through the Key Stage Two classes or lower Key Stage Two pupils impress me more than upper Key Stage Two pupils.

That is most definitely not the case at your school though, all the pupils in each classroom impressed me greatly and are much better than average compared to their respective age groups at other schools.

There is a genuine and obvious momentum at your school and as your children move upwards through the classes, each teacher is building on the excellent foundations that the previous member of staff laid and instilled.

That natural progression always greatly impresses me as I believe progress is what we should all strive for and that is not always the case at every school which I visit with regards to there being a natural progression as I work my way through classes.

That natural progression is definitely evident at your school, and everyone deserves immense credit with that being the case.

I am in no doubt that your teaching staff have played a significant role with regards to how their respective pupils worked with me and conducted themselves, so they deserve great credit especially when you consider all the positives that I witnessed and observed yesterday.

Every conversation I had with a different member of your teaching staff made a very positive impression on me, they were all keen to take part alongside their pupils and they impressed me with their positivity and enthusiasm.

Everyone made me feel so welcome at your school and that goes for the pupils and staff, which enabled me to build a positive rapport with everyone in such a short space of time.

This week at your school, I saw children with smiling faces who wanted to learn and were grateful of the opportunity of working with me, I saw staff who took great pride in the achievements of their pupils and spoke passionately and proudly about your school and if I was a parent who lived in your catchment area then I would definitely want my children to attend a thriving, warm, happy and stimulating environment which I feel describes your school perfectly.

One significant element I would like to add please if I may, to anyone reading this letter I would like to highlight that I am a great believer in positive praise and constructive criticism as and when it is warranted, and this letter is based on what I have seen and witnessed at your school and all the other schools at which I have worked.

No feedback is better than false feedback in my opinion and sometimes my feedback has not always been well received by headteachers, but I must be honest as I feel that is of paramount importance.

So with that being a key point, I would like to add that I cannot fault the pupils, staff or the environment at your school in any way whatsoever and I was impressed for so many different reasons but especially by the pupils attitudes to learning and work ethics, their manners and behaviour, the respectfulness of everybody at the school, the outstanding resilience and perseverance levels, the quality of the completed pictures, the enthusiasm of the teachers which is having such a positive impact on their respective pupils, the kindness of your entire school community and how welcoming I found your school to be.

From the moment I entered your school until the moment I left, I was made to feel very welcome by pupils and staff, I believe we all deserve to feel good about ourselves and the warm, welcoming, and stimulating environment which I encountered at your school is ideal in my humble opinion to help children from not only an academic aspect but also from a Mental Health and Well Being perspective.

The fact that I have taken the time to write this letter emphasizes what a positive impression everyone made on me during my time at your school.

I would like to add that after I have worked at a school, I always ask myself a hypothetical question, would I want my children to go to that school if my sons were of school age again and if we lived in that area?

If being respectful and kind to adults and your peers are important, if excellent manners and behaviour are desirable, if being resilient and persevering are valued, if focus and concentration are considered essential for achieving great results, if I wanted to send my children to a warm and friendly environment and to be taught by enthusiastic, committed, and dedicated staff, then the answer must be a resounding "Yes".

When you consider the challenging times that schools now find themselves in due to the pandemic in recent years and the current financial climate, I believe that makes all the above positives even more praiseworthy and especially in the Autumn Term.

It was a privilege to work at your fantastic school, thank you for giving me an opportunity to do so.

Yours sincerely,  
Ian Brealey  
(The Doodle Bug)