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Dear Parents and Carers,

You will now have seen our recent OFSTED report. There is a lot of national discussion around the current grading system of schools with one- or two-word judgements being the focus of some intense debate. What we can see in our recent report is that inspectors clearly recognise that the school has made significant improvements since the last inspection, has remained stable through transfer and is in a strong position for future development in partnership with colleagues from Reach South. Thomas Hall School is unique in so many ways, and I was pleased that inspectors took time to listen to our pupils and staff and wanted to hear about the journey and the context of our community.

As you read through the report itself, you can see some of the real strengths that inspectors observed that help us emphasise the importance of the culture we have nurtured, this is particularly seen in the early parts of the report; 'Staff provide a caring and inclusive culture at the school. Pupils who started in Reception and are progressing through the school to Year 11 say they value the sense of community and belonging.' I was particularly pleased that the care and inclusive nature was clearly referenced, as well as the children feeling happy at school. Staff have worked hard to develop our school enrichment, and this is starting to take shape, with theatre, residential and performances being aspects that inspectors praised the school for. I was pleased that our Early Years provision has been rated as Good, and the strong start that we provide for our youngest pupils will be built upon as the school continues to improve.

During the last eighteen months, we have established and built a curriculum that strengthens pupil knowledge and is sequenced in a way that enables progression through all of our key stages. OFSTED noted that this has been well planned and that teachers build in time to regularly revisit learning to help build confidence and understanding. We are ambitious for every child at our school, and we will continue to raise aspirations in both academic and pastoral work to ensure that we can continue to work together to ensure we can continue to strengthen provision and become one of the highest performing schools in the region by 2027.

Throughout the process of inspection, we were aware of limiting factors that we are currently working to strengthen. One priority within this is improving our school attendance figures, and we will be looking to work with you more closely in the coming weeks to help all pupils have good attendance to school.

Since starting in July, Mrs Towler-Williams has developed a strong strategy to develop provision both in classrooms and wider throughout the school. We have now expanded our SEN leadership and welcomed Mr Medland as our operational SENCO and Mrs Wavish, who will aid the admin support for the team. This will enable the development of the SEN targets as highlighted in the report.

Throughout this year, leaders have had more support and guidance, along with a more visible network around the school, and I know that as colleagues engage with the programme of development, leaders at all levels will benefit from school-to-school support that we can get from our partner Reach South schools.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Arnold', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Arnold
Headteacher