

# OUR JOURNEY, ONWARDS AND UPWARDS!



MORPETH  
*Stobhillgate*  
FIRST SCHOOL



Since 2019, when we were last visited by Ofsted, we have been working extremely hard to improve the quality of education that we provide our children. At times it is easy to forget how far we have come! Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, we unfortunately haven't been able to invite you into school to see all the brilliant things that happen everyday at Stobhillgate. We would therefore like to tell you about our journey, what we've done and where we are now.

One of the most important aspects that Ofsted highlighted was the need to improve educational standards to ensure our children were achieving their full potential. The improvement in this area has been an utter transformation! The staff have worked tirelessly to improve standards across school and as a result our children are making brilliant progress, resulting in a higher percentage of children working at the national expected level and lots more children now working above this standard!

## Maths

In Maths, we have introduced the Maths Mastery approach. This has allowed our pupils to acquire a deep, long-term, secure and adaptable understanding of the subject. When I call into classrooms, talk to pupils and look in their books it is extremely clear how well they are doing and how much they enjoy it. We now use this approach as soon as our children arrive in Nursery and this will ensure that by the time they move to Chantry they will have the mathematical knowledge and skill they need.

## Writing

In Writing, we have embraced the 'Talk 4 Writing' approach and both the pupils and the staff love it. This process enables the children to orally learn and perform texts, before learning how to innovate the texts and then write their own. The quality of their writing is amazing. Our children are now being clearly

taught how to be brilliant writers, we can't wait to share their work with you. The pupils have also worked extremely hard to improve their handwriting, following the Letterjoin scheme. I hope you will agree with me that our pupils' handwriting is beautiful, we are extremely proud of them!

## Reading

In Reading, we now directly teach reading each day using the Reciprocal Reading approach. This places the focus on providing the children the opportunity to experience high quality books every single day. We now have a carefully considered 'reading road' that maps out which books the children study in each year group, from 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' in EYFS to Michael Morpurgo's 'The Butterfly Lion' in Y4. This lesson is a lovely time of the day. I often pop in classrooms to see the excitement in the children's faces as they hang on their teacher's every word in anticipation of what might happen next. The staff are now extremely skilled at teaching reading and carefully use questioning to develop the children's reading skills. As I am sure you will know we have also improved the quality of books we send home. Using both Read Write Inc and Accelerated Reader we now ensure that children's home/school reading books are accurately matched to meet pupil's ability and with the installation of our new library we have improved the quality and variety of books the children can read.

## Our Broader Curriculum

From Art to RE and everything in between, our broader curriculum is now well planned, sequenced and ensures that our children acquire the knowledge and skills they need before they progress on their Three Rivers journey. For instance:

- In Art the children now study 3 artists every year developing their understanding and skills of painting, collage/mosaic and 3D structure. The children take real pride in developing their beautiful sketchbooks and displaying their book in the school gallery.
- Our History and Geography curriculum is now a real strength and an area that we are now supporting other schools with. We have created a curriculum that really fascinates the children and helps to develop a love of the subject. Our Year 2's were currently learning about Sarah Forbes Bonetta, an African Princess and they can't wait for the next lesson to find out more!
- Our DT weeks are now a firm favourite of the children. They love the opportunity to focus on DT for an entire week, researching, planning and making a high quality end product.



“Mr Whitehead, supported by Mr Henderson and all the team at Stobhillgate, have worked relentlessly to make sure they develop the whole child to be the best they can be. Since 2019, they have focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils are inspired and engaged in their learning. The curriculum is creative and exciting, offering challenge and opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and make a difference in their community. Mr Whitehead leads with passion and integrity ensuring that all his team are doing the very best for the children in school.”

**Jo Warner, School Improvement Partner and Ofsted Inspector**

## Early Years

If you have visited our EYFS unit over the last 2 years you will have noticed it has undergone a total refurbishment. The learning environment is now carefully designed to ensure all children, regardless of background, can be effectively challenged. When visiting the unit, I also see active, engaged children working together and loving being in school. It is a lovely place to be. The curriculum is designed around core books to enable our pupils to develop a love of reading and to create an exciting hook into all other areas of learning. We have also worked hard to develop the outdoor learning. Our children love being outside and even more so with the recent introduction of our fabulous mud kitchen. In addition, Forest School Fridays happen weekly, enabling our children to develop a broad range of skills outside the classroom. These fabulous opportunities will ensure that our children achieve well during EYFS and are ready to access our exciting curriculum in Year 1.

## Governance

One area that Ofsted highlighted was the need to improve governance. Since joining The Three Rivers Learning Hub we no longer have a governing body but instead have an Academy Council. The Trust has supported us in establishing an extremely robust system and have helped us add real strength. For instance, our Academy Council now includes Andy Clark, who is Deputy Headteacher of King Edwards High School and Andy is also safeguarding Lead for the Three Rivers Trust. Our new Academy Councillors are extremely active and visit the

school regularly to talk to pupils and staff, enabling them to provide the right level of support and challenge. We are also extremely lucky to work closely with Mrs Ewart who is the Trust Governance Manager.

As a staff we are extremely proud of our journey so far. Every day we see the leaps and bounds that our children are making and how much the children love to learn. Despite these improvements, we are extremely ambitious for what we can achieve at Stobhillgate and look forward to making our school the best it can be.

“Stobhillgate First School joined The Three Rivers Learning Trust in April 2020, and has made a very valuable contribution to the Trust in a very short period of time. The school is well led and managed and from both external and internal analysis, we believe that the school now provides a consistently good level of education, across all aspects of the curriculum.”

**Simon Taylor, CEO, The Three Rivers Learning Trust**