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Your ref:  
Our ref:



Mrs L Box  
Headteacher  
St Mary's RCVA Primary School  
Birch Road  
Barnard Castle  
DL12 8JR

19 December 2019

Dear Lesley

### **Recent Ofsted Inspection**

I am writing to congratulate you, all of your staff team and the school's governors on the outcome of your inspection in November. Achieving a good judgement for the overall effectiveness of provision, under this more rigorous Ofsted framework, demonstrates the hard work and commitment of your team. Everyone can feel justifiably very proud of what you have achieved and the good level of education that you provide. Please pass on my thanks to your staff and governors for the strengths that they bring to the school and for the vision they share for building further on the school's successes.

My thanks to you, Lesley, for the strong leadership that you provide to your school. I know that you have been a head teacher for little over a year and you have worked hard to establish your leadership without a substantive deputy head teacher. You have demonstrated your dedication to the school community and Ofsted recognised the notable improvements that you have made in this short time. They also reflected the views of your staff, who clearly value your leadership, ambition, support and consideration for all. The pride in your school, felt and shared by staff, governors, parents and pupils, was evident throughout the report. Because of this, the school has secured its good judgement.

I was delighted to see that Ofsted highlighted the focus you and your staff place on children's personal development. To see this judged as being outstanding must be something that you are rightly proud of. Ofsted commented on the sense of family and belonging that exists throughout the school and on how this makes St. Mary's a special place to learn. You are preparing children to become excellent members of their community and Ofsted described this work as 'exemplary'.

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### **Children and Young People's Services**

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Ofsted also referred to the impact that you have had, securing strong outcomes and improving attendance at school. They saw that your work on the curriculum has ensured that it is well sequenced so that pupils build on and revisit knowledge over their time in school. They also saw that you and your team ensure that this is accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND. Your recently acquired Nurture Pod, funded by the local school community, is supporting vulnerable learners to participate fully in school life. Your focus on developing competent and fluent readers who love books and reading was also celebrated by the inspection team.

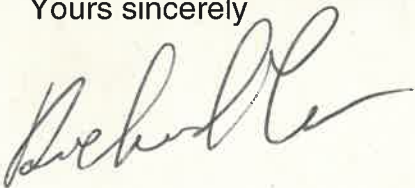
Ofsted have recognised that you create a strong culture of safeguarding and that staff know what to do to keep children safe. You have also supported the pupils and the whole community to recognise bullying and act appropriately to keep themselves safe. Children are able to learn because pupils behave well.

Congratulations on developing and maintaining a strong team that enables pupils to thrive and learn. Achieving this, coupled with the current educational climate and constraints on schools, should be recognised and applauded. It is a great credit to everyone connected with your school that the children attending St. Mary's benefit from such a good quality education.

Please share this letter and its sentiments with your staff, governors and those who have an interest in a really good school!

I wish you, and them, continued success in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Crane', written in a cursive style.

**Richard Crane**  
Head of Education & Skills  
Children & Young People's Services