



FLORA NEWS



Mr Naismith's Headitorial

If we're serious about school improvement then we have to make school inspection more than the sum of its parts; it's culture that we need to nurture. The inspectorate's next framework can help us to ask the right questions about the things that really matter.

What HMCI Amanda Spielman said at the Education Policy Institute's policy conference provided encouragement for those in the system who are concerned that Ofsted's current model is too focused on data.

"I very much want to make sure that at Ofsted we focus on the 'how', on what performance tables cannot capture," she said, "so we can get the clearest view of whether schools, and where relevant, the MATs to which they belong are doing the right things."

The heartening sentiment emerging from Ofsted is that, whilst they will of course continue to evaluate pupil outcomes, inspectors will pay more overt attention to what Spielman calls the "why and what". I hope this is the case.

Meaningful and sustained improvement

This is important, not only because of concerns about contextualising outcomes, but because this approach will give more scope to school leaders to focus less on short-term survival and more on longer-term strategies that deliver sustainable and meaningful improvement.

But what are the "right things" Amanda Spielman refers to? The danger, of course, is increased subjectivity, which is always tricky for Ofsted to balance against the demand for consistency. While consistency must always be strived for, it can't be the end in itself.

We know that consistency can be more easily created by focusing on indicators which require low levels of inference from inspectors.

Developing curriculum thinking and practice

I've been struck by several recent books and their compelling insight into the issues that face our schools. Among these are David Weston and Bridget Clay's *Unleashing Great Teaching*, which provides an excellent account of the importance of high quality teacher development.

Also, Becky Allen and Sam Sims' *The Teacher Gap* makes the case that schools need to do more to reduce workload and improve the working conditions of teachers in order to boost teacher retention. You can add to that a number of recent publications, including Ofsted's own research, which stress the importance of developing curriculum thinking and practice.

Teacher development, curriculum, and working conditions matter not only because of their effect on the here and now, but because they probably provide our best shot of creating meaningful and sustained improvement within and across schools.

How can inspection support schools in this venture? It won't be by adding, for example, a 'workload judgement', or a 'CPD grade', however, a more overt focus on and exploration of school culture may well be helpful to both schools and inspectors.

Ofsted has already hinted at the importance of culture in its curriculum work through a focus on the three i's:

- Intent
- Implementation
- Impact

Implicitly, this digs into the curriculum culture of the school and inspectors can use this sort of approach to explore the values, thinking, and alignment of school culture without resorting to tick boxes.

Most importantly, by talking more overtly about culture, Ofsted can give school leaders the confidence to develop the distinctive values, thinking, and practices which meet the needs of their pupils and focus on the "right things".

Amanda Spielman may be right that "You can't create a precise, codified rule for what good looks like." But by focusing more on culture, the 2019 Ofsted framework could at least help schools move away from Ofsted compliance and truly make Ofsted a "force for improvement".

Have a lovely weekend and I hope to see many of you at the Early Years and Key Stage 1 performance next week.



Christmas Jumper Day
 Christmas Jumper Day is coming up on Friday 14th December. Pupils are invited to wear a Christmas jumper for the day as we raise money for the charity 'Save the Children'. A donation of your choice can be given to your teacher.

Class	Attendance
Nursery	88.3%
Reception	86.5%
Year 1	97.7%
Year 2	95.8%
Year 3	95.8%
Year 4	99.7%
Year 5	94.8%
Year 6	98.9%
Total	94.8%

KS2 Singing Concert

Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 will be performing festive songs for parents, family and friends on Wednesday 19th December at 2.45pm in the hall.

Rehearsals have been taking place and our pupils are sounding very beautiful. Not to be missed!

We are looking for a new parent governor!

Many parents may not know what it means to be a school governor, so if you are interested in joining the governing body, you are welcome to come in and speak to Mr Naismith and he can explain to you exactly what it means.

One of our current parent governors has said - 'Being a parent governor is one of the best things I've ever done. It allows you to make a real difference to the school and learn about how we can make Flora Gardens even better for all our children. Come and join us as we work together with our amazing staff and pupils to make our school the best it can be'.

The Donkey Seller

Thursday 13th December at 2.30pm in the hall.

Parents, family and friends are invited to watch Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 as they star in a festive musical performance.

Tea, coffee and mince pies will be available after the performance in the library.



100% Attendance

Randomly selected, from all of the pupils with 100% attendance last week – Younes in Year 2!

Flu Nasal Spray

Parents from Reception to Year 5 have been given a form to complete and return in order for your child to receive the nasal flu spray, which will be provided by NHS staff on the afternoon of Wednesday 19th December. If you do not return the completed form, unfortunately your child will not receive the flu spray.

Lateness

We have a concerning number of pupils being late to school every week. This week there have been 717 minutes (which is nearly 12 hours) of learning time missed due to lateness. Please arrive on time to ensure your child does not miss the beginning of their lesson.

Please don't forget, pupils will need to be collected from school at 1.30pm on Thursday 20th December. There are no clubs or after school service on this day. As always, Mr Naismith will be leading an exciting assembly and giving prizes for House points at 11.00am. Parents are invited.

Christmas Bazaar

Our Christmas Bazaar is next Friday!
 We are still asking for donations for the tombola and raffle prizes. Please bring them into the School Office. Anything that you have that is unopened/unused will be much appreciated! Also, old or new cuddly toys are needed!
 Friday 14th December at 3.45pm in the hall.

Spelling Bee

There will be a live spelling competition for Y1 - Y6 on Wednesday at 2.30pm in the hall. Your child will know if they are participating, so please ask them!

Our new 'Around the World' reading challenge will be launched after the Spelling Bee, so parents are encouraged to attend to hear all about it!

A very big well done to our Choir who attended the rehearsal for the LBHF Christmas Festival on Tuesday and did such an amazing job – they even received compliments from staff from other schools! We wish them luck for the actual performance which is on Tuesday next week.

Value Award Winners

- Nursery – Sofiya
- Reception – Ewan
- Year 1 – Mohamed
- Year 2 – Kiyah
- Year 3 – Emese
- Year 4 – Mohamed
- Year 5 – Jack
- Year 6 – Halima
- PE – Xela