



21 November 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Ofsted Report

As you may be aware, the school had a two-day OFSTED inspection in October. The full report has now been published on the main OFSTED website: a link can be found at the end of this letter. In summary, the judgements were:-

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| Overall | Requires Improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Sixth Form | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching and assessment | Requires Improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |

We are, of course, extremely disappointed that any of the judgements are less than ‘good’ and that our overall judgement remains at ‘Requires Improvement’. We would like to reassure you that we are already working very hard to address the given areas for development. In fact, we actually outlined many of these areas to the inspection team through our School Development Plan as ongoing targets and our progress towards these was recognised.

In September, OFSTED published another new inspection framework. This means that judgements under this new framework are not comparable with those made under the previous framework.¹ The new framework places greater emphasis on the progress of disadvantaged students in schools. Our inspection, therefore, focused heavily on the progress made by students from a disadvantaged background. This group is defined as:

‘...those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.’

This issue is high on the National agenda, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds do not achieve as well as non-disadvantaged students nationally. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, we were able to buck this trend. Unfortunately, in 2015 and 2016 we did not manage to successfully support our disadvantaged cohort of students to perform as strongly. This adversely affected three judgement grades and, therefore, proved to be a limiting judgement on the overall grade the school was able to attain. The inspection report’s areas of development for the school strongly centre on the progress made by our disadvantaged students. We acknowledge that this is something we need to improve upon and, to this end, have already started to review how we can better support this group to make the faster progress being made by many other students.

¹ Our Progress 8 figure for 2016 Key Stage 4 results, for example, is better than that of four schools in Buckinghamshire who, in 2016, attained a ‘good’ grading under the old framework.



During the inspection, students and staff worked extremely hard to demonstrate to the inspection team what a successful and caring school we are. The inspection team noted both the high response rate to their [parent view survey](#) and the overwhelmingly positive nature of the responses as compared to the national data set. We thank you for that.

The Ofsted inspection team praised many aspects of the school. The following are just some of those highlighted in the report:-

- The good progress made since the last inspection against all the areas for development.
- The number of top grades achieved in English, Maths and Science compared to National figures.
- The good progress made by students in English and Further Mathematics.
- The good progress made by the most-able students. In 2016, this cohort at Key Stage 4 achieved a ¼ of a grade higher across their subjects than students of similar ability nationally.
- The good outcomes for students in the Sixth Form. The Sixth Form is seen as a real strength of the school.
- The appropriate steps being taken to improve the outcomes for boys.
- The systems that are in place to ensure that teaching continually improves.
- How supportive the students are of each other, even across year groups.
- The nurturing of the personal development and welfare of students.
- The excellent behaviour of students both around the school and in lessons.
- The strong relationships between staff and students. Staff know students really well.

Good relationships are the bedrock for the continuous, sustainable improvement that both governors and staff are committed to and that our students deserve. Again, as reassurance, our [examination outcomes at Key Stage 4](#), as measured by student progress, *have improved every year since 2011* in virtually all subjects. In 2016, the proportion of A*-B grades achieved by our Year 11 students was the highest we have ever had. In 12 subjects, our students achieved more of these grades than the national average including in English, Maths and Science. This pattern was also repeated with A*-C grades: here 14 subject areas surpassed the respective national figures.

We believe that rapid change can be made relatively easily but inclusive, lasting development is more challenging. As you know, we have a strong ethos of community, which has enabled us to instigate sustainable long-term changes over the past five years. We would like to thank the staff and governors for their unstinting hard work and you, our parents and carers, for the invaluable support you give to the school.

The overall judgement outcome is undoubtedly a disappointment for us as a staff, for the governors and, I am sure, for you as parents and carers. However, we are absolutely sure we have the right staff and wider support network, including a strong and fully engaged governing body, to ensure that the school achieves at least a 'good' grade across all of the report criteria at the next inspection.

[A link to the full report can be found here.](#) Should you wish to discuss any element of the report please contact the school to make an appointment.

Yours faithfully

Mr J Fletcher
Headteacher

Mr A Harrison
Chair of Governors