



Dear Parent/Carer

Ofsted Inspection Report – March 2020

We wanted to write to you today regarding the report we have received following our recent Ofsted inspection. The report is available to read on our websites but we wanted to write to you personally about its contents and Ofsted's conclusion.

We were both very pleased that Ofsted recognised a number of strengths at both academy sites including grading our Early Years Foundation Stage as good. We were particularly pleased that at the primary site Ofsted recognised how the strong subject knowledge of the staff impacted well on the learning of pupils. They identified how focused pupils are, how hard working and how willing they are to answer questions.

More generally they recognised:

- That our pupils, on the whole, behave well around the academy and in lessons;
- That our arrangements for safeguarding are effective and pupils feel safe. On the primary site, for example, Ofsted reported pupils were adamant "bullying does not happen here";
- That pupils felt well supported by people they can talk to if they need to;
- That pupils discover new talents such as the steel pans or the combined cadet force;
- That most parents and carers would recommend the school to others.

The big challenge, as an all-through academy, was (and is) consistency across the two sites. We recognise that our work on the new curriculum at the secondary site, for example, is less well developed than at the primary site. Along with most secondary schools, we are quickly addressing curriculum changes but we fully accept, while the plans are being developed and embedded, this means we are not consistent across the parts of our academy and therefore "require improvement".

Ofsted were very complimentary about the delivery of the curriculum on the primary site. They also said that teachers do a good job of teaching pupils to read and match books carefully to pupils' needs. They were particularly impressed with the "well-stocked library". We have strong plans, moving forward, to fast track our curriculum development and reading plans at the secondary site with the support and expertise of colleagues working at the primary site. As you would appreciate we were already working rapidly on this at the secondary site but we had not done enough at the time of the inspection.

Ofsted recognised that leaders across both parts of the academy have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs/ disabilities (SEND). They recognised that pupils with SEND achieve well in the primary phase because of the support they get. On the secondary site there is more work to do around this, which is linked to our work on curriculum development and is a priority to ensure consistency.

You will already know we work hard to improve attendance and it has improved every year, as has behaviour, but, particularly at the secondary site we know there is more work to do. Ofsted quite rightly picked this up during the inspection. We had already strengthened our approach to this last year but recognise there is more to do. Unfortunately, like many of the other things at the secondary site we couldn't yet fully demonstrate the impact and so this means that this too "requires improvement" as it is not yet good.

Ofsted also recognised the high expectations that we have for our pupils and the meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work. At both sites we have focused on mental health and we were pleased that Ofsted identified this in their report. Like everything else this too needs time to be embedded but, crucially, the structures are in place to ensure that this happens. On the secondary site, for example, over fifty staff are now trained in mental health first aid.

The primary site deserves the praise they received and we recognise that, as an all-through academy, the secondary site must be at least as good so there is consistency across the whole academy. We are both committed to this development and improvement and will accelerate our work around this as soon as is practical.

While many of the strengths of the academy have been recognised in the report a "requires improvement" judgement is disappointing but we accept we must be consistent across the two sites. The staff, governors and trust colleagues all want to transform lives and are dedicated to this. We are working closely with the trust to ensure that improvement plans, when we can get back to some sort of normal, are rapid and deliver the necessary consistency to be judged at least good across both sites at our next inspection.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support since we took over as Principals a little over two years ago. We are committed to making the academy the best it can be and to ensuring your child gets the best possible education, and we know that our staff feel the same.

Your support as we seek to achieve this will be invaluable.

Yours faithfully



Emma Owner
Principal (Hockwold)



Stephen Plume
Principal (Methwold)