

11 January 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Ofsted Inspection 05 & 06 December 2017

The latest Ofsted report on The Grove School, following an inspection last December, is that the sixth form provision is good and the main school requires improvement. The overall findings of the report are that the effectiveness of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development and welfare and outcomes all require improvement and 16 – 19 programmes are good with good leadership and good quality of teaching.

There was praise for the sixth form where the report notes “the 16-19 study programmes are good because learners continue to make good progress and enjoy their education. The sixth form is well led and the quality of teaching is good.’ The range of courses was acknowledged and the inspectors commented “the sustained excellent attainment in the applied general GCE was acknowledged by an award letter from the Department for Education.”

However, we are disappointed with the outcome of the inspection for the 11-16 provision. Nonetheless, the report says that ‘the headteacher is not complacent and implements necessary changes to develop the quality of teaching and learning.’ It says, “She is determined to improve the quality of education and has a clear focus on high expectations of pupils and staff”. It comments on the “committed and skilled” governors who provide effective challenge.

One of the areas for improvement is ensuring that outcomes at the end of Year 11 are higher. We were very disappointed by the Progress 8 figure for August 2017 and the report recognises that ‘the headteacher has analysed the causes of the decline in outcomes in 2017 and is addressing them swiftly.’ Leaders are taking strong actions to ensure that outcomes for all groups of pupils improve rapidly. In the report it states that “current information on pupils’ progress shows that, overall, pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4 are making progress which is in line with what can be reasonably expected”. It acknowledges there has been “a trend of diminishing differences between disadvantaged and other pupils” and that “the tracking of the impact of interventions is effective.”

The inspection noted that pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities are “supported by experienced and knowledgeable staff” and leaders have “well-thought-through strategies to support disadvantaged pupils”.

Inspectors have identified the need to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning because ‘pupils are not sufficiently focused on their work.’ We are aware that some students are not completely engaged with their education and staff have been tasked with ensuring that our behaviour policy is consistently applied so that this can be addressed swiftly.

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Feedback on the presentation to parents on Friday 05 January 2018

I invited parents and carers to a presentation to share the School's priorities, vision and challenges and to ask for more parental engagement with the education that we provide for your children. I would like to thank those who gave up their time to attend to offer feedback, make suggestions and to offer continued support in our drive to achieve excellence. However, we have approximately 1,100 parents and in total, over the three presentations that were held, 100 parents or carers attended. During Ofsted parents were asked to complete a survey using Parent View. Only 57 parents completed the survey.

Research shows that parents make judgements about the quality of education that a school provides based on their examination results. Likewise, schools can only achieve the best results if the large majority of parents fully engage with the school in ensuring that their child achieves their potential. I fully appreciate how busy parents are with work and other commitments, but your child has one chance at education and we need to work closely to ensure that they make the best of the opportunities offered to them at school. I openly encourage you to:

- attend Progress Day on 24 January 2018;
- email teachers if you have any questions about the progress of your child or any concerns that you need to raise (email addresses are on our web site);
- follow our Facebook page and Twitter feed so that you are receiving up-to-date information;
- complete requests for updates to personal information so that we are sure that we hold the correct details for you and your child;
- attend information events;
- look at our web site for future dates and events;
- support us in upholding our policies on behaviour, teaching learning and assessment;
- hold your child to account for valuing their education and achieving the best they can.

The team of staff at The Grove are fully committed and dedicated to providing the best education, care, support and guidance for your children, but that is only possible with your full support and engagement. Likewise, I ask you not to judge the School on its past reputation and not to bad mouth the school in our community. The Grove is your community school so please support it. If you have concerns, complaints or are unhappy about our provision please share it with a member of the leadership team because we will work with you to address the issues.

The full Ofsted report is available on our web site. We are unwavering in our determination to secure and sustain the improvements that have already been seen at The Grove with the aim of achieving at least good, if not outstanding, in our next inspection in two years. The students, staff, governors, parents, carers and the community deserve that accolade so please join us in achieving this ambition.

Yours faithfully,

Sonia Taylor (Mrs) | Headteacher

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