

Stafford Manor High School



RAD/Ofsted/July23

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Dear Parent/Carers

Ofsted Inspection Report – letter to parents

I am writing to share the outcome of our recent Ofsted Inspection on 24 and 25 May and have attached the inspection report to this letter. It has been five years since the school was last inspected. During that time, the Ofsted inspection framework has changed and is now much more demanding. In addition to this, the school community has experienced significant challenges, particularly as a result of Covid. Both of these significant factors have undoubtedly contributed to the recent inspection judgement of 'Requires Improvement.'

During our recent inspection, Ofsted recognised that there has been significant work undertaken since my arrival in September to quickly establish an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Inspectors also recognised that we are working determinedly to address these areas for improvement and that these improvements are well underway. During this academic year, we have developed and implemented a wide range of policies and procedures that are having a really positive impact on pupils and the quality of provision they receive.

As you will see from the inspection report, there are many positive aspects in terms of what we provide for our students and families that needs to be celebrated. There is however, still work to do to further improve the school. We have clear plans in place to address the areas identified in our inspection report which were applauded by Ofsted. In addition, I am confident that we have the resources and appropriate support to achieve these improvements before we are inspected again in another two years' time, when we will be aiming to achieve a 'good' judgement.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you, as valued parents and partners, that we are working with determination to accurately and effectively address these areas for improvement from Ofsted. In addition, as the school's Headteacher, I will continue to work tirelessly to champion our fantastic pupils and this community and will be unwavering in my commitment to ensuring that the excellent work we have started continues and becomes embedded and applied consistently across the school. It is also important that we continue to ensure that the many strengths identified in this report remain as key features of our school.

This is a fantastic school, with wonderful pupils, who are taught and supported by amazing and dedicated staff. We will continue to work with you and your children to offer them our very best each and every day.

What follows is a summary of the Inspection report and the actions we are taking as a school to address this.

What is it like to attend this school?

I am pleased to say that inspectors identified the school as a caring, inclusive school at the heart of our community and that staff know pupils and families well. It was clear for inspectors to see that we want the best for every pupil and that the majority of pupils feel happy and safe in the school. Inspectors also identified that there are strong support systems in place if pupils have problems in school and most of our pupils say that bullying is rare and they feel that staff resolve issues well.

Head Teacher Mr Rhys Adams (BA Hons, M Ed, NPQH)
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Inspectors identified that the school was adversely affected by the pandemic and during that time we faced significant challenges with pupils' progress, attendance and behaviours and that school leaders are determined to address this downturn. As a result, inspectors were impressed with the work we are doing to significantly increase our levels of support for pupils and families as well as the work we have done since September to raise expectations in all areas.

What are we doing well and what do we need to do better?

Inspectors praised our recent work and the significant improvements we have made since September. They also appreciated our honesty in relation to where we currently are as a school. Inspectors also recognised the determination that all staff have to continue with the improvements we have already made in several areas, and encouraged us to maintain our focus, determination and the direction that the school is going in.

Quality of Education

Inspectors acknowledged the suitability and breadth of our curriculum and the provision that is in place for all pupils, including SEND students. They felt that our curriculum is both broad and balanced in Key Stage 3, and that there are a range of GCSE and vocational qualifications at Key Stage 4 and were also impressed with our recent improved languages provision.

In addition to this inspectors identified that teachers have strong subject knowledge and that leaders give careful thought to the sequencing of the curriculum in some subjects. We pinpoint the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and use assessment to check pupils understanding. Inspectors stated that the sequencing of the curriculum and assessment processes in some subjects is not consistent and is underdeveloped. Inspectors also said that in some subjects, where this is the case, pupils have gaps in their knowledge which limits their progress. These are areas that the school needs to develop and we have already taken steps to address curriculum sequencing and assessment.

Quality of Post 16 Provision

Inspectors were impressed with provision in the Sixth Form and have judged this to be good.

SEND Provision

They were also very impressed with the provision for SEND students across the school. They stated that we identify their needs swiftly and share information well with staff on how best to support students with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND are able to access the full curriculum and receive excellent support from teachers due to the information they receive from school leaders about how best to meet SEND students' needs.

Our focus on Reading

Inspectors have identified that the reading programmes we have introduced this year are well planned and well delivered and that as a result of our focus on reading, pupils are developing a wider vocabulary and reading with increasing fluency.

Behaviour and attitudes

The school's new behaviour system was positively recognised by inspectors as working well for many pupils. They also described pupils at Stafford Manor as polite, open and honest. We are proud that our students have been recognised in this way and this is a credit to both our students, you as parents and their teachers.

Inspectors identified that behaviour is improving, but that our behaviour policy is not always applied consistently by all staff and that some of our pupils are still adjusting to the raised expectations that have been put in place this year. We are addressing this and also focussing on ensuring that the occasional poor behaviour identified by inspectors, does not continue to disrupt learning or have a negative impact on wider school life.

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Personal Development

Inspectors also identified that some aspects of our personal development programme needs to be sharper and we are working on ensuring that the tutor programme, the SEL curriculum and the assembly and PSHEE programmes are flexible and responsive enough to identify and address gaps in pupils knowledge over time. For example, if they have missed aspects of the programme, the school needs to be aware of this and plan the curriculum to ensure students can catch up and don't fall behind.

Safeguarding is effective

You will be pleased to learn that inspectors were very impressed with the systems we have to keep students safe at Stafford Manor High School and they stated that 'there is a strong culture of safeguarding' here and that leaders ensure concerns are followed up promptly. They were also impressed with the work we do with outside agencies to ensure our pupils and families receive extra support if, and when they need it. They also stated that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and that they know who to talk to if they have a concern and that pupils are confident that they will get support if it is needed.

Staff Morale and Workload

It was also pleasing that inspectors identified that staff are proud to work at Stafford Manor High School and that they feel the school is well led and managed. They also stated that they feel trusted by school leaders and that we take their workload into account when planning improvements.

What does Stafford Manor High School need to do to improve?

1. In some subjects, leaders have not clearly identified the knowledge pupils will learn and the order this will be taught in. This prevents pupils from building effectively on what they already know. Leaders should ensure all subjects clearly identify key knowledge that pupils should learn and how this will be sequenced.

What is the school doing to address this?

School leaders were already addressing this and have developed planning time in the summer term and from September, to ensure that detailed knowledge is explicitly outlined to support each unit of work and topic in all subjects. Leaders are focussed on and will ensure that the knowledge students need to learn is outlined in detail to support curriculum sequencing and teaching and learning. This will also support assessment and students self-testing and quizzing in tutor time and through homework from September. This means that students will be asked to ensure that they are clear on the knowledge they need to learn and will be given a wider range of tools on top of how to use flashcards, which has already been delivered to students this year.

2. Some subjects do not plan the use of assessment effectively to check pupils' learning. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders plan the use of assessment effectively to ensure pupils are learning the planned curriculum.

What is the school doing to address this?

School leaders are addressing the use of assessment in areas with less strong practice through reshaping expectations around assessment and establishing clear assessment calendars in each subject. Senior and curriculum leaders will continue to quality assure assessment practices to ensure that all subjects use assessment well, without exception, to assess what pupils know and can do and then use this information to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to reshape and replan teaching to address this swiftly and accurately.

3. The new behaviour policy is not consistently applied by all staff and not all pupils adhere to the raised expectations. As a result, the behaviour of a small number of pupils has a negative impact on learning and wider school life. Leaders should ensure that their high expectations for pupils' behaviour are fully and consistently implemented.

What is the school doing to address this?

School leaders will address this through appointing Heads of Year, a Pastoral Lead and also through more regular training and support for staff to ensure all members of staff consistently apply the behaviour policy. Morning routines and line up, which have already started, will also ensure sanctions for things like lateness and uniform are applied and a calm purposeful start to the day is experienced by all students. Regular ongoing staff training, our staff bulletin, staff briefings and behaviour walks will also address issues around consistency of applying the behaviour policy.

4. Although attendance is improving, too many pupils still miss too much school time. This has a negative impact on their achievement and personal development. Leaders should intensify their efforts to reduce levels of absence further.

What is the school doing to address this?

The school will appoint an attendance officer to support attendance from September. We will also continue to deliver initiatives like attendance matters that has seen attendance improve significantly this year and which needs further time to embed and develop. The school will also work with families to address historical poor attendance and adopt systems which supports and challenges families to improve attendance for their children.

5. The personal development curriculum is planned to include an appropriate range of topics. However, inconsistent delivery means that not all pupils access the full programme. Leaders should ensure that the programme is delivered consistently to ensure that all pupils get full access.

What is the school doing to address this?

The school has already appointed a Pastoral and Personal Development Lead on Thursday 29 June 2023, who will work alongside Heads of Year, subject leaders and senior leaders to ensure we address gaps in personal development and improve provision and gaps in students' knowledge.

[We will be providing regular updates on our progress against these improvement priorities.](#) If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter with me personally, or the attached Ofsted inspection report, then please do not hesitate to contact Sam Marshall via email who will be able to coordinate a suitable time for you. s.marshall@smhs.staffs.sch.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope your son/daughter has a productive end to the school year and an enjoyable summer holiday.

Yours faithfully



Rhys Adams
Headteacher

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