

Dear Parent

As you will be aware, the school was inspected by a team from OFSTED on the 4-5 November, having been previously inspected in May 2007. The outcome of the inspection was that the school was judged to be satisfactory overall, but with many good features, and that it was an improving school with good capacity for sustained improvement.

Prior to the inspection, we were required to submit our own analysis of the school using the same inspection framework as that used by the inspection team. The inspection report has confirmed the accuracy of our self-evaluation. Of particular importance to us is the recognition of the improvements within the school since the last inspection, and the judgement that the school has good capacity for further improvement, as we have high aspirations both for our students and for the future of the school. The report is also required to identify issues for development, and we were pleased that these were all already embedded within our strategic improvement plan.

The main findings of the inspection are as outlined below. The full report is available on our website now, and also on the OFSTED website from next week. If you would like a printed version of the report, please contact school reception and we will send a copy home with your child.

The report confirms that performance in examinations at the end of year 11 is consistently above average. This represents progress in line with what might be expected, given the students' above average starting points at the beginning of year 7. All groups of students, including the least able, make progress at least as good as their peers. There is an increasing proportion of teaching which is good or better, but this is not yet sufficiently consistent for teaching to be judged better than satisfactory overall. Hence student learning and progress is judged to be satisfactory, although consistently improving since the last inspection. This judgement of satisfactory learning and progress leads to a judgement of satisfactory for the overall performance of the school. The identified improvements in teaching are complemented by an improved curriculum at key stage 4, now judged to be good, and this is expected to impact further on results in summer 2010.

The provision for care, guidance and support was judged to be good, as were all aspects of students' personal development. These included the extent to which students feel safe, student behaviour, the extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles, the extent to which students contribute to the school and wider community, the extent to which students are prepared for future economic well-being, student attendance, and the extent of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These judgements of good for all aspects of students' personal development, combined with above average performance in examinations, means that our students are well prepared for successful lives when they leave us at 16 or 18.

The report for the sixth form reflects the report for the main school. There are many identifiable aspects of good practice, and an improving picture in terms

of student performance in examinations. Teaching needs to be more consistently good or better, and the inspectors would like to see a greater range of courses for students who find A levels difficult, although the capacity for further improvement is again recognised.

In reflecting on the inspection report, I would like to acknowledge the efforts and commitment of all the staff at the school, without which the improvements since the last inspection would not have happened and the achievement of our future aspirations would be impossible. I would also like to acknowledge the positive attitudes and behaviour of our students, who are a daily credit to themselves and, of course, to you. Finally, I would like to thank you for your continuing support.

The school is at a very exciting stage in its development. We feel that in creating a picture of an improving school with good capacity for further improvement, the inspection report provides us with the necessary encouragement to continue with the strategies which we have in place to ensure the very best outcomes for our students as we look to the future.

Yours Sincerely