

19th May 2015

### OFSTED INSPECTION – APRIL 2015

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have now received the final report on the Ofsted inspection which took place on the 28-29<sup>th</sup> April 2015. We are delighted that Ofsted judged us to be a good school. Many areas of good and outstanding practice are highlighted by the inspectors, and the report notes that this is a school where we constantly seek to improve our provision and outcomes for students.

‘Senior leaders have established a clear vision for the school resulting in a highly positive ethos. Leaders are assiduous in seeking out external support and challenge in their quest for the highest standards.’

The inspection team were hugely impressed by the quality of relationships between all members of the school community, reporting that ‘mutual respect and positive relationships pervade the school’. Inspectors spoke to many of our students during the two days, and state ‘students talk about a harmonious atmosphere in the school where bullying is rare and intolerance and name-calling hardly ever happen’. This is something we are very proud of and have worked hard to achieve.

Particular praise is given to teaching in Maths and Science, in both the primary and secondary phases. In the Reception class the role of our teaching assistants is noted, ‘the teaching assistant, through good questioning, helped them to understand what symmetry is, thus developing the children’s numeracy skills’. In secondary Maths lessons it was observed that ‘students understanding is carefully assessed by teachers who then plan lessons with precision to ensure rapid progress’.

Science lessons are highlighted for the ‘considerable subject knowledge’ of staff, and the quality of student engagement, in one lesson the inspector observed a discussion which ‘showed students reaching a remarkable level of understanding and reflection’. The expertise of staff and enthusiasm of students are linked as ‘highly skilled teachers inspire students to contribute exuberantly to lessons.’

The report is also very positive about the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading, where ‘the teacher’s expertise ensures that early reading skills are developing swiftly and are in line with students of their age nationally.’ Overall, ‘students are making good progress from their starting points in mathematics, reading and writing. The school’s focus on literacy, strong teaching and the effective use of an external programme has had a positive impact on students’ skills in Years 1 and 2.’

Ofsted identify two areas as reasons why this is not yet an outstanding school; these are standards in English (which are not yet as good as Maths and Science), and provision in the early years. We are pleased that the inspection team recognised the improvement plans we have in place for these areas as being clear, well focused and appropriate to raise standards. Ofsted also note that we have made new staff appointments in key areas which gave them confidence in our capacity to achieve our aims. Our new Director of Learning for EYFS and Primary, Mrs Dallas, joined us on 1<sup>st</sup> May, and our new Director of Learning for English, Mrs Marin, will join us from the start of the new school year.

Leadership and direction of our early years' provision has been identified as requiring improvement, and the timing of the inspection was unfortunate as Mrs Dallas started two days later. The inspection team recognised that this new appointment had been made, and described the improvement plan which we have for the EYFS as 'clear and well-focused'.

The report notes that children in Reception this year are making better progress than previously, and particularly praises the 'excellent learning and emotional support' offered to children with special educational needs. The staff in Reception class are recognised to be 'highly committed and hardworking', and children described as 'well behaved, articulate and keen to learn'. Given the very high quality of teaching and learning observed in Years 1 and 2 we are confident that our current Reception children will have an excellent start to Key Stage 1. We have already started to involve Miss Ward in this process to ensure a smooth transition.

A copy of the full Ofsted report has been emailed to you, and hard copies are available on request from the School Office. A summary of the report is attached to this letter.

We greatly value the contribution you have made as parents to the success of this inspection. We hope you will continue to bring the same enthusiasm and support as together we take the journey from 'good' to 'outstanding'. Should you have any questions about the inspection judgements, or our future plans, there will be opportunities for Primary Phase parents to discuss these with myself and the SLT on the following dates:

- Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015, at 3:00pm and 4:00pm, West Wing 'Breakfast Club' room
- Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015, at 3:00pm and 4:00pm, West Wing 'Breakfast Club' room

With thanks for your continued support,

David Castles,



Principal



HEYFORD PARK  
FREE SCHOOL  
BONUM COMMUNE COMMUNITATIS

## **Summary - extracts from the Ofsted report:**

### **Overall judgement- 'this is a good school'**

#### **Leadership & management – is good**

- The school's senior leaders provide a clear vision for the school and have quickly created a very positive ethos. This manifests itself through strong, consistently applied systems for managing behaviour, monitoring students' attendance and rigorously checking the quality of teaching.
- The Principal has high expectations that are clearly recognised by staff and students.
- Leaders create good plans for improvement and demonstrate a keen commitment to achieve the highest standards.
- Highly committed governors know the school well. They offer robust challenge to senior leaders about standards and carefully and regularly check how well students are doing.

#### **Behaviour & Safety – are good**

- Students feel safe and well cared for, and parents are confident that their children are happy and secure at school. Mutual respect and positive relationships pervade the school.
- Students are cheerful and welcoming. They greet visitors politely and happily express their positive views about all aspects of the school.
- Good behaviour is a result of consistently applied sanctions and rewards and the positive ethos of the school.
- Students behave well around the school and in lessons. Their polite and enthusiastic demeanour is a strength and the result of teachers' effective behaviour management.

#### **The quality of teaching – is good**

- Staff are enthusiastic and have positive relationships with students. Students comment that teachers support them very well and are always there to help with work.
- Teachers engage students so that they are keen to work hard. In the best lessons, teachers use their considerable subject knowledge to inspire students.
- Teachers assess students' work accurately and regularly.
- The school is assiduous in checking the standards of assessment.
- Students welcome teachers' detailed feedback about their work in books, and respond to it thoughtfully. As a result of this, most students make good progress over time.

#### **Achievement – is good**

- In the Reception class - excellent learning and emotional support are offered to children with special educational needs, who are catching up well with their peers.
- Students in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress from their starting points. The teacher's expertise ensures that early reading skills are developing swiftly and are in line with students of their age nationally.
- In Secondary phase - students are achieving well in mathematics and science. The rate of progress is better than that made by students nationally over the course of the key stage.
- Disadvantaged students achieve well at Heyford Park as a result of well-targeted support.