

July 19th 2018

OFSTED Inspection Update

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following our OFSTED inspection in June, I am writing to inform you in advance that our full inspection report will be published at the beginning of September on both the OFSTED and Edge websites. In the meantime, I feel it is important as new Principal that I am open and transparent with you and share the key findings of the report with you before the end of term.

The school received a judgement of “inadequate” and is deemed to require “special measures”. This matched fully with our self-evaluation of the academy’s current position, we were and continue to be honest about our areas for development and where we need to improve. I would like to advise you in advance that we will be hosting an additional Parents’ Evening on **Wednesday September 5th 5-7pm** where we will talk you through the contents of the report and answer any questions you might have.

Many of you will be aware of the context of The Edge since its opening in 2015- the OFSTED report acknowledges this and explains that *“since 2015, the school has suffered various setbacks in trying to get established. Initially, the school was housed, temporarily, in unsuitable accommodation- a lengthy period of weak leadership and significant staffing turbulence followed”*. However, the report goes on to describe the recent changes that have been made and the impact of these, in particular that *“the new Principal...has helped the school to turn a corner and started to address some deep-rooted weaknesses”*. Governors are also praised in the report which states that they *“have been relentless in their quest to eradicate weak leadership....they are instrumental in driving forward improvements”*.

In addition, the report states that *“the school now has the right people in the right places to bring about positive change. The transformation has begun and is gathering momentum....staffing has stabilised and recent appointments have added strength to the quality of teaching”*. You will be aware of recent appointments we have made but I am delighted to announce that we have been quick to further strengthen the senior leadership team with a series of new appointments in preparation for September. Supporting myself from September will be Adam Smith (Vice Principal), Jackie Bailey (Vice Principal), Charlotte Poynton (Assistant Principal), Claire Fairburn (Assistant Principal), Helen McClane (SENCO) and Janet Gray (Lead Teacher of Textiles). This is a talented and experienced team featuring a balance of new appointments and highly committed staff who have worked at the school for some time.

Improvements across a number of other areas are acknowledged in the report- for instance, *“the new leadership team is quickly addressing outstanding safeguarding issues....leaders are tenacious in following up referrals when responses from other agencies are slow”*,

“leaders have recently revised and improved the recording of safeguarding concerns and incidents....they use this information well to identify training for staff”. Our recent improvements in attendance (although attendance is still judged as “inadequate”) are also noted- *“leaders have recently appointed an attendance officer with specific responsibility for improving pupils’ attendance- this is already beginning to make a positive difference”*.

Whilst impact of the new leadership team’s work in recent months is commented upon at length in the report, I do not shy away from the fact that there are some hard-hitting comments about students’ behaviour and learning. OFSTED noted that teaching is inadequate, partly because, over time, widespread weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the management of pupils’ behaviour have not been tackled. OFSTED also found too many pupils displaying poor attitudes to learning and choosing not to participate productively in lessons. Instead, some pupils were causing deliberate disruptions to the learning of others. In September, we will be rapidly addressing these issues.

In summary, we fully accept the findings of the report and are moving quickly on areas for development. It is important to me as new Principal that we work relentlessly until we are a “good” school and recent changes we have made only represent the beginning of the journey. The governing body share my ambitions for the school and will not rest either until we are truly a school that, as our website puts it, “shapes the futures” of our students effectively. I know that you will support us in this drive and would like to thank you for the support you have shown me since I have been in role. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions regarding this letter, my direct e-mail is andrew.wakefield@theedgeacademy.co.uk

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Wakefield

Principal