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YATELEY SCHOOL



MFJ/ble

A PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

16 December 2015

Dear Parents

Please find attached our Ofsted report for parents and students. While we are pleased that the strengths of our Sixth Form were recognised, it is obviously not the report we would want overall. However, given the results of 2014, a judgement of 'Requires Improvement to be Good' (previously "Satisfactory") was a definite possibility and we agree with the overall judgement.

We wrote after the 2014 results about how we intended to improve. We recognised that the Pastoral system had not delivered the best outcomes for every student and that our target setting and assessment system needed a fresh and more rigorous approach. We are certain that the steps we have taken and will continue to develop have made the school stronger already and will continue to provide improvements. The results in 2015 were significantly better than 2014 but, as I wrote at the time, still not where we would want them to be.

Ofsted acknowledge the steps we have taken and the improvements that these will bring but have to report what they saw at the time. Therefore, they saw that assessment and tracking in KS4 is extremely effective but was not yet fully in place in KS3 and we would agree – that is a priority this year, already identified in our School Development Plan. At Yateley, we believe that a student in Year 7 deserves the same focus on their progress as does a Year 11 student and we are very keen to deliver on this. When it is in place, progress in KS3 and leaders' understanding of this progress will be clearer. Leaders will have better information about their departments in all key stages.

They also saw that many of the shortcomings of the Pastoral system had been addressed and were continuing to bring about improvements. While they were very complimentary about student's behaviour around the school and to each other, they saw some misbehaviour in some classes. This was extremely disappointing bearing in mind the excellent behaviour of the vast majority of our students. I am confident that the investment we have made in our new House system will support in dealing with this low level disruption.

We have a systematic programme of staff development and a focus on the quality of teaching and learning but like many other schools we acknowledge that there is inconsistency in our teaching. We have been through a period of significant disruption in some subject areas and some staffing shortages but we will continue with this focus. We will develop our monitoring further to ensure that there is no inconsistency in marking and feedback. These measures will also improve behaviour in classes.

Ofsted commented that leaders' expectations of behaviour, how hard students will work and how much progress they should make are not high enough. We disagree. Schools tend to produce self-evaluation forms (SEFs) in which they grade themselves. We felt that our



school was on the cusp of being good but recognised that our work was in progress. If we graded ourselves as 'Requires Improvement to be good' there would be no position from which to argue for 'Good' and so we graded ourselves 'Good'. The downside is that Ofsted could then make a comment about expectations, as they did. We were under no illusions that there was work to do after 2014 – work that has already brought significant improvement in results and will continue to do so.

While we acknowledge a number of issues raised by Ofsted we were extremely disappointed about the range of lessons observed. Teachers reported a total of 45 observations although the report says 34. Perhaps they were just passing through some lessons although we do not know which. Out of these 45, only one was in Music and only one in Art. None were in Drama or Dance. These are among our areas of excellence yet they were ignored. While we are totally committed to promoting academic excellence in all subjects, we are of the belief that the performing arts are of relevance and importance in the development of well-rounded and confident young people and we were sorry that more importance was not placed on them.

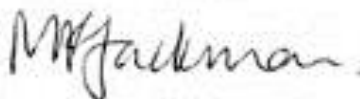
Overall, out of the 45 lessons, only twelve observations took place in the subjects that were not EBacc subjects. Of the remaining 33, half were in two areas that we had identified as requiring support to improve. The feeling that they did not see the best of us and looked for areas of least success was reinforced by this.

However, we are reassured that the areas for improvement highlighted by Ofsted were those we were already aware of and doing something about. We now need to redouble our focus on them and ensure we bring about even swifter improvement.

We will keep you informed on a regular basis about developments in all the key areas identified by Ofsted. The whole report can be accessed on the school website www.yateleyschool.net In addition we are proposing to hold a Parents' meeting at 7.00pm on Monday 25th January so that we can talk about the findings in more detail and answer any questions you may have. There will be a further communication about this next term.

Finally, can I thank parents for their support during this process. The very high proportion of happy students who felt safe at school and the very high proportion of supportive parents was noted by the inspectors.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M F Jackman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

M F Jackman
Headteacher