

Monday 12th September 2022

Dear Parent and Carers

I am writing to inform you that the Academy welcomed an Ofsted Inspection in June this year.

The School Leadership Team, the Trust Executive Team, and I are grateful to the inspection team for identifying and noting many of the school's strengths. We are very clear that the Ofsted Inspection has judged the school fairly. In particular, we are grateful for the Inspectors acknowledgement of the work already undertaken since the new leadership arrangement was introduced in September 2021.

You will all be aware of the many challenges the Academy has faced over the past few years, and the final report matches our assessment of where we are currently.

The overall judgement is 'requires improvement' with 'good' for personal development. I recognise that the 'requires improvement' outcome will surprise many parents and carers. However, there are a lot of positives.

- The inspection identified that 'leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding and that pupils know where to seek support and feel staff will listen and help.'
- 'Pupils feel safe in school' and 'value the inclusive nature. Pupils can be whomever they want to be and feel included.'
- 'Most pupils enjoy coming to school.'
- 'Staff act quickly' when Bullying is reported.
- There is a 'wide range' of extra-curricular activities on offer to our students.
- The curriculum is designed to be 'ambitious for all pupils.'
- We have a strong practice in English and Maths.
- 'Reading is a strong focus' at the school.
- Personal Development is strong with 'pupils feeling confident to express their views in lessons and respectfully listen to the views of others.'
- 'Careers education is a strength at the school'.

Ofsted recognised that improvements were already happening at the school but had not yet had significant time to be fully embedded nor had time to demonstrate the full impact before the recent inspection.

They identified the main limiting factor for a 'good' judgement was attendance which has dropped for some students post-pandemic. Another factor was historical inconsistencies in curriculum delivery and classroom practice caused by staffing and leadership changes.

I am confident that we now have a settled Team at subject level and pastorally, which will enable the school to thrive. The inspection team agreed, saying, 'Increased stability in senior leadership is helping to improve the school.'

The same is true of behaviour. Before the new Team started, expectations were not high enough, and systems during the pandemic were not established. Although Ofsted did not see poor behaviour during the inspection, some students referred to this. The inspection team recognised that 'Leaders have high expectations of behaviour, although the new policies recently introduced have not yet been fully embedded.'

Having returned to the school permanently, I am hugely optimistic that the new Team I have in place can take the school forward. St Leonards is a special place with an exciting future.

My Team is dedicated and focused on working hard to ensure all areas are judged good at the next inspection. During this school year, our primary focus will be on tackling attendance, introducing a consistent curriculum, and fully embedding new policies to ensure high expectations are met across the Academy.

The full report is now available on our website [\[LINK\]](#)

We will be holding a parent forum on the 12th of October at 5pm in the main hall to update you on progress and plans. If you wish to discuss any issues raised in the report, please get in touch with us via g.ferguson@thestleonardsacademy.org.uk

Thank you



Mr J Francies
Principal



University of Brighton

Academies Trust