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ROYAL ALEXANDRA & ALBERT SCHOOL



10th January 2022

Dear Parent,

You will be aware that our School had an Ofsted inspection in November, and we have now received the report to share with you.

The inspectors concluded that our School has high standards, and was rated “good” in the behaviour and attitudes of pupils, personal development and in the Sixth Form. However, in some areas of inspection, Ofsted has made recommendations for improvement, and so rated the school overall as “requires improvement”. We wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the report’s findings and set out the steps the school is taking to make these improvements.

It is pleasing that the report recognises the many strengths of our School, such as the behaviour and attitudes of our pupils, who *“are respectful and well-mannered”* and *“are typically keen to learn”*, their personal development, and the exceptional range of activities they undertake. The report stresses that *“the school’s co-curricular programme of activities is particularly impressive”*. Our Sixth Form was also highlighted, where *“sixth formers are challenged and supported well in their chosen subjects”*. The latest published Progress 8 figure is 0.44, meaning pupils at RAAS are gaining nearly half a grade per subject above similar pupils nationally (with same prior attainment).

However, the report states *“too few pupils study a wide enough range of academic subjects at GCSE”*. It also notes *“there are weaknesses in the teaching of reading and in teachers’ use of assessment.”*

The report recognises *“New senior leaders have focused on boosting leadership capacity and supporting staff after a particularly challenging year.”* They also note *“Leaders have worked to improve curriculum plans across the broad range of subjects on offer.”*

The steps taken since the new headship team began working at our School in September (referenced in our recent end of term letter) to bring the school in line with the requirements of the Ofsted September 2019 Framework, are now starting to come into effect. This 2019 Framework made a fundamental change in the approach of Ofsted inspections, with the focus now on the curriculum (“Quality of Education”) rather than outcomes.

The Government is looking to schools to increase the number of pupils taking the EBacc subjects (English, Maths, Science, History or Geography, Modern Language) and Ofsted are judging schools on their implementation of this, using the phrase *“sufficient range of academic subjects at GCSE”*.

The report notes: *“Too few opt to study a sufficient range of academic subjects at GCSE. New senior leaders have plans to address this but have not yet had time to implement them”*. Ofsted inspectors must make their judgement on what they see at the time. To bring these plans into effect at our

School, new plans for the current Year 9, from September 2022, are being announced this month as part of the options process.

Since 2019, Ofsted has changed the way they expect schools to assess their pupils. Although our School has a rigorous set of half-termly assessments, Ofsted is now looking to see more on-going assessment in lessons through teacher questioning, which, for low attaining and SEND pupils, has not been consistent at our School, something which we are tackling through reviews and training. Our School is also reviewing its teaching of reading, especially for low attaining pupils.

Although the overall outcome of the report is frustrating for us, we will continue to work hard to rectify these specific points so that our School can receive the judgement it deserves. The report and the Ofsted Parent View give a positive view of the experience of pupils at our School and the views of our parents, *"They learn to be respectful and considerate of others and diversity is celebrated. Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum enriched by a vast array of engaging clubs, trips, activities and challenges on offer."* We once again thank all parents who took the time to complete the Parent View survey last term.

There is so much to celebrate at our School, and we continue to be impressed by the attitudes and commitment of our pupils and staff. In our view, the recent Ofsted report provides a clear summary of our School's many strengths and the steps that need to be taken moving forward.

We hope you will be able to join us at the forthcoming Parent Forum where you will be able to ask further questions, hear more about the actions already taken, and our plans to address the other key areas of the report.

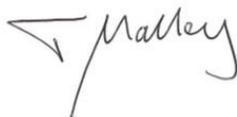
- Year 9 Parent Forum – date and link to follow
- Junior School Parent Forum – date and link to follow
- Year 7 and 8 Parent Forum – date and link to follow
- Year 10 and 11 Parent Forum – date and link to follow
- Sixth Form Parent Forum – date and link to follow

If you are not able to join the Parent Forum, we will share the recording soon after the event so that you can be informed. As ever, we are always pleased to speak with our parents individually too – please email head@gatton-park.org.uk if you would like to arrange a call or Teams meeting to address any questions or concerns.

Yours sincerely,



John Billingham,
Chair of Governors



James Malley
Headteacher



David Blow
Executive Headteacher