

23 May 2016

Dear parents/carers,

I am writing to you as I know that you are aware the school was inspected by an OFSTED team on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

**Chaucer School is a safe, improving, happy and harmonious school** where youngsters go on to lead fulfilled lives as successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. The snapshot of two days by the OFSTED inspectors does not capture the full success journey of Chaucer School since 2012 and though we are extremely disappointed that the school has been judged by OFSTED as inadequate; the school, governors and students fundamentally believe the judgment is not a true reflection of the progress that has been made at Chaucer School over the 22 months since the last inspection.

**The school has lodged two formal complaints about the OFSTED inspection itself**, which has resulted in the report having a lengthy delay, however it will be published during week beginning 23 May 2016. Alongside this publication it is important to be aware that:

- The first complaint raises serious concerns regarding the accuracy, omissions and contradictions included in the report (particularly outcomes, teaching and learning, behaviour and leadership)
- The second complaint centres upon the process of the inspection, the conduct of the inspectors and the overall judgments that were arrived at.
- The Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, David Bowes has written to Nick Hudson Regional Director of OFSTED North East, Yorkshire and Humber
- The Chair of Governors, Ken Matthews, has written to Nick Hudson.

**Both of the first two points above are still currently being officially investigated by OFSTED and Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors.**

**As Headteacher (alongside, governors, staff and students) I remain absolutely focused and committed to Chaucer School becoming an outstanding academy.** This judgement may be upheld and within the report there are clear areas signposted for improvement. These areas will be robustly tackled through careful planning, astute leadership and skilled determination and dedication from staff. The judgement will not set us back on our mission to drive continued improvement from 2012 to secure 'Good'. We will rigorously self-evaluate and use external support mechanisms where appropriate to achieve outstanding status for Chaucer School as part of Tipton School Academy Trust.

**Without knowing that an OFSTED inspection was to take place**, we had already commissioned two independent reports (conducted by an ex-senior HMI and serving OFSTED inspector in March and May). These equally valid reports in their feedback give an independent view for consideration against the feedback in the report. I have included these reviews on the school website along with a copy of the OFSTED report, all of which can be available in hard copy from the school office.

**The feedback in March** said that a baseline was taken with regard to the progress that the school has made towards:

- Teaching and Learning
- Teacher Effectiveness
- Marking and Feedback
- Behaviour and Safety
- Leadership

In the first independent review, students themselves explained when asked in a balanced and wide ranging (one day) investigation of practice that the school is a place where:

- 'Students report that the quality of teaching and learning is improving and that the written feedback they receive from teachers is much more helpful than it used to be'
- 'Students reported that they feel safe'
- 'Students reported that behaviour is much better about the school...students are still frustrated (with behaviour at times) because ...it means they did not learn as well as they should'
- 'Students noted that the school has changed 'drastically for the better'

At the end of the review, several recommendations were made regarding areas for continuous improvement (as practice is still variable and inconsistent) alongside recognition of what has already been achieved.

**In April OFSTED have indicated that:**

- Leadership and management must rapidly improve its effectiveness.
- There needs to be rapid improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school needs to improve behaviour and safety substantially.
- An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be taken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

**In May after the OFSTED inspection had occurred** (in the second independent review which picks up the areas from the last visit) teaching and learning and the teacher effectiveness programme was described by students in the following ways:

- 'It gives a solid, concrete structure'
- 'Helps improve teaching'
- 'Teachers have to break it (learning) down, it helps them and it helps us'
- 'Teachers think more carefully about planning now'

Students spoke again about behaviour having further improved with teachers supporting students that need it ... they asked us to continue to support them when moving around the corridors and keep learning interesting and relevant.

The school improvement reviewer (ex-HMI and serving inspector) said himself that students were on-task in lessons and purposeful learning was taking place and that the school and the leadership team continues to 'knuckle down' to what needs to be done to improve and ensure the school is good.

The two external independent reviews chime with the school's own self-evaluation and the school still does require further improvements in order to be judged as good,.

**Chaucer School and its students, staff and governors would like to thank its community for taking the time to read this letter.** We do not feel that the OFSTED report captures the real improvement that has occurred at the school where the government threshold targets for Progress 8 have been met for the first time in Chaucer School's history and the progress of disadvantaged/disabled students (Special Educational Needs and Free School Meals students) has risen in line with national performance. I have a duty to describe and defend an accurate picture of Chaucer School. I also have a duty of care to students and their life prospects. I will continue to diligently drive development that enhances life chances for students and their community so that our improvement is recognised by all.

Please do continue the enormous support as part of the collective momentum that is transforming Chaucer School and making it a great place to learn and a school that gives its students the best possible chance of success on their chosen path.

Yours faithfully,



Scott Burnside  
Headteacher