



Nailsea School

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7th July 2020

Dear parents and carers,

As you are aware, Ofsted visited Nailsea School on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th March 2020. Given the changing national picture at that point regarding the pandemic this meant that we were one of the last schools nationally to have a full section 8 inspection. On Friday 13th March the Department for Education announced that Ofsted would cease visiting schools, a sensible decision given the magnitude of the days ahead and the focus already being shifted at that time.

Our previous Ofsted in February 2019 graded the school overall as 'Good' and the latest inspection graded the school, overall, as 'Requires Improvement'. This is equivalent to the old 'Satisfactory' grading. Within this latest overall grade 'Behaviour and Attitudes', 'Personal Development' and the 'Sixth Form Provision' were all judged to be 'Good'.

The report can now be accessed through the Ofsted website here:

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50152791>

Understandably, I am incredibly disappointed with the report. I want you to know that I and the rest of the staff will work hard to continue to address the comments made. Although there are things I know the school does need to do to improve, in line with our own self-evaluation, I believe that some of the wording in the report does not accurately reflect the school that I know and care passionately about.

Also, the governors are dissatisfied with the way the inspection was carried out and we have an active complaint and Freedom of Information request regarding a conflict of interest of one of the inspectors. The complaint has been upheld by Ofsted. Further to this, the Chair of the Governing Body has been in discussions with Ofsted over the last months and we are awaiting the outcome of an 'internal review' of the inspection by 5th August. However, regardless of the outcome of the complaint, the report will not be changed as per Ofsted's Complaints Policy.

I am delighted that Ofsted recognises the many good aspects of our school. These conclusions were reached through the things the inspectors saw for themselves and in the comments made by students and parents in various surveys and meetings. These included:

'Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy their lessons and find staff approachable'

'Pupils say that staff work hard to resolve any issues they may have. Pupils behaviour is good in class and at social times. Consequently, the school is both calm and productive'

'Senior leaders work with the community to create an inclusive school'

'Leaders have ensured that a well thought out personal, social and health education programme is supporting pupils to become good citizens'

'The sixth form supports pupils well in their learning and next steps'

'The school keeps pupils safe and has a very knowledgeable safeguarding team'

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I am, of course, disappointed that the 'Quality of Education' judgement does not meet our high expectations. New curriculum measures were introduced in September 2019 and I believe that with time to embed these changes, the curriculum and its delivery and monitoring will improve. This also applies to the 'Leadership and Management' judgement, with Middle Leaders having a key, but new, role in monitoring the curriculum. Although schools were promised time to embed the curriculum, with only a matter of months since the new measures were introduced, we did not have the benefit of this before the inspectors visited. Under the new Inspection Framework many education providers are being downgraded with Nailsea School being one of a number to have been inspected and issued with a lower grade within our area in the past 12 months.

Personally, I have found it difficult to accept this judgment when our students do well in their exams, achieving above local and national averages, and we have such a strong school community. Most importantly, students are happy and feel safe here at Nailsea. I will not compromise my core belief that happiness and safety is the foundation for successful learning and personal development for young people. Nailsea's ethos has, and always will be, 'students first'. This will not change, but please be assured we will be relentlessly focusing on the identified areas of improvement to further enhance our provision for our students, your children.

I am acutely aware of any school's key responsibility in providing a safe, secure and productive environment for the young people their parents entrust to our care. I understand that this report may lead to families having concerns and I want to reassure you that I and the rest of #teamnailsea are committed to giving your child an excellent education. In other times I would have been able to invite parents to a meeting if they had queries or questions but given the circumstances this is not possible. As ever, if you have any specific questions and queries please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

For Nailsea we are not chasing a grade, we are aiming to do the very best for each student in our care. We strive to help all of our students to recognise their talents, build on their strengths, recognise when they or their families need support and help them have the skills to move forward. Our aim is to create caring, thoughtful and passionate young people who are proud of themselves and the communities they live in. I would like to end by thanking our amazing students whose resilience, thirst for knowledge and sheer enthusiasm for Nailsea School combine to make it a wonderful place to work and study.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Dee Elliott

Head teacher