

CLO/lm
24th June 2022

Dear Parents/ Carers

As many of you will be aware our school was inspected by Ofsted on 10th and 11th May. This was not a surprise as most schools not inspected for some time were told that they would be scheduled for inspection within the next year.

As with all Section 5 inspections it was an intense two days and very different from what has been experienced previously, given the significant changes to the inspection framework.

The final report identifies a number of key strengths around the areas of Quality of Education and Leadership and Management. Ofsted commented that:

- *Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)*
- *Leaders want the best for pupils. They are driven by their vision to provide the best education to pupils in their local community*
- *Staff are proud to work at the school.*
- *Teachers understand the needs of their pupils well and adapt learning when appropriate*
- *A well-considered careers programme is a strength of the school*
- *Pupils benefit from access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many are proud of the opportunities to compete in local and national sporting competitions. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities in the arts, such as taking part in school productions.*

We were delighted to read that the Quality of Education we are offering to our students was identified so positively and that, as a result, students achieve well at the school and have done consistently for many years achieved outcomes within the top 20% of schools nationally.

The areas that have been identified as requiring improvement are '*Behaviour*' and '*Personal Development*'. Given the challenges all schools have faced during COVID, we know that behaviour outside the classroom has certainly been more challenging this year with some students struggling to adapt back into school routines, struggling to engage positively with their peers in a way we had always experienced prior to the pandemic and struggling to follow instructions from staff. Whilst we have put many measures in place, we clearly need to see these more embedded within school and we are confident we can achieve this with the support of our students and parents. Ofsted acknowledged that

- *Leaders are rightly concerned about the behaviour of some pupils*
- *Leaders are taking action to change the culture in the school by promoting kindness and equality through lessons and assemblies. They have increased the support available to pupils and made it easier for them to report concerns.*

We were disappointed, however, that the inspectors did not fully consider the impact that COVID-19 has had on our school which, without doubt, has affected how students engage with each other and staff. As leaders we continue to work on this and are seeing that our focus on kindness and our principles of respect are returning. Ofsted highlighted that '*When pupils do talk to adults about problems or worries, leaders act quickly and effectively to provide help.*' We will continue to do so and continue to encourage students to seek advice and support from us when they need to.

The judgement regarding personal development was a surprise and disappointing given that we invest considerable time in this area, which includes a structured MSS and tutor programme. We will need to review this further moving forward by working with students to establish what aspects they feel need more in-depth study and focus. We have already done considerable work around mental health and wellbeing. However, we would have liked the inspectors to have explored more areas of our school to gain a fuller picture of what Wildern stands for which, regrettably, did not happen.

Despite being disappointed by the overall judgement we are delighted and encouraged that the key fundamental areas of a school notably '**Leadership and Management**' and '**Teaching and Learning**' were identified as good. These are critical to a school's success in supporting students' progress and achievement. In other words what we are delivering every day in the classroom is good and working for our students. What was clear to the inspectors is that all staff are committed to providing the best education for your children.

From the start of this academic year, we have been focusing on kindness in order to return to the culture we have always enjoyed prior to the pandemic linked to our Rights and Respect ethos. However, some of our students have found this challenging and therefore, this will require a joint effort and support from us all in partnership moving forward. We will be expecting, without exception:

- Politeness from everyone to everyone; this includes how students speak and behave with each other as well as to staff. Students who do not practise this behaviour will face our normal sanctions which will be applied consistently and proportionately.
- Our behaviour policy indicates there is a zero tolerance towards bullying which in order to be addressed must be reported. As you know, our students can report any incident in a number of ways:
 - completing our #ineedsupport form
 - visiting Student Services or the Year office
 - speaking to any member of staff

Unfortunately, if we do not know about incidents we cannot support our students. We therefore urge parents and students to report all incidents.

- Punctuality and attendance continues to remain a focus for the Government and Ofsted and still remains a challenge for us. Therefore, we will continue to apply our attendance policy in line with Department for Education expectations.
- Uniform needs to return to the same high standards we held pre-COVID. We have continued across the year to inform parents and students when these standards have not been met. If uniform does not conform to the set standard, students will be expected to resolve it immediately, there will be no compromise on this. If there is a student who, for a valid reason, is unable to meet the standards, we will contact parents and support where we are able to.

After several challenging years we believe a reset and reminder of the minimum standards is required and would ask for your support to this end.

Wildern is an integral part of the local community which is highly regarded by the majority of you, our parents and our students. The overall outcome of our Inspection is set out below and by working together, we know we can improve all aspects of the overall judgement.

Under the new framework the outcome of our Inspection is as follows:

Quality of Education: Good

Behaviour & Attitudes: Requires Improvement

Personal Development: Requires Improvement

Leadership & Management: Good

Overall: Requires Improvement

The full report is due to be published on Tuesday 28th June at reports.ofsted.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Mrs C. Oakley
Headteacher

Miss M.L.Litton
Executive Headteacher

Mrs G.Lane
Chair of Trust