



MAGHULL HIGH SCHOOL

SPECIALIST ACADEMY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

All to: Aspire, Achieve, Enjoy

Headteacher: Mr M R Anderson BSc

July 2016

Dear Parents,

OFSTED Inspection, end of term arrangements and September 2016

As you will know the school had an OFSTED inspection on the 8th and 9th of June earlier this term. As the final report is now about to be published I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support not only during the inspection but also throughout the year, and share the inspection judgments with you.

As has happened before (we were inspected in July 2012) we did point out to OFSTED that June was not the best time for them to get a proper picture of the work of an 11 – 18 school with three out of seven year groups taking public examinations at GCSE and Advanced Level and not in normal classes, nevertheless we are pleased with the very positive nature of the report and the comments that it makes about our pupils, staff and school. The current OFSTED Framework, introduced in September 2015, is generally regarded as the most rigorous and essentially judges four aspects across the school before arriving at an overall judgment.

Following this inspection OFSTED states that leadership and management, teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare are all "Good". Although the report makes many references to how much results have improved since the last inspection in 2014 it still concludes that outcomes for pupils "requires improvement" and, because the OFSTED Framework requires inspectors to be sure that all aspects are good, it is this judgment that determines the overall effectiveness grade for the whole school. We would encourage you to read the report in its entirety because, as mentioned earlier, it is so positive about what we have achieved together over the last two years. The following quotations about the strengths of the school taken directly from the front page of the report should give you a flavour.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have led significant improvements since the previous inspection so that more aspects of the school's work are now good.
- The leadership of teaching is good. The quality of teaching, marking and assessment has improved and is now good.
- Standards are rising, particularly in English and mathematics, and pupils' progress is accelerating so that more pupils are making good progress in a range of subjects.
- The focus on developing the reading skills of all pupils is helping to raise standards in many subjects.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is calm, orderly and respectful. The school's promotion of character education improves pupils' sense of self-esteem and their contribution to the community.
- Vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are well supported and cared for because of the good pastoral care provided by the school.

During feedback to myself and senior colleagues inspectors were clearly very close to being able to conclude that all aspects of the school's work were at least good. Again we feel that the school may have suffered from the timing of the inspection coming before the work students have done this year has been formally recognised by the results that they will achieve this summer; published data now being almost a year out of date.

The report picks up on our own analysis of internal data and agrees that one of the main improvement priorities over the next year should be further acceleration of the progress of our most able pupils and hence an increase in the number of A and A* grades obtained at both GCSE and A Level. This is summarised in the section of the report titled "What does the school need to do to improve further?" as is set out in full below.

- Improve the outcomes for all pupils by ensuring that:
 - all teachers provide a consistently high level of challenge for the most able in the main school and in the sixth form
 - all teachers set higher expectations for the quality of presentation of pupils' work
 - all departments increase the number of most-able pupils achieving the highest grades at GCSE
 - interventions and support provided for disadvantaged pupils further reduce the gap between the achievement of these pupils and that of others in the school
 - students in the sixth form are advised from the outset to follow courses in which they are likely to be successful.

We are confident that we are already making good progress towards achieving these outcomes and that our new school improvement plan will demonstrate our determination and capacity to move every aspect of the school's work towards outstanding.

The overall strength and positive outcome from the inspection means that under current regulations the school is very unlikely to be inspected again before the 2018 - 2019 academic year. Before concluding this section of my letter I would like to include just a few direct quotations from the OFSTED report which the school is very pleased with:

"The most notable improvements have been in teaching and learning. Teachers are developing interesting and creative ways of delivering their subjects and making sure that pupils have a very secure grounding in the basic skills in English and mathematics."

"Raising aspirations is a key focus and the number of pupils following the more academic routes is rising steadily."

"Governors are totally committed to overseeing further improvements in the progress of pupils and are proud of the way in which all staff have responded so far to greater challenge and the pace of change."

"The progress of most pupils in the school has accelerated well because of good teaching."

"Pupils of all ages say they feel safe in school. They indicate that there is little or no abusive, racist or homophobic language used. Bullying is not seen as an issue."

"The behaviour of pupils is good."

"Standards in all subjects are improving."

"A real strength of the sixth form is seen in the fact that in the last two years, every student has gone on to university, college, apprenticeships or employment."

May I finally take this opportunity to thank all the parents who responded to the OFSTED on-line survey, but especially those parents who sent in highly supportive letters and emails to the lead inspector. The full report will be available shortly, either electronically via the link button on the school website or on request in hard copy from the school office.

September 2016: uniform, equipment & mobile phones

We are pleased with the commitment that most pupils make to the school by arriving each day very smartly dressed and equipped for learning. Nevertheless we are always looking to improve and believe that with a renewed focus on all pupils displaying the highest standards of uniform and engagement with learning that lessons will be even more productive and enjoyable. To this end we have consulted with a range of stakeholders, including pupils, and from the start of September will insist upon a consistent adherence to the uniform and equipment standards outlined in the enclosed booklet. The main changes are:

- new guidance as to what are acceptable school shoes (trainers and ballet slippers are not acceptable)
- changes to the drinks that may be brought into school (no fizz, no sugar or energy drinks)
- modifications to our policy on mobile phones
- specific guidance on the equipment that must be brought to school each day

Many schools have a total ban on mobile phones. We believe that this is inappropriate for our school when so many pupils travel considerable distances. On the other hand they have no place in lessons and can be a source of distraction and disruption to learning. From September any phone taken out or used in lessons will be confiscated and placed in the school reception from where it will need to be collected by a parent or responsible adult. Phones may be used at break and lunchtime but not as pupils move from one lesson to the next.

Two years ago we encouraged parents to stop children from bringing high sugar and fizzy drinks to school. After considerable debate we have decided that we need to go one step further and issue a ban on such drinks being brought into school. From September pupils will only be allowed to bring still water or pre-diluted squash in a reusable container into school. Any other unsuitable drinks will be confiscated and disposed of. I would ask all parents to support this measure which we believe will have positive health benefits.

End of Term

School will finish for pupils at 12:30 on Tuesday 19th July. As is now our custom this is the only early finish to the school term. Last year there was a significant reduction in the nuisance caused by a minority of pupils who brought foam into school but some did spoil the end of year for many other pupils and staff. Please understand that bringing foam to school, or any other materials which can disrupt learning, is unacceptable and I am afraid that parents will be required to come and collect any pupil who chooses to mess around in this way. The arrangements for the start of the new academic year are that all pupils in **Years 8 – 11 & 13 return to school at normal time on Monday 5th September. Year 7 & Year 12 start school on Friday 2nd September.**

With many thanks and best wishes for a sunny and relaxing holiday,



Mark Anderson
Headteacher