

16 January 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

Update on School Improvement work since our May 2022 Inspection

Immediately following our Ofsted inspection in May 2022, I met with any parents that requested meetings to provide reassurance and further information on the work that we were doing to improve the school. Over six months have now passed, and I am in a position to report on our progress.

Positive Behaviour

Our Assistant Headteacher, Alyce Le-Brunn Healey, has been leading a large strand of work across the school on anti-bullying. Student surveys and focus groups have taken place to track the improvement, alongside more personalised work with students who have needed support. The specific actions that have been taken place include:

- updating our policies and procedures
 - Our Behaviour Policy can be found [here](#). It includes sections on the importance of positive relationships, British Values and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It also has clear reference to social times and how the school makes reasonable adjustments for students. Some school routines have been changed and elements of our policy have been benchmarked against similar local schools.
 - Our Anti-Bullying Policy has been updated to reflect improvements to our expectations and procedures for reporting, monitoring and tracking impact. The policy can be found [here](#). The update process has what we describe as ‘Check in’, ‘Check up’ and ‘Check out’ i.e. three distinct phases ensuring that students also have support and a follow-up conversation with staff every time an issue is reported.
- raising awareness to students about the difference between unkind behaviour and bullying, and how to report issues’.
- updating all staff duty arrangements around the school to support calm transitions
- additional staff training on identifying and reporting bullying
- emphasis on creating a culture of ‘belonging’ and ‘buy-in’
- assemblies and other sessions with a clear focus on culture building, including British Values, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Safeguarding

In the last six months, our safeguarding team have been completely retrained. Nicola Kamara has joined us from the North School in Ashford as our lead DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). All of the teaching members of the Senior Leadership Team have been trained to DSL level, as have all of the Heads of Year. Amongst the other improvements made are:

- clear signposting of our DSL staff to community members through posters and assemblies (an example of this can be found [here](#))
- the addition of a ‘worry box’ reporting system to the school website – click [here](#)
- the completion of a movement to a computer-based safeguarding reporting system
- all staff retrained in safeguarding, prevent and how to report concerns
- ensuring that records are only kept in one place (historic records have been digitised)
- safeguarding case review meetings, the quality of which have been monitored by governors

- the updating of our policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection (these can be reviewed [here](#))

Attendance

Nationally, there are challenges around student attendance since the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. To tackle this we have increased the size of our school attendance team and appointed a new Attendance Manager. Amongst the other steps that we have taken to support student attendance include:

- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy (which can be found [here](#))
- Closer working with Kent County Council's attendance team
- Attendance reminder letters sent home
- Re-integration plans to support students with anxiety or other challenges
- Parental meetings (including at family homes and within school)
- Attendance rewards

Governance

Over the last six months, the frequency of on-site governor monitoring has increased. There has been specific focus on the areas of improvement identified by Ofsted. We have been sure to evidence this, alongside significantly more safeguarding challenge questions in governing body meetings. Safeguarding is a standing item in our governing body meetings (which have increased in frequency) and our governing body have updated their own safeguarding training. We have also recently recruited more parent governors, as we understand the importance of your positive engagement within the school community.

Transition to a Multi-Academy Trust

Our school will transition to joining The Howard Academy Trust in April 2023. It is the Government's expectation that schools should all eventually be part of a strong family of schools, so this change means that we are meeting this aim.

The support available through a trust will mean that staff in The Abbey will be able to benefit from a set of centralised services to support all aspects of school operation and improvement. Members of the wider community should see the benefits of this in due course.

Finally, in the next few days, we plan on running some additional assemblies with students to update them on our school improvement but also to remind them of the systems, procedures and processes that exist in our school for supporting behaviour and safeguarding, along with how they can report things, or escalate should they need to.

I hope that this summary of the work that we have completed is useful for you all, and goes some way to provide confidence in the seriousness with which we take our improvement. Should you desire a meeting to talk to senior staff about this school improvement work and issues with your own child then please contact headteacher@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk and we will arrange this.

Have a great start to the New Year



Dr Rowland Speller
Headteacher