

16 November 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you will be aware, Hellesdon High School was visited by an Ofsted inspection team, early into this academic year, on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

Please find attached the report in which four of the five areas inspected have been recognised as Good by Ofsted.

We are delighted that Quality of Education, Personal Development, Leadership and our Sixth Form have all been rated as Good. However we are naturally disappointed that Behaviour and Attitudes was identified by inspectors as an area of development.

Whilst you will naturally be concerned with the area which requires improvement, the report gives us a lot to be proud of and it's important we focus on the many positives inspectors found our students experience in school every day.

Inspectors found that students feel safe in our school and know they have a trusted adult they can talk to, confident in the knowledge that we take their concerns seriously and help them. They also stated that our arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Our Quality of Education received praise with inspectors highlighting that our students benefit from an ambitious and well-designed curriculum, our students enjoy their learning, and they are well supported and appreciate the support they receive. Inspectors also said teachers confidently deliver information clearly and regularly check what pupils can understand and do.

Whilst the report says some pupils are not achieving as highly as they could due to waiting for others to catch up with their learning, it is something we had acknowledged prior to the inspection and in September we moved from mixed ability classes to sets. We do expect this to improve as students adjust to those changes.

Inspectors have praised the school for accurately identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They said staff are confident in supporting students with SEND to do well and adults within the school are provided with clear plans on how to best help pupils.

Whilst inspectors recognised that school leaders understand how important it is for pupils to be able to read fluently, they did find a minority of pupils lacked the skills needed to read well. Since the inspection we have invested in an assessment programme to provide accurate reading data. This will be used to provide appropriate support to those few pupils who struggle to read more confidently.

Pupil Development has been praised with inspectors highlighting that pupils are explicitly taught how to discuss important issues, how they talk with maturity about British values, and how they display high levels of respect towards other races and religions. Inspectors highlighted the school's commitment to providing students with

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high-quality careers information, education and guidance to ensure they have the knowledge needed to make informed decisions about their future.

We are delighted that Hellesdon Sixth Form has been judged as 'Good'. The report highlights that students at our Sixth Form achieve highly, receiving high-quality education in a warm and welcoming environment. Inspectors praised its high degree of consistency in the delivery of lessons and for providing valuable information which prepares students well for their next steps.

We understand that parents and carers will be concerned with the report's conclusion that behaviours and attitudes within school require improvement. The report says that although many pupils display good attitudes to learning, a minority do not and that disruption to learning is too common. We acknowledge that we have experienced low-level disruption in some of our classrooms, such as calling out, talking over the teacher, not following instructions the first time of asking, distracting others and lack of engagement has fallen below our own high expectations.

Whilst this does relate to a minority of pupils, it is something we had already acknowledged and we have been working hard to put practices in place to ensure high standards of attitudes and behaviour from all pupils, at all times. We came into the new school year with a new leadership team and a clear plan for the future of the school. We had reviewed our school practices and were already implementing changes before the Ofsted inspection.

It is disappointing that the inspection took place four weeks into the start of the new school year, before we had the chance to fully implement our plans and demonstrate the impact our new leadership team is having. The Ofsted team did note this and told us we are on the right path to a good outcome. However, we can only change this with a whole school approach, with all students committing to our school rules of ready, respectful, safe; and with the support of all parents and carers.

We are grateful to all our students and their families who have embraced our new Home School Agreement which requires the school, students and families to commit to a set of expectations in line with the rules of ready, respectful, safe. It is already making a difference to the lives of everyone who works and learns in our school every day. We believe had the inspection been a little later, inspectors would have seen the positive impact of this.

Attendance is taken into consideration when looking at behaviour and attitudes and we do have challenges with attendance. The issue of attendance is complex – it has been widely reported as an issue nationally and it's not unique to Hellesdon High School – and we have implemented a number of new initiatives to improve attendance.

It is very disappointing for all members of staff that, despite being judged 'Good' in four out of the five areas, the overall effectiveness of the school has been graded as Requires Improvement. We are sure, after highlighting the positive outcomes from the inspection, you will share our disappointment to have missed out on an overall 'Good' outcome. However, under the current Ofsted framework, the lowest rating given for any of the inspection areas is used as the overall rating.

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# Hellesdon High School & Sixth Form Centre

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What is reassuring is that we know from conversations with inspectors that we are heading in the right direction. We have requested a monitoring visit as we believe that, under the new leadership team, inspectors will see our improvement plan is efficient and effective. If we continue to work together and support our school, we are confident we can continue to build a school community which not only reflects our efforts, but is one we can be proud of.

You can find further information about the Ofsted inspection and our plans going forward on our website. If you do have any immediate questions or concerns, please contact Sharon Bailey, Principals PA on 01603 424711 or via email [principal@hellesdonhigh.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:principal@hellesdonhigh.norfolk.sch.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Earl & Mr T Rolfe  
Principals

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