

29 November 2019

Dear Parent / Carer

RE: Ofsted Inspection Outcome

As you will be aware, before October half term, The Farnley Academy was inspected by Ofsted. Owing to strict rules surrounding the confidentiality of Inspection outcomes, today is the first time that I have been able to talk to our school community about the outcome.

The Inspection of The Farnley Academy was undertaken following a complaint being made to Ofsted from the Leeds Local Authority. The complaint accused The Farnley Academy of 'off-rolling' children to The Stephen Longfellow Academy (TSLA). For the purposes of clarity, 'off-rolling' is the practice of removing a child from the roll of a school for the benefit of the school and not the child. It is important for me to make clear at this point that, during their three days of Inspection activity, Ofsted found no evidence of 'off-rolling' taking place within our academy. We know this because inspectors told us this in their verbal feedback to us, and because the new Ofsted framework makes clear that, *'when an inspection finds evidence of off-rolling taking place inspectors should always address this in the inspection report'*. We continue to be clear, as we were with Ofsted, that any child who transferred to TSLA did so because it supported and improved their individual life chances. We are very proud of the achievements that these students went on to secure as a result of the exceptional support they received at TSLA.

The outcome of our Inspection is as follows:

Quality of Education: Good

Behaviour & Attitudes: Requires Improvement

Personal Development: Outstanding

Leadership & Management: Requires Improvement

Overall: Requires Improvement

Anyone who spends time at The Farnley Academy knows it is a brilliant school which has, for many years, achieved amazing things for its pupils and its community. It may therefore be difficult for you, as it was for us at first, to fully understand how the above judgements were reached. As you will see within the report, Ofsted are highly complementary about the work that takes place with the students who are on our main school site. They comment how our school is "...calm and well-organised", how students "...behave well and are keen to succeed" and how "pupils feel safe and are confident staff will support them and help with any concerns". In addition, Ofsted are clear that our work to educate and develop young people is of the very highest level. Ofsted commented that "Pupils personal development is promoted exceptionally well", that "Pupils have plenty of opportunities to express their own opinions" and that "Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They do not shy away from expecting pupils to achieve as much as possible". This assessment is of course backed up by our continuously improving academic

performance which this year saw us achieve our best ever GCSE results, placing our academy in the top 5% of schools in the country.

Ofsted were less complimentary, however, about our work with the most challenging small minority of students who were in some cases significantly disrupting the learning of others in the academy, and we accept their assessment. Our work with these students whilst thorough and driven by the highest level of integrity was not well documented. Ofsted were therefore not able to review the support that had been put in place and see why the decision was made to move some of these students into alternative provision. This is a failing on our part and for this we apologise.

I would seek to reassure all of our community that whilst the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection was not what any of us had hoped it would be, day in, day out, your child continues to receive the very highest level of education and guidance at The Farnley Academy. This is a view not only held by me as Principal but also by our staff and students. During our Inspection, hundreds of our students were spoken to by Ofsted Inspectors and their overwhelming view was that they "...feel safe and well cared for...", that "...bullying is rare" and that overall The Farnley Academy "... is a great place to be." We are immensely proud of our students for the way that they conducted themselves throughout our Inspection.

The outcome of the Inspection will lead to no visible change to the school and the way that it functions. In the background, however, we will be continuing our work to ensure that all students, including those who are hardest to reach, achieve the best possible outcomes. We now have approximately 30 months until our next Inspection. Rest assured that during this time we will leave no stone unturned in our determination to have The Farnley Academy returned to its Outstanding status; a status which is of such great importance to our pupils, our families and our wider community.

For a full copy of our Inspection report, please see our academy website.

Yours faithfully



Chris Stokes
Principal