



*'We value the power of education to change lives.'*

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017

Dear Parents and Students,

Please find on the reverse of this letter a link to our Ofsted report informing you of the outcome of our recent Ofsted inspection. We are pleased the Ofsted team recognised many of the school's strengths. They agreed with our own evaluation of ourselves as a **'Good'** school with a flourishing Sixth Form that is a *strength of the school*. They note the extremely positive feedback from parents and students about the school. I am delighted with the outcome on behalf of my colleagues and our students. School staff have worked successfully in the last 3 years to move the school forward in the face of its unfair per-pupil funding compared to many other schools and with the added workload challenge arising from the government's implementation of reformed GCSEs and A Levels. I congratulate and celebrate my colleagues and students' achievements identified in this Report.

### **Leadership and Management: Good**

Ofsted note that current school leaders have *made significant strategic differences to the school and have created a culture of respect that pervades the school. Low expectations are not tolerated. Teachers receive high-quality professional development and the systems for managing the performance of staff are stringent. Middle leaders are improving the curriculum in their subjects, the systems for checking pupils' progress have been improved and Governors have worked with leaders to ensure improvements in staffing and outcomes have taken place. Governance is strong and the Governor link with middle leaders has been pivotal in some of the strategically positive changes.*

### **Teaching and Learning, Outcomes for Students: Good**

Ofsted judged that *better learning is taking place. All pupils know how well they are doing and can articulate this clearly. This has improved the well-being and confidence of pupils. Teachers' questioning usually is skilful and used to probe pupils' knowledge and they use a range of strategies to secure pupils' engagement in their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. In the best lessons, this is used well to develop pupils' understanding. The school's new marking and feedback policy supports pupils in making good progress. At GCSE examination outcomes for students continue to be 'Good' according to Ofsted, because over time pupils have achieved in line with other pupils nationally from similar starting points. In two key areas, student outcomes have improved since the last inspection, Ofsted noted. The differences between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school are diminishing. In addition, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress.*

### **Behaviour, Welfare and Attendance: Good**

Staff use the system for rewards and sanctions consistently, manage behaviour effectively and as a result, behaviour in and around school is good whilst pupils are competitive to be the best with rewards. Pupils are ready to learn and pay attention to teachers. They are courteous to each other, adults and visitors. Attendance has improved since the last inspection because the behaviour management team and the achievement leads have worked hard to improve attendance and staff at the Jubilee Centre support the most vulnerable pupils who value the nurture they receive, and return quickly to mainstream school. In relation to pastoral care highly skilled staff care for pupils with sensitivity, the designated safeguarding leads are vigilant in their oversight of any child protection issues and staff work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support vulnerable pupils.

### **Students' Personal Development: Good and a particular 'strength of the school'**

*The curriculum contributes well to pupils' . . . physical, mental and personal well-being, they work well together in practical subjects, enjoy competitive sports and understand the benefit of a team ethos. Students spoke confidently about the intolerance of bullying behaviours at the school and welcome the efficient way that staff deal with any incidents. Pupils are self-aware. They are articulate and can explain their learning. They understand fundamental British values. They benefit from an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, which support sporting prowess and cultural experiences including cultural links to European countries and Japan. Pupils' learning about safety, fundamental British values, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects is a strength of the school. This is because they are given many occasions to appreciate democracy, equality of opportunities and respect for law and order and there are proactive practices to break down stereotypical perceptions while there are several opportunities for pupils to be charitable. They thrive on this.*

### **The Sixth Form: Good and a particular strength of the school.**

Our Sixth Form was justly recognised as *a strength of the school* that continues to improve. Contributing to this judgement were several years of A Level and BTEC Level 3 results in many subjects that are consistently among some of the best in England and Wales. Our enviable record of securing students' admission to Russell Group and Oxbridge universities combines with an enrichment programme including one-to-one academic support, university online courses, Core Mathematics, scuba diving, sailing, Leadership Awards, and much more. The level of personal support for Sixth Form students was highly praised by students and parents. Ofsted noted *leaders of the Sixth Form have high expectations, bespoke study programmes are in place for each learner and their needs, students are keen to attend and learn, and they embrace academic opportunities. There is a focus on critical thinking and problem solving with Sixth-Form teaching, to which students respond well and gain high outcomes as a result. Students are progressing well in the Sixth Form and the majority of students remain in education post-18. Of these, many go to the top third of higher education institutes including Russell Group universities and a few students each year gain admission to Oxbridge. Students achieve well and Highcliffe Sixth Form provides a good platform for future opportunities in employment, education and training. The enrichment programme enhances their learning and the Sixth Form is a strength of the school.* The report omits specific reference to our Extended Project Qualification students who regularly achieve results around the top 10% nationally, as do our A Level Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computing and Further Maths students, alongside our students on the different Art and Design courses or in Physical Education, Music, Acting or Languages.

### **Future Priorities**

Ofsted agreed with our own self-evaluation in relation to future areas for development, which are detailed in the report also, around ensuring best practice is adopted at all times in teaching and in assessment to benefit all students, and these are key features of our current development plan. This contributed to Ofsted's positive view that *the Governing Body holds school leaders to account, they are thorough in their monitoring of the school leadership team and challenge senior leaders effectively.*

Read the Full Report by clicking here. <http://highcliffe.school/I/OfstedFullReport17>

Yours sincerely,



**Patrick Earnshaw**  
Headteacher