

July 2015

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have now received the final report on the Ofsted inspection which took place on 10 – 11 June 2015. We are delighted that Ofsted judged us to be a Good school. Ours is an exciting new school, it has been a phenomenal achievement to go from a standing start, with no premises, no teachers and no tangible reality to the position where in just 22 months we are on a par with every established Good school in the country. Many areas of good and outstanding practice are highlighted by the inspectors, and the report notes that this is a school where our determination 'to ensure that the quality of pupils' education is the key priority' is matched by the creation of 'a strong and positive ethos in the school which permeates all aspects'.

Strong Leadership and a Nurturing Ethos

We are very pleased that the Inspectors recognise 'the school benefits from several strong senior and middle leaders. These leaders are highly committed and are effectively raising standards across the school'. The Inspection team were also enormously impressed with the quality of relationships between pupils and staff, especially how 'pupils are proud of their school', and, 'feel well supported and know that there is always someone there to help if they need it'. A fundamental part of our ethos is to nurture every child and the Inspectors found that to be the case wherever they looked, in pupil behaviour, in their respect and politeness towards adults and one another, and also from pupil comments about the School, including when secondary pupils reported 'that there is little bullying at the school and that when it occurs teachers deal with it swiftly and effectively'. This is something we are very proud of, as we have worked hard to promote positive behaviour.

Challenging and Inspirational Teaching

It is also part of our core values to challenge and inspire children. Informally, the Inspectors told us that the clubs they visited were some of the best they'd ever seen at a school, with the report noting how the pupils 'thoroughly enjoy them'. The tremendous enthusiasm of our teachers in both Primary and Secondary phases, their skill in questioning and ability to encourage pupils to 'think for themselves and to share ideas with others' is praised by both Inspectors and pupils. The articulacy of our pupils and their 'keenness to learn in lessons' impressed the Inspectors throughout their visit, and was seen as a natural consequence of challenging and inspirational teaching.

Praise for English, Maths, SEN and Art

Particular praise is given to teaching in English and Maths, which are also seen as being 'very well led'. This is a very pleasing validation of our commitment to focus on pupil mastery in these core subjects. Inspectors agreed that all pupils make expected progress and attain well in English and Maths, and in secondary 'the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is higher than average'. Teaching of Art was also seen as a strength of the school, as was leadership of and provision for children with Special Educational Needs, which drew special praise for being 'exceptional because it is led with rigour, passion and determination'.

Areas for Improvement and Next Steps

Ofsted identify some areas as reasons why this is not yet an outstanding school; these are the progress of some pupils and the monitoring of this in Primary, the consistency of effective feedback from some teachers, and the need to bring all leadership, by teachers and Governors, up to the strong standards of the best we already have in place. We are pleased that the inspection team recognise we have tremendous capacity to improve in these areas, given that we already have several strong leaders in the school who model excellent practice and provide very effective training and development; this will be extended to leadership training next year. Inspectors also recognised that the plans in place to develop our feedback strategy by Mrs Williams are highly likely to succeed given that she already 'has created a rigorous programme of training and development for teachers'. Ofsted have noted that the one class in Primary where progress and monitoring have not been as strong as elsewhere, Year 4, will be a focus for us next year, with a new teacher appointed for that class and the excellent monitoring practice from secondary and the rest of the primary phase being employed with as much rigour throughout the school. This will be complemented by extending the links we have with other outstanding schools to develop excellence at CFS, and build on those links Ofsted already recognise we have.

There will be a meeting for all parents of current Year 4 pupils at the start of the term in September 2015 to meet with our new teacher Miss Wade, Ms Doyle and myself to answer any questions you may have and to discuss our plans for Year 5. Please do contact Ms Doyle or myself via email with any questions you have prior to this, or which you'd like to raise at the meeting.

A copy of the full Ofsted report has been emailed to you, and hard copies are available on request from the School Office. A summary of the report is attached to this letter.

We greatly value the contribution you have made as parents to the success of the school and this inspection; it is your desire and vision for a different type of education which is our reason to be. I don't think the Inspectors had seen such an overwhelmingly positive response to their parent questionnaire before, which is why they comment on how 'parents are hugely supportive of the school'. We hope you will continue to bring the same enthusiasm and support as together we continue on our journey from Good to Outstanding, because that's where we intend to be the next time Ofsted visit. Should you have any questions about the inspection judgements, or our future plans, please feel free to contact me or arrange an appointment.

Yours,



Guy Martyn
Principal

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Summary extracts from the Ofsted Report

Overall effectiveness – ‘this is a good school’

Leadership and management – is good

- Leaders have created a strong and positive ethos in the school which permeates all aspects of their work ... several strong leaders are in place in the senior and middle leadership teams, for example in the leadership of English
- The Principal has managed the creation of a new school, with the strong support of the governing body, with resilience ... he is determined to ensure that the quality of pupils’ education is the key priority
- The Deputy Principal has created a rigorous programme of training and development for teachers
- The school’s positive behaviour management system is very effective because it is well-led and managed. Pupils are all clear about the standards expected of them
- The coordination of support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is exceptional because it is led with rigour, passion and determination
- There is a very good range of activities every afternoon. Pupils, who all attend at least two sessions a week, thoroughly enjoy them

Behaviour and safety – are good

- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They get on well together and respect each other’s differences
- Secondary pupils report that there is little bullying at the school and that when it occurs teachers deal with it swiftly and effectively
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the positive relationships they have with teachers. They feel well supported and know that there is always someone there to help if they need it.
- Pupils’ attendance is good, and better than the national average. All groups of pupils attend well. This is because the school tracks pupils’ absence robustly.

The quality of teaching – is good

- Teachers at Chichester Free School are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Secondary pupils comment that they enjoy lessons because of the teachers’ enthusiasm
- In the best lessons, activities are well planned to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to share ideas with others. This helps them to learn well.
- Pupils make good use of their tablet computers in the secondary phase
- Teachers question pupils well to develop their deeper understanding of topics. Pupils’ responses are often keen and articulate and demonstrate good knowledge and understanding.
- English and mathematics are very well led, and the teaching in these subjects is good



Achievement - is good

- In Reception a higher proportion of children than nationally achieved a good level of development
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 all make expected progress in English and mathematics ... This is a higher proportion than is the case nationally
- At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress and attain well in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is higher than average. More-able pupils achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the exceptional leadership of this area

The early years provision – is good

- The 'Forest School' provision used by the school is a rich and valuable experience for children in the early years
- The early years leader has a good understanding of best practice in this phase and this is now being disseminated effectively so that all children benefit from good teaching.