

25th April 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians

I am delighted to attach a link to our website, from which can be downloaded our Independent Schools Inspectorate Report, which was conducted from March 6th-8th in our school. The report is overwhelmingly positive in content and tone, and despite being an objective, evidence-based document, is a celebratory endorsement of your children and the school which they attend.

Although the link to the report is found below, the remainder of this letter contains an overview of the report, which places it in context, so please read the letter first.

For ease of access, the link is here:

<http://www.readschool.co.uk/>

On the front page, you should see the link to download the full report, which is a PDF file.

I will briefly explain what you are about to read within this letter. Over the course of the three days, the school essentially underwent two separate inspections. These were:

- A Focused Compliance Inspection;
- An Education Quality Inspection (EQI), comprised of the academic and the pastoral.

The Focused Compliance Inspection

The compliance inspection looks at the requirements of the statutory framework for education and decides whether the school is meeting expectations. This is a binary inspection and is therefore graded as a pass or a fail. Without this initial stage being passed, inspectors cannot progress to carry out the second stage of the inspection: The Education Quality Inspection. Schools which do not pass compliance are put into suspended membership of the Heads' Association and thereafter trigger an additional inspection at a later date.

Inspectors review in detail paperwork, logs, registers, communications, complaints and many other records; they also privately interview staff, parents and pupils. They also review the parent and pupil questionnaires which many of you carried out to see if there are trends which need to be investigated. During this inspection, the Boarding House was also inspected, to ensure that it too was compliant with the National Minimum Standards (NMS). The following criteria are inspected:

- Quality of Education provided – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;
- Welfare, health and safety of pupils – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils (SMSC) – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;
- Premises of and accommodation at schools – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;
- Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;
- Provision of information – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;

- Manner in which complaints are handled – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;
- Quality of leadership in and management of schools – Judgement - The Read School MET these requirements;

We were obviously delighted having **met all of the statutory requirements**, as no further action was then required. A stumbling block for some schools was surmounted and we could proceed to the next phase of the inspection.

The Educational Quality Inspection

The Educational Quality Inspection is based on the achievement of the students, which divides into two further areas: Academic Development and Personal Development. As the report outlines, the grade descriptors have changes since we were last inspected, with the criteria being, Excellent, Good, Sound and Unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the school has **improved** since that last good inspection in 2012.

For a non-selective school such as ourselves achieving excellent for academic achievement with a diverse range of abilities becomes more challenging. That notwithstanding, we achieved GOOD in relation to academic development and EXCELLENT with regard to pastoral care. We were delighted that inspectors found that “all groups of pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, achieve well relative to their starting points.” Inspectors also noticed that we have a number of “notable individual successes at regional and at national levels” in relation to academic and sporting prowess. It is testament to the ethos of Read and the positive attitude to learning that the vast majority of our pupils possess when it was observed that “pupils’ attitudes to learning are positive, they are productive in individual work and collaborate well when given the opportunity.” This really does chime with what we believe our school to be all about: an extended family, a community of people who work exceedingly well collaboratively, as well as striving for personal triumph.

We are, of course even more excited about the **best possible** judgment for the Personal Development of pupils, which was graded as EXCELLENT. We must remember that inspectors use as their primary source for these judgments interviews with your sons and daughters themselves, so that when we receive such a grading, it is as much about their sterling collective character as it is about us as a school community. “Pupils display high levels of self-confidence, self-understanding and maturity for their age”, is a heart-warming judgment which we feel is reflected in the multifarious ways in which our pupils get chance to undertake external pursuits such as the Combined Cadet Force, Duke of Edinburgh, and other educational visits, which all allow for independent development of the self, with a robust and resourceful personality. The desire for our pupils to put back into the wider society is reflected in the judgment, “pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community, exemplified by the numerous charitable initiatives promoted by the school community.” These factors and more contribute to the widely held opinion from local business and other educational establishments that Read pupils are self-possessed individuals, usually confident at standing up and giving talks, or taking part in activities which others might balk at.

However, all inspection reports file recommendations, and of course there always aspects which we can improve upon, or take to the next level. It is telling that there is only one

recommendation for Read School, and it is this: pupils should be “enabled to take leadership with their learning, developing high-order thinking and independence of thought to achieve higher levels of progress.” In consultation with a voluntary parental body, after we conducted our own survey prior to the inspection one, we discussed some of these same features. As parents and teachers alike, we have already begun to brainstorm and implement ideas to take the process of some of these higher-order thinking skills and get them into the classroom. There will be a further process of consultation which will result in some new initiatives and/or teaching methods being introduced.

In conclusion, I would just like to add that we have always known that Read is a special place, with indefinable qualities which are often expressed at the coming together of the school for performances, talent shows and other community gatherings, but it is hugely edifying to have that officially recognised by external visitors, tasked to make objective judgments about the school and to offer such positive and useful feedback to our community. Congratulations to all of the students and staff for their hard work and achievements. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you, the parent body, for your ongoing input and support, it is sincerely valued. We value our partnership and are happy that we have all been part of the success story and ongoing journey that this report describes.

Best regards

Mark Voisey

Head.