



Dear parents and carers,

As you will be aware, Ofsted carried out a routine inspection at the academy on 12 and 13 March 2019. We have now received the final report and are able to inform you of the outcome.

The inspectors identified a number of areas of strength, for which we can rightly be proud of, however, overall the academy has been judged to require improvement. Whilst this falls short of our own high expectations, I am confident that we are already taking significant steps to ensure where improvements are needed, that the progress required will be swift. This letter summarises the key themes and actions we are taking.

Leadership and management

- Our leadership is described as *'passionate'* in ensuring the academy *'is truly inclusive and meets the needs of the community.'* Inspectors found that we *'know the community the school serves extremely well'* and that *'every effort is taken' to involve parents in the life of the school.'* We recognise that more must be done to further this aim and we are fully committed to working hard with parents to achieve this.

Ensuring the progress of students

- Our curriculum provides a *'wealth of opportunity to study across a range of subjects'* and students *'make strong progress within the 'open curriculum', and 'great thought is taken'* to ensure students study *'appropriate qualifications'*. Whilst the progress of our students is *'beginning to improve'* we accept that we must drive this at a greater pace – something we are deeply committed to achieving.
- Not all of our students start their life in secondary education at the expected levels required to progress alongside their peers, particularly in reading and maths. We were pleased that Ofsted recognised the steps we have taken through our Accelerate Learning Centre and across the academy to deliver *'individualised and high-quality support'* and which is *'imaginative, creative and focused.'* Ofsted also acknowledged the success of our transition programme from key stage 2 to 3, noting that *'pupils settle well in to their new school'.*

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- Our provision for extra-curricular, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was highlighted as a strength – our students *'gain rich opportunities to be prepared well for life'* and said they *'valued the many opportunities they had to develop their leadership skills'*, which made students *'feel proud of their school.'*

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THE HOLGATE ACADEMY

- Our *'arrangements for safeguarding are effective'* and students are *'taught well how to keep themselves safe within school and outside of school.'* Students described that *'there were many members of staff that they could turn to if they had a problem or needed help.'*
- Ofsted found *'the vast majority of pupils are polite and conduct themselves in a positive manner.'* Where student behaviour falls short of our expectations, firm steps will be taken to ensure high standards are consistently achieved throughout the academy. Any kind of disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Teaching and learning

- Our students *'are known well by their teachers'* and *'many extensive efforts are taken to ensure a positive learning climate.'* We recognise that aspirations for all students must be equally ambitious and we are empowering our teachers to robustly embed policies and practice. We will raise the bar for our expectations of students. They will be appropriately challenged and tasked to foster greater engagement and pride in their work. Our passion for creating a nurturing and inclusive environment will remain unchanged.
- Attendance is critical to a student's progress and we take every effort to work with our parents to ensure our students benefit from the full programme of teaching and learning required to progress. Ofsted found that attendance was *'improving at key stage 3, and good within sixth form.'* Our commitment to students is unwavering and year 11 students will further benefit from an extensive programme of revision support over the Easter holidays and during the exam period.

Post 16 programmes

- Our post 16 provision was judged to be 'Good'. The *'leadership of the sixth form is strong. Leaders are highly ambitious and focused to absolutely make sure that students achieve well.'* Students said *'they enjoyed their studies'* and that *'they were well supported in both their academic studies and personal development.'* We are proud to offer *'personalised study programmes'* which are supported by *'expert'* teaching to ensure *'students' progress well.'*

We are confident that we know where processes must be sharpened in order to drive a rapid return to a 'Good' judgement by the next inspection. To this end, the Trust has commissioned an academy transformation plan to ensure the focus and development of the academy, working alongside our governance team. The success of the academy is built on the strength of our work with you and our students. If you would like to discuss any aspects of the Ofsted inspection, I would be happy to meet and discuss them. The full Ofsted report is available to view on our academy website (www.holgate-ac.org.uk/our-academy/ofsted-reports) or should you require a hardcopy, please request one from reception.

Yours faithfully,

Ms S Forsey, Principal

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