

Friday, 10th December 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Ofsted Section 5 Inspection Report

As you know, Pimlico Academy was inspected by Ofsted on 5th and 6th October 2021 under the Education Inspection Framework. I am writing to inform you that Ofsted have judged the academy to be Good with Outstanding features.

I am pleased that the inspectors agree that:

- the focus of the academy and its leaders is always on offering students the highest quality of education. The report notes that *“becoming better in a subject is taken very seriously by staff and pupils at Pimlico. Leaders give a lot of time and attention to planning what pupils must learn and in which order”*. As well as recognising the careful sequencing of our curriculum, it also notes Trustees have *“commendably ambitious curriculum aims”*, aims which are shared by all of us at the academy. In addition, the report notes the Trustees’ ambition *“is to provide pupils with the ‘best that has been thought and said’”*. For example, our text choices are selected *“with the aim of building pupils’ cultural capital”*. The inspectors saw in lessons pupils who *“are keen to show what they have remembered from previous learning”*, which is a result of our well thought-through curriculum.

The report goes on: *“The trust’s curriculum leaders support subject leaders to plan the learning programme in great detail. In every subject, teachers benefit from excellent professional development. As a result, staff know what it means to make strong progress in their subject and how to assess this”*.

Furthermore, that *“leaders have mapped out the sequence in which pupils need to learn knowledge, including the ‘core knowledge’ that teachers need to emphasise the most. Teaching typically revisits this knowledge regularly so that pupils can remember it. Consequently, most pupils recall key ideas and knowledge fluently in most aspects of the curriculum. In the sixth form, curriculum leaders have developed well-organised plans for how their subjects are taught. Clear links are made to prior learning. This helps students to reinforce and develop their knowledge. Teaching helps students to grasp more difficult concepts and appreciate the scope of each subject. Over time, students develop a rich knowledge of their subjects. This prepares them exceptionally well for life beyond school”*.

The education we offer at Pimlico Academy is the birth-right of all our students and we are passionate about ensuring their continuing access to it.

- the Personal Development of our students is Outstanding. The Education Enrichment programme, which gives pupils *“access to a remarkable range of high-quality opportunities outside of lessons”*, is a clear strength of our academy. This is *“aim[ed] at develop[ing] pupils’ physical and mental well-being as well as academic interests”*. The inspectors highlighted our *“clubs to deepen pupils’ subject knowledge alongside activities to promote pupils’ talents in art, music, sport and drama”*.

The breadth of the Education Enrichment offer at Pimlico Academy is seriously impressive and a significant contributing factor to the successful way we support students’ personal, emotional and physical wellbeing.

- our sixth form is outstanding, delivering teaching which allows students *“to grasp more difficult concepts “and “to develop a rich knowledge of their subjects”*. This provision *“prepares them exceptionally well for life beyond school”* and students in the sixth form *“receive excellent advice and guidance which enables them to make the best choices for higher education”*.

The sixth form at Pimlico Academy gives students access to a rich and rewarding education which results in their making successful applications to a wide range of higher education providers, most of them Russell Group universities including Oxford and Cambridge.

- we focus on the personal, social, emotional, physical education and well-being of all students. We are delighted that our new Personal and Social Education curriculum in Year 7 has been commended in the report which describes *"the provision for promoting pupils' personal development is of a high quality"* and that *"concepts such as consent in the context of personal relationships and democracy have been well thought through"*. The inspectors have noted that *"leaders have ensured that the personal, social, health and economic education programme responds to all pupils' needs. The programme"*, the report goes on, *"develops pupils' awareness of issues to do with equality and diversity"*.

Importantly, too, the report notes the work of the Inclusion department at the academy and especially its work *"with external agencies and families to ensure that the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are typically understood and catered for"*.

This is a community with diversity running through its DNA and we are committed to it continuing to be a place where all can flourish.

- our safeguarding arrangements are effective and we have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination. Where incidents of this nature are reported, leaders *"act effectively to tackle this type of behaviour"*. This, in turn, *"helps pupils to feel safe in school"*. The report draws particular attention to safeguarding practices at the academy, praising the fact that *"leaders ensure that staff are well-trained in keeping pupils safe"*. It notes that *"staff are vigilant in looking for signs that pupils may be at risk of harm"*. It goes on that *"recording of concerns is appropriate and precise"* and that leaders *"work well with external agencies to access support for pupils who need extra help"*.

Safeguarding students and equipping them with the tools to healthily and successfully navigate the challenges of life in the twenty-first century will always be a priority for us.

It is important to view this judgement in the context that Ofsted has, as has been widely reported, committed to halving the number of schools graded Outstanding. The framework that Ofsted now uses to inspect schools is far more rigorous than that used previously. Chris Russell, Ofsted's National Director of Education, has stated that there is *"no doubt"* that the new outstanding judgement is a *"challenging and exacting judgement to achieve"*. Furthermore, he has stated publicly that *"if, for example, a school that has been judged 'Outstanding' a good many years ago is inspected again and judged to be 'Good'... that doesn't mean that the school has declined in recent years, in fact the opposite can be the case"*.

The report points out that *"trustees and leaders have made significant progress with addressing the areas identified in the previous inspection"*. The ongoing development of the school proceeds, and with continued vigour in the light of this report.

As always, we welcome feedback, both critical and positive, and we receive this report in the same spirit. We will reflect carefully on Ofsted's recommendations and will ensure that these help to shape the academy's ongoing development planning. Indeed, much of the work recommended by the inspection team is already underway.

Covid restrictions and school closures have disproportionately affected young people and had a hugely disruptive impact on their education. We remain committed to ensuring that we do everything in our power to help them catch up and to set them up for success during their time with us and in their lives beyond. That is our core business: the delivery of an education that transforms and empowers, a vision so clearly expressed in our school motto.

With all best wishes,



Tony Oulton, Acting Principal