

Post Ofsted Parents Meeting 2nd April 2014

Opening statement/remarks – Colin Taylor

Thank you for coming this evening, taking the time to find out more and ask questions following the inspection. You have now had the opportunity to read my letter to you, the Ofsted report and the summary improvement plan and start to digest the information you have been given. Tonight is an opportunity for us to be open with our perspectives on the report but more importantly move positively into the future. It has been a difficult 8 weeks not being able to share the report with you.

I would like to start by re-iterating our congratulations and thanks to all of our students for the way in which they conducted themselves during the inspection. Not only did the inspectors tell us that they had seen virtually no examples of bad behaviour in or out of lessons, but they were also full of praise for the pride shown in their school by the young people that they met.

I would also like to thank parents who responded to the online survey. As I commented 89% of you said you would recommend the school to others and high degrees of satisfaction were evident from the answers to the other questions. As the inspectors told us – the results of the parent survey were very positive. I am therefore sure you were very surprised by the very disappointing outcome and want answers to key questions related to the report. We will try and provide these this evening where we can.

All schools can make improvements and we are no exception, although our issues at this time are more significant than other schools. The improvements we need to make are clearly set out in the action points and the improvement plans that are being written to directly address these. These are the most important documents and you will hear more about these this evening. We have already made a start in putting necessary actions in place.

The inspectors noted that there are inconsistencies and inadequacies across subject areas and students do not make the progress they should. They therefore underachieve at KS4. We recognise the areas where we clearly need to do a lot better.

We were told we were not a school causing concern after our 2012 results. The GCSE results in 2013 were just not good enough and the inspectors have based a number of the judgements on achievement on these and took little notice of the work more widely across the College. We knew and accepted that the College and the students in Year 11 last year had significantly under-performed and we had concerns ourselves as to the way Ofsted would judge us as soon as we received the results last August. These results were the trigger for the inspection.

The inspectors start point for comparisons were the results in 2010 when we had our best ever GCSE results. Measured between then and 2013 there was a significant drop with fluctuating results in between, related to changes in exams and the standards now required. We had put in place actions that the inspectors acknowledged were the right ones but they had not yet had the time to make a difference when we were inspected. We also commissioned a two day external review by an accredited Ofsted inspector as part of our commitment to seek ways of improving. Unfortunately the full inspection happened very shortly after he had visited and we had not had the time to instigate further actions based upon his report.

The latest Ofsted framework is a much more rigorous one. Progress is a key issue. Ofsted inspection outcomes under the new framework are predominantly determined by the achievement grade. If achievement is inadequate then everything else cannot be anything other than inadequate – in our case teaching, leadership and management. In the draft report our behaviour grade was a 2 (Good) and the inspection team were unanimous about

that and they wanted it to remain as good. However, the final report has had this moderated down to 3 (Requires Improvement) as a result of the safeguarding issue. This related to members of our cleaning team who work in the evenings and do not have interaction with students but they were on our SCR and had not had the appropriate DBS checks undertaken. This was an administrative mistake and implies nothing about the integrity of the individuals. Subsequent checks have returned clear results. As the report states the safeguarding issue was resolved to the satisfaction of the team before they completed their visit. I can reassure you that no teacher or any other member of staff will start working at the College in the future without the appropriate checks having been completed.

At our last inspection in 2011 we were judged as good. Many who know the College in more depth would say that today it is actually a better school in many ways than in 2011. Certainly results from parent surveys are even better now than they were in 2011. As a result, and as many of you have commented, the final report does not reflect the wealth of opportunity that the school continues to offer through the wide variety of trips, activities, clubs and other successes that cannot be measured as easily as GCSE results. From the feedback comments we have had so far parents are overwhelmingly supportive and we are very grateful for taking the time to contact us. These messages are well received and valued by staff.

You can rest assured that none of us at Oakmeeds have had our confidence and belief in our students undermined by this outcome. Oakmeeds has always been known for the quality of care, guidance and support provided to the students. However, students and their achievement has to be the number one priority and we have to be more ambitious for them. We are very confident students will achieve well this summer and are working very hard towards their GCSE examinations. Our forecast is currently for much better results than last year and in line with previous best levels. We know that the staff will continue to provide a wealth of opportunities for the students and help them grow into confident young people who will succeed in life. With the support being provided we will make the changes required and return to our previous "good" Ofsted rating as soon as possible.

Nigel Bloodworth – Local Authority (LA)

Ofsted started in 1990s to inspect schools, and changed criteria in 2013. Schools around the county are struggling to maintain previous judgements. Ofsted inspect on a 3-5 year cycle however Oakmeeds' poor exam results prompted an earlier inspection. The inspections are a snapshot of the school taken over 2 days. They start by looking at a data pack called Raise, parents' views, the last Ofsted report and then arrive with a hypothesis. They look at 4 areas,

- Achievement of Pupils
- Quality of Teaching
- Leadership and Management
- Behaviour and Safety of Pupils

with Achievement of Pupils being the determining factor. Once decided that achievement/progress is not good enough, all results went from there. The LA was not surprised by the decision as they had looked at the results and were concerned. The LA does not believe that the school is inadequate, but it does need to improve.

Ofsted must write their reports in a certain way to reflect their decisions:

- Outstanding – No critical comments
- Inadequate – No positive comments

With regard to the Safeguarding aspect of the report, a week or so before the inspection, the school discovered administration problems with safeguarding. They acted quickly to rectify this problem which was largely a paperwork issue. The school carried out a risk assessment and the students were not deemed to be at risk. When Ofsted arrived, they were informed of the problems and checked very carefully – if they had thought the safeguarding to be inadequate, they would have walked straight out and not carried out an inspection. By the

end of the inspection, the safeguarding issue was resolved to their satisfaction. The LA County Safeguarding Officer has subsequently visited the school and is reassured by her findings.

What happens next:

- School to produce an action plan
- LA to produce a support plan to ensure that the school improves rapidly, part of the action plan is that the LA have asked Millais (an outstanding teaching school with an outstanding Headteacher, Leon Nettley) to provide support and guidance.

Leon Nettley explained that Millais are a national teaching school appointed by the Department for Education (DfE) to lead support for schools in the area and provide expertise in areas which need support.

Nigel Bloodworth explained that Leon will be spending one day a week at Oakmeeds to help implement the action plan and provide support along with other members of his staff to our teachers. The LA will monitor the process by sending in teams of people to check improvements against the action plan.

Nigel explained that there would be regular visits from HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) to review the action plan against progress. The first visit will take place in 4/6 weeks' time then subsequent visits termly. The HMI will publish reports on all visits so parents can see progress. If they judge progress to be inadequate after a year, the DfE will look at other options included turning Oakmeeds into a Sponsored Academy.

David Fry – Chair of Governing Body (GB)

Admitted that in the past the Governing Body have not been critical enough and relied on the data provided as the school previously have provided good forecasts of result. The GB were shocked by the 2013 results and instigated an external review by a consultant. The GB have also intensified governor interaction with the school, previously they looked at the key areas identified on the yearly plan with the relevant member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) but now there are specific governors linked to each subject with regular visits to subject leaders.

The external review inspector had no prior knowledge of Oakmeeds, he looked at the improvements that had already been implemented and suggested some further measures. He identified that should Ofsted come in, the school could be placed in Special Measures as the improvements had not been in place for long enough to show effectiveness.

The Governors have implemented an external review of governance by Richard Tyndall of the National Governors Association which is being undertaken now.

The academy situation was discussed but it has been decided that at this point it is not a good route at the moment as the work involved will take away focus from the students and improving the College.

David Fry confirmed that he had offered his resignation, which was not accepted, and he was determined to stay and fix the problem.

Colin Taylor

Also considered his position. Last year was a disaster but it was one year. He sees his role is to provide continuity and stability whilst helping the College to make changes and move forward especially with the change in SLT due to Paul Boxall's promotion.

Nigel Bloodworth

The LA also considers changes in the leadership but our view is that the leadership has worked well in the past and have the capacity to do so in the future. We have every confidence that with support they will improve. We will also provide additional expertise to the Governing Body.

Questions received prior to meeting – abbreviated responses

Why did we not see this coming? Slow to react?

- very complex picture in 2013
- big positive spike in results 2010, went down 2011, went up 2012, went down 2013 - but did not get back to the highs of 2010
- 2012 our exam results went up when many schools went down - Oakmeeds not considered a concern at that time as I mentioned earlier.
- exam results 2013 - we believed that results would be over 60% and much better than achieved. Expectations were that up until the last minute the results would be on or near target. No obvious indicators that they were not likely to achieve their targets. Teaching staff downgraded forecasts at the last progress point review. English results very disappointing.
- We had not ignored what the data was telling us – it was not telling us we had a major problem
- students we had to target and focus upon - action taken and intervention put in place
- normally our forecasts are very accurate - but not in 2013
- provided forecast grades to students at every data point but students assumed the forecasts would be achieved irrespective of the effort they made.
- data is provided to GB in the Headteacher's report after progress points

Internal data

- new package introduced this year
- new data manager appointed
- new target setting process to set challenging targets for students
- staff this year erring on the side of caution compared to last year - more realistic
- English, Maths and Science much more assured that the forecasts are reliable
- work has been undertaken on accuracy of teacher assessment
- greater quality control systems are in place and these will be strengthened even more as part of the implementation of the action plans

Over estimate of school effectiveness

- our cumulative data was telling us 86% teaching good or better
- SLT had all been benchmarked by Ofsted in 2011, by the Ofsted inspector 2 weeks before the inspection and then again at the inspection. Our judgements on teaching alone were in line every time.
- Framework had changed. This time around the difference is that progress, immediate and over time, is taken into account when the judgements are made. When this occurred the lessons are down-rated. This is where the discrepancy has largely occurred.
- We had focused on attainment and headline data, not sufficiently on students individual progress

Teamwork

- teamwork not an issue within the SLT team
- issue for Ofsted was the wider team of SLT and subject leaders and their working relationships with SLT - SLs
- part of the issue - new data management system not well understood by SLs and teachers - resulting in some confusion, despite Paul Boxall putting in/offering many training sessions for staff.
- Mr Taylor and Mr Snape now meeting with Directors of Learning for English, Maths, Science, Head of Year, Director of Inclusion weekly to review actions and progress and discuss individual students
- We accept we all have to work better as a team

Standards of teaching.

- New lesson planning sheet introduced across the College
- More training for staff to be undertaken - action plans will detail this,
- Students should be seeing some difference already - in planning better lessons, staff expectations
- Development of subject leaders' skills
- College wide feedback policy introduced - to support improvements in marking/feedback to students
- Support from Millais e.g. visits to Maths already underway

Questions received during the meeting (answered by Mr Taylor unless otherwise stated)

The parents' action plan is of a high level, it would be useful to have information on how you intend to achieve this and your goals

The HMI will approve the action plan next half term; we will need to investigate whether we can make this public. Every visit by the HMI will produce a feedback letter which will be published on the website. There will be lots of visitors over the coming year and we will be monitored rigidly.

Leon Nettley advise that part of Millais' support is to ensure that the plan is rigid and good enough and implemented correctly and he will be carrying out internal checks to ensure this.

Question raised regarding the differences between the 2011 and 2014 reports on Teaching/Teachers

CTR invited the LA to come into school after the 2013 results as we were unable to make specific decisions on what went wrong. A representative from the LA visited and could not pinpoint anything specific. The GB asked for an external inspection which concluded that students didn't make enough progress.

Is there a problem with getting and retaining good teachers?

There are problems with keeping good teachers and getting quality supply teachers, but this is universal. English is a subject with significant teacher shortages at this time nationally.

Nigel Bloodworth – we have to accept that teaching is not right and support teachers to improve.

Maths was identified as a problem area – what will be your focus?

Leon Nettley – every school has outstanding teaching and there are outstanding teachers here. Teaching needs to improve rapidly across the board and we need to tackle inadequate

teaching. Millais staff will assist in mobilising talent to be up to standard and consistent with high benchmarks on performance and clear guidance.

At what point is the situation going to be reviewed?

Nigel Bloodworth – after a year it would be expected that the plan is reviewed if things haven't improved, however, there will be a review every term.

Colin Taylor – the GB have set up a regular monitoring group with Leon Nettley and Nigel Bloodworth.

What can be expected if you're made an academy? Is it better to choose rather than be forced?

Nigel Bloodworth – For a school in special measures, the route would be controlled by the DfE. Oakmeeds will only have the choice once out of special measures.

Colin Taylor – Definitely preferable to choose. There may be additional monies available from an academy chain but this would need to be looked at very carefully.

The attention to academies took the GB's eye off the ball – every speaker has been very positive which suggests denial, you need to accept the inadequate decision and get on with fixing it.

Colin Taylor – Agreed

You keep mentioning Ofsted's focus on 2013 results but they came in January

Ofsted look at Achievement and Teaching equally and one cannot be good if the other isn't. Ofsted look very carefully with the last set of achievement data as their starting point.

Headteacher and Chair of GB – the buck stops with you. Obviously not good enough nor the Subject Leader for Maths – Are the right persons in the job?

At this point, major disagreement from the majority of parents in audience and expression of support from them for staff.

Nigel Bloodworth – we need to be certain that the school is properly led to provide a good education for students. Parents need to trust me to ensure that this will happen.

51% of students did not achieve – this is not the education we deserve.

Colin Taylor – we admit we got it wrong.

We're not hearing what went wrong last year – what investigations are taking place

David Fry – This is why we instigated an external review. This also couldn't identify reasons but did suggest further measures, which have been put in place.

How often will we get feedback – don't want to waste another year of my son's education?

David Fry – Detailed data now means that we can monitor students much better and ensure that they are not falling behind.

Leon Nettley – I will be taking a view every 30 days across leadership, lessons, marking and feedback – working alongside staff to help them make the necessary changes. The GB will

get regular monthly updates to show measures of impact. The HMI inspection letters will be key for feedback to parents.

Just an observation but my eldest son knew that last year's results would be a car crash as the students were not motivated. This year the Year 11 students are being motivated by Mr Smith who is doing a fantastic job.

You need to bring parents along with you by keeping them informed. Must not focus on progress to the detriment of students. How will the LA provide resources to support teachers when away training?

Leon Nettley – Millais will be working alongside teachers in school not training offsite.

Colin Taylor – Looking at recruiting more staff to provide intervention and support for teachers which may have an impact financially. LA will not assist.

What is the impact on teachers' motivation?

All the teachers understand what needs to be done and want to get out of this situation.

Son in Year 10 – concerned as not being challenged enough, will it be too late for him?

Priority is Year 11 to ensure results then we will focus on Year 10 to ensure they get the best education. Mr Snape confirms that Year 10 forecasts are significantly better. The Head of Maths has been working with Key Stage 3 to ensure progress is there to provide strong foundations to build on.

Can I believe the data on Assessment sheets?

Subject leaders ensure quality control correct and teachers are focussing very much on providing accurate data of where students are at each assessment point. We are no longer providing forecast levels to avoid students becoming complacent.

If Ofsted keep moving the goalposts, why are schools not informed to allow them to act?

The new version of the guidance was placed on the Ofsted website on 24/12. This new framework was then applied to previous achievements (2013) and as a result we were judged inadequate.

What has been put in place for Year 11 – are you managing the extra pressures on them giving your dependence on their exam results?

- Intervention – extra maths and English teachers and a maths class has been split to allow smaller class sizes.
- Revision guides across the subjects and a structured programme of revision sessions.
- Double set of mock exams
- Entry for two exams in English – IGSE and GCSE – students get two goes at English this year.
- Early entry was going to be used but government changes to early entry rules stopped us.
- Head of Year managing pressures and providing support for students

Colin Taylor then thanked the parents for attending, for their questions and support and finished by stating that the school will resolve the situation as soon as possible.