



The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation



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8th March 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are delighted to attach the letter detailing the outcome of our recent OFSTED Inspection. Please take time to read it and you will see how highly the inspection team regarded our school. Inspectors said they thoroughly enjoyed being in school and meeting our fantastic children whom they described as, 'confident, articulate and appreciative.'

Here are just some of the quotes from the report we are particularly proud of include:

'You and your leaders have created a 'can do' culture of high expectations for all pupils.'

'The school is a vibrant and exciting place to learn, where academic challenge is set in the context of engaging topics in the broad curriculum.'

'Behaviour across the school, both in and outside lessons, is exemplary. Pupils are welcoming, well-mannered and polite. Their ability to go about their work independently and sensibly is particularly impressive, as is their care and concern to help each other.'

'You have strong strategic planning for improving teaching and learning across the federation... Teaching has consequently, moved to the next level and beyond, focusing on the key skills needed for learning'

'Teachers use the characteristics of a growth mindset to support pupils' personal development as learners. The editing and redrafting of writing in pupils' books demonstrated resilience and an independent determination to improve.'

'There is a consistent focus throughout the school on encouraging pupils to engage in a subject so that they are bursting to write about it.'

'You have created a climate where pupils have the confidence to take risks with their writing, knowing their efforts will be respected and valued.'

'The overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe the school provides a very good standard of education.'

'Parents trust the school to deal with any problems that arise. They particularly appreciate the caring ethos that enables their children to thrive.'

'The over whelming majority of parents that responded to the Parent View survey said their children were well looked after and that they felt safe at school.'

The inspection that we had was a Section 8. The purpose of a Section 8 inspection is to determine whether the school continues to provide a good standard of education. In a section 8 inspection, inspectors do not have the authority to change a school's overall judgement from Good to Outstanding but they can identify sufficient evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school may be judged Outstanding if it had a longer inspection. This is called a Section 5 inspection. As you can see, our report says,

'Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 (longer) inspection.'

Whilst we are pleased that the strength of our school has been recognised, had the Section 8 inspection occurred before January 2018, the Section 5 inspection that is recommended would have happened almost immediately after the Section 8, probably in the same week and we would have had the opportunity to be graded Outstanding then.

However, a revised Ofsted framework has been in place since the week that we were inspected. This framework dictates that the Section 5 inspection will typically take place within one to two years. This is deeply frustrating for us as we had already waited over 5 years for the inspection and then, the week that it happened, the Ofsted framework changed, meaning that we are waiting, once more, for the opportunity to demonstrate our belief that we are an outstanding school.

This is a complicated process and we have tried to explain it to you as clearly as possible. We have also attached a flowchart from the Ofsted Section 8 Inspection Handbook that might help (our school is now in the position outlined in the fourth column).

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to school. We could see from your overwhelmingly positive responses on Parentview and your conversations with the inspectors just how highly you regard Gordonbrock. As far as our journey is concerned, it is onwards and upwards in continued partnership with you!

Yours sincerely,

Maria Gilmore,
Head of School.

Kathy Palmer,
Executive Head Teacher.