



BEECHEN CLIFF

Tuesday 3rd July 2018

Response to Ofsted Inspection Report 22-23 May 2018

Beechen Cliff had an unannounced Ofsted inspection in May and the final report is now published (follow the link: [Ofsted Report](#)). The inspector's view is that the school has a number of issues related to systems, practices and processes around our teaching and safeguarding, leading to a view that safeguarding duties were not adequate. As this is a "limiting judgement" the school has been rated as inadequate.

Along with the governors and staff, I am profoundly saddened by the outcomes of this report and I know it will be both disappointing and worrying for parents and those connected with the school. We accept that the report makes a number of fair recommendations and our plans to rectify these are already well advanced. Nonetheless when you read the report you may be surprised how little you recognise of our school; the opportunities and experiences that we look to provide our pupils. For that reason the school will be making representations to Ofsted regarding the basis on which it came to some of its conclusions.

Attached to this letter is a more detailed response to the report but most importantly I can reassure you that:

- Whilst there are procedures that need improving, there is no evidence that child safety is being compromised; indeed 94% of you told the inspectors that your child feels safe at Beechen Cliff and the fact that 32 children of staff currently study (or have recently studied) at Beechen Cliff surely endorses this.
- Academic outcomes are the strongest they have been in recent years. They represent some of the best anywhere in the region.
- We are a school that resolutely embraces diversity. The inspectors identified the positive work of our Equalities Team and our status as a Stonewall champion. In national terms, the progress that our disadvantaged pupils make is strong. Girls' progress at Beechen Cliff is very good: three quarters making progress above national average outcomes.

To explain our response to this report and the actions we will be taking in more detail we are inviting parents and prospective parents to attend private briefings. For parents wishing to attend please register this with us by following the link: [Register for Ofsted Briefing](#). In the meantime, please be reassured that we have total commitment from all staff and will be working with a strong external partner to reinstate an Ofsted grading that better reflects our school when we are re-inspected within two years. We would welcome your comments about this inspection report and you can make these by following the link: [Feedback Comments](#).

If any parents would like to speak to me personally about the report, please contact Clare Thompson on 01225 480466 to arrange a call or a meeting. We will also be communicating on the report via our website and our @BeechenCliff twitter feed.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Davies
Headmaster

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Message from Nigel Stevens, Acting Chair of Beechen Cliff Governing Body

Along with all the staff at Beechen Cliff we are writing to you as the Governing Body to express our disappointment and concern with the inspection report. We would also reiterate that whilst we have reservations with the conduct and outcome of the inspection, we accept that the report makes some important recommendations that need to be implemented as soon as possible.

As the Board of Governors, we must accept ultimate responsibility for the findings made public today. We have therefore taken a number of immediate actions:

- The current Chair and deputy Chair have stepped aside and resigned as governors to allow an objective and fresh perspective to be taken.
- As a recently appointed governor, with 3 children at the school, and several years as a chief executive in the private sector, I have been asked by the Board to take on the Acting Chair to lead the School through the changes now necessary.
- We are setting up a new safeguarding structure with the urgent task of reviewing the processes, procedures and systems regarding safeguarding to ensure that they are as strong as possible and reflect best practice from across other schools.
- We have made available additional support and resources to bring in the expertise necessary to help us implement the recommendations from Ofsted and our own reviews.

The leadership team have been exceptionally successful in the last thirteen years, delivering amongst other things: two 'Outstanding' judgements from Ofsted; some of the best academic attainment in the region; a strong record on encouraging diversity and equality and record numbers of applications for places at the School. The Governors are clear that this team is fully capable and motivated to implement the changes required and they have our full support.

The governors and staff are determined to achieve a speedy and positive Ofsted re-inspection. Even more importantly, our continuing priority is to continue to deliver the very best education for pupils and students in a happy and safe environment, building on the on the great attributes that make this such a popular, distinctive and high-achieving school.

Yours faithfully



Nigel Stevens

On behalf of the Governing Body

Beechen Cliff's Response to Ofsted Inspection Report 2018

Below we have responded to each of the key areas in the Ofsted report, highlighting actions that we have taken/will be taking as well as some additional perspectives not included in the findings which we feel are key to providing a complete picture of life at the school.

Key areas identified in the report are:

- Behaviour:** The overwhelming response of visitors, particularly prospective parents, is that Beechen Cliff has a calm, purposeful and orderly atmosphere. They are struck by pupils who, by and large, are well-mannered and courteous but lively and engaged. Parents, including many teachers, send their children to Beechen Cliff largely for this reason. 94% of parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey as part of the inspection were positive about standards of behaviour at the school (higher than parents nationally who responded to same question). However, as a result of huge demand for places at Beechen Cliff numbers of pupils in classes in Years 7 & 8 have risen which presents extra challenges. This had been recognised prior to the Ofsted inspection and additional classes had been timetabled in for these groups next year.
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment:** Whilst we recognise the need to continue to review and update our monitoring procedures, Beechen Cliff's GCSE results clearly demonstrate the positive impact of our teaching, learning and assessment. Students at Beechen Cliff were entered for the IGCSE English (a qualification we believe to be best suited to the boys at Beechen Cliff and highly regarded by all academic institutions) which for the first time this year Ofsted did not recognise. As a consequence of this all the Ofsted key measures of school performance were very low. However, if IGCSE English results are incorporated, the outcomes and progress made by pupils is very strong:

 - 85% of students in 2017 achieved standard pass in both English and Maths GCSE (national figure for boys is 62% (Source: DfE Statistical first release)).
 - 51% of students achieving the EBacc (national figure for boys is 19% (Source: DfE Statistical first release)).
 - 91% achieved a standard pass in English (compared to 62% of boys nationally (Source: DfE statistical first release))
 - Maths 90% standard pass (70% national boys) – progress in top 4% nationally.
 - Science progress in top 13% nationally, EBacc subjects progress in top 13% nationally (Source: Inspection Data Summary Report produced by DfE and used by Ofsted).
 - Progress for IGCSE English Language in top 25% nationally (Source: ALPS report using DfE data)
 - Progress made by disadvantaged pupils: Maths top 21% nationally, Science top 5% nationally, EBacc subjects top 9% nationally. No data available for English IGCSE (Source: Inspection Data Summary Report).
- Safety:** Although we believe, as our parents do, our pupils are safe at school, our policies and procedures are being revised to ensure they reflect best practice in other schools. The school and its Governors have learnt lessons from a particular safeguarding incident that occurred earlier in the year and policies, practice and training will all be updated. In addition, there will be an enhanced PSHE/Citizenship programme put in place next year with additional curriculum time. Our referral procedures and record keeping in relation to social services will also be updated with a new safeguarding management structure put in place. Our long-standing arrangement with a small selected group of Year 11 students offered early study leave will be reviewed.
- Pupil Premium Plan and Catch-up Documentation:** Both documents will be improved for the next academic year.

5. **Sixth Form:** The Sixth Form continues to be highly successful and oversubscribed. Not only do students make very good progress, typically 20% achieving AAB grades in facilitator subjects etc, there are numerous cultural opportunities – such as theatre visits, music and our annual representation at the International Model United Nations. Our super curricular programme stretches students beyond their A’Levels including the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Meanwhile, our annual TEDx event, run by students, provides a platform for our community to share their ideas worth spreading. Girls’ progress at Beechen Cliff is very good: three quarters making progress above national average outcomes – but we will be continuing to put in place strategies to further improve levels of achievement.
6. **Ofsted Parent View:** You may note that the report does not refer to parental feedback; below is a summary of the results of the survey you completed during the inspection.

	Positive Responses	
	Beechen Cliff	National Secondary Schools
My child is happy at this school	92%	88%
My child feels safe at this school	94%	90%
My child makes good progress at this school	94%	83%
My child is well looked after at this school	91%	86%
My child is taught well at this school	94%	82%
My child receives appropriate homework for their age	92%	81%
This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	90%	79%
This school deals effectively with bullying	87%	86%
This school is well led and managed	93%	79%
This school responds well to any concerns I raise	87%	75%
I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress	90%	81%
Would you recommend this school to another parent	93%	83%

7. **Boarding:** Our boarding provision continues to be highly successful and oversubscribed and was recognised as being Good with Outstanding features in the feedback from the Ofsted’s Boarding inspection in March 2018. Boarding students and parents value the ethos of the boarding family which places pupils’ happiness and wellbeing at the heart of the boarding experience. Boarders are able to take advantage of the diverse range of extracurricular activities at Beechen Cliff and receive help during supervised prep sessions from the staff in their care to ensure that boarders have balanced lives and receive a well-rounded experience. The Boarding Improvement Plan will take on board suggestions from the Ofsted’s May inspection and be available to all parents of boarders.