



Astor College

Adaptable Creative Proud

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Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you as Ofsted have been in contact to inform us that the report from the recent inspection can be released today to all stakeholders.

Having had a pre-release of the report to view and digest we are extremely pleased with the outcomes that have been achieved especially when you compare this to the report in 2017.

The inspection team were thorough during the 2 days and the report clearly outlines the findings that they shared with us during the feedback session.

The inspection has graded the personal development that the college offers as "good" overall however, it was recognised by all inspectors that this was a strength and was very close to being awarded "outstanding". The behaviour and attitude of the pupils was also graded "good" and this was explored in depth with many pupils who the inspectors either spoke with at break and lunches or asked to meet with. They found that the pupils at Astor were very welcoming, friendly and lively and they were proud of their school.

The third area of the inspection was the effectiveness of Leadership and Management. The inspection team, in the report, have highlighted many strengths for this area. They found leaders to be ambitious, they make sure pupils behave well, have planned thoughtfully what pupils will learn and leaders structure the curriculum well.

They also identified that we receive a large number of students in years 8 to 11 from other schools locally and from around the country and this creates 'gaps' in their learning and, despite the efforts of Astor staff, this cannot always be filled meaning they achieve less well. Mobility is an area that we are aware of as a college and departments have been working on a concept of 'keep up/catch up' for those who are absent for long periods or join the college late. This was shared with the inspection team and will be more embedded by the next inspection.

The inspection of the sixth form found this to be 'good' also highlighting that sixth form students are extremely positive about the education they receive. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. Students are challenged and motivated by their study programmes. Sixth form students with SEND are well supported.

Students do well when they need to retake their GCSEs in English and mathematics. Sixth form students receive strong careers guidance. They are well prepared for their next steps.

The final judgement was that linked to the quality of education. This is broken down into 3 parts as outlined in the diagram below. The inspection team found that the intent of the curriculum was very strong and offered a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils at Astor. The evaluation of the intent of the curriculum also found that subjects across the college have mapped their curriculum to link with each other allowing greater depth in knowledge and understanding to be gained by pupils at all key stages.

When looking at the implementation of the curriculum across the college the inspection team identified a 'mixed picture'. They found those students who arrived later in their schooling and those with SEND or who are disadvantaged, required more support and focus to ensure that they achieve better. They also found that



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some historical teaching had led to gaps in knowledge and understanding, which had now been addressed, but this had affected progress and attainment.

The report also highlights that we have brought in precise strategies to overcome barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils and when applied consistently these work well. We just need to ensure that these strategies are applied in all subjects to bring about improvements in outcomes.

The final area is the impact of the curriculum and as I have previously communicated with you this is an area that is affected by the various adjustments that we make for the pupils. Currently we implement an early entry in English Language and the option to follow two art subjects along with a flexible approach and adjustments for those who are having difficulties whether it be medical or academic.

The inspection team discussed this approach at length, as they wanted to consider the impact it was having. They concluded, under the inspection of 'gaming' (an approach used by schools to narrow their curriculum to allow inflated outcomes and data but to the detriment of pupils knowledge and understanding) that we were doing the opposite and this was having an effect on the impact of our curriculum. The team discussed that should we continue to follow these approaches then we would always remain requires improvement for this section.

The advice they have given us to enable the Quality of Education section to become good, is to review this practice. They talked about trying to find a middle ground where we keep the broad and balanced curriculum for pupils but that we do not disadvantage ourselves in terms of data outcomes with early entry, following subjects that discount or offer pathways that can influence negatively on our data set.

As you will see from the Inspection Report, we have made great strides since the previous full inspection and this has led to a smaller more focused set of actions, which from reading you will see we had already identified and were addressing. The team strongly believe that by addressing and embedding consistently the strategies and actions our plans have identified we will continue to move forward.

Finally, I would like to thank once again all the parents, carers, pupils and staff who contributed to the inspection process and took the time to share their views and opinions with the inspection team.

Should you wish to discuss the report in greater depth then I would be more than happy to meet with you over the coming weeks. Please contact Miss Penn by email Lisa.Penn@astor.dfamat.com who will book an appointment for you.

Yours faithfully

Mr L Kane
Principal



Astor College
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Barton Junior
School



Shatterlocks Infant
and Nursery School



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Below is an overview of how the new Ofsted framework is organised and the areas explored under each section.

The Quality of Education is 50% of the inspection and is a limiting factor in the overall grade allocation.

The other three areas and the sixth form are then judged for the remaining 50%.

Judgements: our working hypothesis in detail



Towards the education inspection framework 2019

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