

Halton Community Combined School

Tring Road, Halton, Aylesbury, HP22 5PN

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Website: www.halton.bucks.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr. Colin Horsfield



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Thursday 11th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Ofsted Report for Halton Community Combined School

I am delighted to be able to share with you the final report for our Ofsted inspection which took place in November.

The 2-day inspection involved a number of different threads, with gradings given to 5 key areas: Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Early Years and Leadership and Management. These gradings feed into a judgement for Overall Effectiveness where a school can be judged as Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

Our judgements were as follows:

Overall Effectiveness: GOOD

Quality of Education: Good

Behaviour and Attitudes: Good

Personal Development: Good

Early Years: Outstanding

Leadership and Management: Good

We are very pleased with the judgements and we believe that the inspection and the report give a very true and honest reflection of our school. To put this more into context, every year, I have to produce a document called the Self Evaluation Form (SEF), where I grade the school using the Ofsted criteria. Interestingly, with the exception of one area, my gradings matched the final judgements made by the inspectors in November.

In actual fact, 'Good' doesn't really do the findings of the inspection justice, as there were very few development points raised and we really weren't that far away from achieving 'outstanding' in multiple areas. We actually came away with a very strong 'good' and the development points which were raised are targets which we had already identified in our School Development Plan back in September, there were no surprises.

Many wonderful things were said about our school during the inspection and not all of these are captured in the report. I am particularly proud of the comments which relate to the ethos and the sense of what it feels like to be part of our school community. *"It is clear that everyone is welcome here. The children are respectful, polite and have a clear moral compass. In all classes children are calm, on task and purposeful."*



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The children are very proud of their school and they recognise that pupil voice is important to school leaders."

In terms of development points, as I mentioned earlier, there were no surprises and the main points centred around the curriculum. The inspectors could clearly recognise where we had prioritised particular subject areas and the impact that this has already had. Reading, writing, maths and PE all came out really strong in the inspection as these have been a focus in recent years. Our target is to ensure that **all** of the subjects are given time so that we can review the content, knowledge and skills that the children are taught and to ensure that the assessment in these subjects is robust. All of this is already in our School Development Plan, with geography, design & technology, computing and art being a focus for this year. Inspectors could see that we had already identified this. Interestingly, this is a target for a lot of schools who have been inspected this academic year.

As the report is quite short, there are some key areas which do not feature as much.

Whilst it does not get a separate grading, Safeguarding is taken extremely seriously during an Ofsted inspection and if there are any concerns raised by the inspectors, this can have a big impact on the overall judgements. Our Safeguarding processes were recognised as being extremely robust and that it was clear that safeguarding is a priority at our school and that all staff had a commitment to keeping the children safe. In both the parent survey and the staff survey, 100% of parents said that they trust the school and 100% of staff said that the culture is safe and secure. The inspectors said that both of these statements rarely score 100%.

SEND is another area which does not receive a separate judgement however the feedback for SEND will be of interest to a large proportion of our community. The inspectors met with Mrs Rawlins, our SENDCO, and conducted a learning walk with her, observing provision across the school. In the feedback given to myself and Mrs Dawkins at the end of the inspection, they recognised the extent of expertise that we have across our school to enable our curriculum to be inclusive and to allow our children with SEND the opportunity to progress academically, socially and emotionally. The ambition for our curriculum was seen as being equally high for SEND pupils and they could see that we are trying our best to meet the individual needs of all of our pupils with a bespoke approach where possible.

I could continue to write about all of the positives from the inspection however this would end up being a rather long letter for you to read. We are really pleased and I am proud that our hard work has been recognised. I would like to thank the staff for their continued hard work, not only in the classroom but also for the wide range of other responsibilities that they have. Every aspect of the school is inspected and as we are a small school, several members of staff had multiple meetings to discuss their many areas of responsibility. These are intensive and stressful however the staff were magnificent.



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I would also like to thank you, the parents, for all of your support before, during and after the inspection. It was lovely to receive so many kind and thoughtful messages, wishing us good luck. It was also amazing to hear the comments that were submitted in the parent survey.

"This is a lovely school."

"My child settled immediately. It has lovely caring teachers and staff. I love this school and am pleased I moved."

"I have 2 children at Halton and am thrilled with their schooling. Children's interests are at the heart of everything they do."

"I feel lucky to send our children to such a wonderful school."

"My son is flourishing. He has SEND and an EHCP and I am blown away by the staff who have given such consideration to my child's needs whilst maintaining independence."

There were so many more and it was lovely to be able to share these with the staff and governors.

Most importantly, I'd really like to thank the children, all of whom played a pivotal role in the success of the inspection. They were great ambassadors for the school, speaking very honestly about all aspects of their learning, sharing their thoughts and their work openly with the inspectors. It was no surprise that their positive behaviour was commented on, this is something that is always recognised by visitors to our school. Inspections are very different to how they were 12 years ago, the last time we were inspected. Expectations and 'goal posts' have changed significantly and it is much harder to achieve each judgement. So much more emphasis is placed on pupil voice and looking at what a school day is like from the perspective of the child. We would not have received the judgements we did, if it weren't for the children and I am incredibly proud to be the Headteacher of the 223 young people that we have here at Halton School.

Please do take the time to read the Ofsted report. There will also be opportunity to discuss this at our next Parent Forum, on Monday 29th January. More details will be sent out soon.

Kind regards

C Horsfield

Mr. C. Horsfield
Headteacher



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