

SANDHURST SCHOOL

OFSTED REPORT 2009

Notes:

As I am sure you are aware the school was inspected by Ofsted on March 18 and 19. The full report following the inspection has been distributed to all parents and is available on our website.

School inspections are very short nowadays and we are given a few days' notice, although we know in which year to expect them because they occur on a three year cycle. Before the inspection we submit a thorough and comprehensive 40 page self-evaluation of the school's progress in which we make a range of judgements about ourselves and in particular identify where we need to make improvements. The Ofsted inspection team use this self-evaluation, along with their own analysis of our examination results, to form the basis of their own judgements. All their judgements which you can see in the report were in line with the judgements we made about ourselves before the inspection. Only one judgement changed. We graded our curriculum as good and they graded it as satisfactory because there are insufficient vocational courses on offer and because we expect many of our students to do too many GCSEs.

Consequently there were no surprises in the inspection report and I and the other senior leaders in the school are pleased that it reaffirmed what we know to be the strengths and areas for further improvement.

The strengths of the school are:

- The care, guidance and support, and the personal development and well-being of the students, are strengths of the school
- Students feel safe at school: bullying is rare and dealt with effectively by the school
- Behaviour is good; the school is calm; the students are respectful of one another and visitors
- Teachers have good relationships with students and are successful in creating a motivating learning atmosphere in which learning is enjoyable
- The excellent mapping of the spiritual dimension in the curriculum is a strength of the school
- Diverse groups of students have excellent relationships

The areas for improvement are:

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching
- Develop a more diversified curriculum in the school to match the varying needs and aptitudes of the students
- Increase the rigour with which subject leaders evaluate the action taken to improve achievements and standards.

Inspection teams base their judgements on examination results, and particularly on the contextual value-added (CVA) score which measures our progress against that of similar schools. Our CVA score is satisfactory and therefore the overall effectiveness of the school (along with achievement and standards, and leadership and management) can only be satisfactory.

Our challenge is now to ensure that our progress measure (CVA) rises above satisfactory. This must be done by improving the consistency and rigour of our teaching and learning in the classroom across the school. The inspection team recognised that we are focussing on improving students' standards with some success and that recent improvements in examination results should be further reflected in the current year 11 results this summer.

We need to continue to build on the improvements we have put in place. I have every confidence that everyone connected with the school – students, staff, parents, governors – will pull together to make sure that we meet the challenges ahead.