



25 February 2014

Dear Parent/Carer,

Please find enclosed a copy of the OFSTED Inspection Report following the two day inspection on 29 and 30 January 2014. I am delighted that so many of the key aspects of our School were recognised as truly outstanding including:

- Overall attainment is very high and has improved significantly
- The proportion of students achieving A* or A grades at GCSE is well above national averages
- Students are exceptionally well behaved and feel very safe
- The School's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent
- The curriculum, advice and guidance leads to high levels of achievement and excellent behaviour
- Most teaching is good or outstanding
- The behaviour of students is outstanding
- There is a strong ethos of striving for excellence, coupled with a concern for every individual
- The governors are exceptionally committed to help the school improve further
- Students have numerous opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Students behave extremely courteously to one another, to teachers and other adults
- The Sixth Form is outstanding – achievement has risen rapidly

The School was previously inspected in November 2010 when it was judged as outstanding overall. Since then the inspection schedule has been changed at least five times, most recently on 1 January 2013. On each occasion the criteria for every grade have been made more challenging. It is current Government policy to concentrate on making all schools at least good with only a very small percentage graded as outstanding – around 5% from the current 20%.

The Inspectors did identify some areas for improvement. In 2013 the exam performance data for small numbers of students at GCSE was not judged to be outstanding. It was recognised that we heavily support these students, everything is being done to address any gaps and that achievement is continuing to improve.

In summary there is a sense of great pride in what we collectively achieve but also some disappointment in how the quality of schools is now being measured. The Gryphon has improved since the last inspection in terms of the quality of teaching, the facilities and the high results students achieve. Each year around 70% of our students stay onto The Gryphon Sixth Form where their performance, based on the average points score per entry, is one of the highest in the country and higher than all other state schools in the region. Of course education is more than just exam results – we place great value on the personal development of each student.

We will of course accept the challenge for achievement to be even higher. The Inspection Team made it clear that the school improvement plan is "immense" and is addressing all the remaining small areas for improvement. This includes our focus on literacy, numeracy, the consistency of marking, pupil premium academic progress and the development of a coherent Year 6 to Year 8 curriculum as well as the investment in mobile technology.

Thank you for your continuing support and contribution. The responses to the OFSTED Parent Questionnaire were exceptionally positive and had some of the highest approval ratings possible at 95%.

Yours sincerely,

S M Hillier
Headteacher