

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you will be aware, the school was inspected by Ofsted on the 31st October and 1st November. At the previous inspection in 2012, the school was rated as 'Good'. Prior to the recent inspection, we were hoping that we would retain this grade.

The inspection team were keen to look at the progress that our students make compared to their starting points. In recent years, pupil progress measures across primary and secondary have improved, but are still rated by the Department for Education as 'average'. The inspection team were clear that there had been improvements; however, the rate of this progress has not been sufficiently rapid enough to warrant a continued good grading. Unfortunately, lesson observations across the school also showed some inconsistency in teaching, an issue that we were again aware of and were working hard to improve.

The school has now been rated as 'Requires improvement', which of course is a real disappointment to us all. The inspection team, however, have given us clear areas that we need to focus on for us to move rapidly back to Good. As with all "Requires improvement" inspection reports – the focus of the report is improvement and as a result, there is not the scope in the report to focus on many areas of our provision that we do extremely well. However, the blunt messages in the report have required leaders and teachers to reflect hard on the work that we do and the speed that these changes need to occur. The school leadership and the teaching staff are determined to use the inspection findings as a catalyst to accelerate the rate of improvement in the school and to strive to return our inspection status to at least "Good" rapidly.

The Ofsted grading in itself, does not affect the provision that we provide. GCSE results in 2017 were better than results in 2016. Likewise, Key Stage 2 results also improved in 2017. We are now clear, however, that these results need to be much higher and in particular, the most able students need to make more progress than they have achieved in the past. At GCSE this will mean that we will be pushing larger numbers of students to obtain the top grades of 9, 8 and 7 and at A level, this will mean more students being pushed to obtain A* and A grades than in the past. At Key Stage 2 a greater proportion of more able students need to be making the higher rate of progress than they currently do.

It is understandable that parents will be very concerned by the findings of this inspection. However, in the long run, if the inspection causes improved results for our students and an increase in the proportion of engaging lessons, then it can only be seen as a good thing for both the school and the children that we serve.

Secondary: 01604 669200 **Primary:** 01604 669210 **Website:** www.ccs.northants.sch.uk

Principal: David James **Vice Principals:** Katherine Patterson, Gary Wakefield

Caroline Chisholm Education Trust is a charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7638756 whose registered office is at:

The Wooldale Centre for Learning, Wootton Fields, Northampton NN4 6TP

Since the inspection:

1. We are working with teachers to increase the level of challenge in lessons, especially for the most able. In secondary phase in particular, the expectation on students to achieve has and will increase further. Teachers will set more challenging work in lessons and will increase the amount and challenge of homework that the most able students are expected to complete out of school.
2. We have accelerated our work to improve teaching across the school. Students in Year 10 and 11 and the 6th form should already have seen many more senior leaders observing lessons to help teachers improve. This will increase further and students will be seeing more adults in lessons across all phases of the school, supporting teacher development.
3. We will increase the sharing of good and outstanding practice that exists across all phases of the school.
4. We have reviewed target grades especially in Year 10 and 11 and have moved many of these up, so that more students are aiming for higher grades. These updated target grades will be reported in the upcoming Year 10 and Year 11 reports.
5. We are looking at how we improve the way we report to parents in Year 7, 8 and 9, so that they have a much better understanding of the progress their child is making. Students in Year 7, 8 and 9 will now also be able to see what grades that we will expect them to achieve at GCSE. We will work closely with Parent Voice to produce a reporting system that parents are happy with.

The school appreciates the continued support of parents as we push this work forward. It is important that our students receive the best education that we can provide, and by asking parents to reinforce our increased expectations of students, your support will assist us in our drive to improve.

It is important that parents take the time to read through all of the inspection report in full and not simply read the headlines on the front page. The report outlines where we need to improve, as well as areas where we have made impact. The issue of student progress has been an issue that has affected the school over a considerable number of years and is the underlying issue the school has to address and to improve. To do this we need to focus on improving the consistency of our teaching. To the school's credit, I have a hard working and dedicated staff who are keen to make the improvements required to bring us back to where we should be.

On a very positive note, the inspection of our Early Years Provision in Primary phase was judged to be outstanding. In addition, our GCSE maths results and Key Stage 1 results were both identified as strengths of the school with both areas showing well above average progress.

Can any feedback or comments you wish to make regarding the outcome of the inspection, please be shared with Parent Voice, using the contact form available on the school website. The school is keen to speak to any parents/carers relating to specific issues that you feel we need to be aware of.

The students at Caroline Chisholm School deserve the best education that we can create for them. Working together, I expect us to overcome these issues and move from strength to strength.

Regards,



David James
Principal

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