

11th July 2022

RE: Chellaston Academy Response to Post Ofsted Questions and Concerns

Dear Parent and Carers,

I want to thank the 90 parents who provided 146 valid questions and concerns following the publication of the latest Ofsted report. I would also like to thank the many parents who have sent positive and supportive messages.

I understand the community's concerns, not only from the perspective of an honest leader, but also as a parent myself. I also appreciate that there will be members of the community who are angry, frustrated and still have doubts and I hope that the details I am providing reduce some of those anxieties.

All of the staff at Chellaston, including leaders and myself, are disappointed with the report and are already working tirelessly to resolve these shortcomings as soon as possible. As proud Headteacher, I would also like to reassure the community that my heart and soul is with Chellaston Academy and I am already working diligently to demonstrate improvements, not only at the first Ofsted Monitoring Visit in the winter, but also in the following months and years.

I have synthesised your concerns into a number of categories which are below. Academy Improvement Plans are currently in draft form, but when finalised they will be available for public viewing on the school website.

There have been requests for a face-to-face question and answer event. If parents believe that their concerns or questions have not been addressed in their entirety, I will be more than happy to set up individual meetings in the Autumn term.

Culture

'Ensuring that students and staff feel safe at school' – There were a number of valid concerns about behaviour and comments within the Ofsted report.

- Behaviour - Our current behaviour protocols are already being reviewed and an effective 'relationships' code will be embedded in September. Although there were a number of comments calling for 'zero tolerance', I personally do not believe in this philosophy. Instead, I believe that the correct provisions and interventions need to be established and accessible for all of the young people in schools. In short, we need to meet need at the point of need, whether that is SEND, emotional or wellbeing need. To support the effectiveness of this, all members of the community need to know and adhere to our updated 'flows' therefore consistency and quality assurance of the 'relationships' code will be in place.
- These interventions and provisions centre around a 'cycle of support' or 'Inclusion Graduated Response' [IGR]. Our IGR interventions have already started to be put in place and will develop further over the next term and year. Interventions that have started to be put in place include an effective on-site Alternative Provision called Connect, an effective Extended Learning department

(where students have access to a wide range of SEND, SEMH, therapeutic and wellbeing interventions), reflection and restorative interventions in our 3Rs room, utilising external support either in the form of mentoring, therapeutic provisions or widening curriculum offers.

- Pastoral Care - The current structure of a single Head of Year, has not enabled all students to receive the adequate support they require. Plans have already been put in place, and appointments made, to ensure that there will be a Head of year and a non-teaching Deputy Head of Year in year 7 – 11 from September. There will also be a Student Support area which students can access for a variety of reasons when support is needed.
- Expectations - A couple of concerns were raised about expectations. Work has already started on reviewing, then implementing and embedding, clear expectations for classroom practice, 'relationships' and assessment. Training is a priority for all of these expectations and the future Quality Assurance plans will centre around these expectations. In addition, clear structures and next steps will be embedded so students and staff understand them and can create a consistent climate.
- In my first response to the Ofsted report a couple of concerns were raised about my positive commentary. I believe that in all classrooms 'teachers should be able to teach, and students should be able to learn'. Processes to support this have already been initiated and will be embedded in September. From my many observations of classroom practice at our school, this philosophy is commonplace, and a lot of lessons are productive. This has also been corroborated by external visitors, including universities, who have committed to allow trainee teachers to practise here. In some cases, students' attitude and commitment to learning has not met our expectations. However, since the last inspection, provisions and interventions have been put in place and these incidents have significantly reduced.
- Inclusion - I have been proud to be the Chair of the Inclusion Strategy Group in Derby City for the past 12 months. Headteachers from the city have worked on an Inclusion Charter. The principles of the Charter have been committed to by all schools and we have already started to embed these philosophies and strategies into Chellaston Academy. These strategies are research and evidence driven.
- 'Outsiders' – There were a couple concerns raised about students who have joined the academy. In all schools there are young people with a range of additional needs, including those with complex needs. I do not believe the rhetoric following on from the press release is accurate. All of the students who attend Chellaston are our students. It is our job to ensure that the correct provisions and support are put in place. As stated above, steps have already been taken to do this and further plans will be embedded next year.
- Toilets – Many comments and concerns have been raised about toilets. The make-up and design of the buildings, in particular the toilets, are not fit for purpose in a modern-day school. Strategies and plans have already been put in place to modernise the toileting facilities and allow them to be more open plan with a cubicle design. In addition, with increased supervision/monitoring I am confident that concerns will reduce quickly. With increased supervision we will also be able to embed effective reparation and restorative action for our students who demonstrate unwanted behaviours.
- Rewards – I am passionate about rewarding students in school and not allowing committed students to be forgotten. Plans are already in place to introduce a robust and exciting rewards system at Chellaston. Students will have the opportunity to gain three positive points in every lesson and for other deeds where Integrity, Care and Excellence have been demonstrated.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding our students is the most important thing that we do in schools. The staff at Chellaston are committed to safeguarding and I believe that improvements have been made even since the last inspection. Unfortunately, complex and needless systems for monitoring out of lesson absence, coupled with a lack of clarity for all staff, led to an inconsistent message when inspectors quizzed staff. These systems have already been replaced with simpler, more effective systems.

Other areas of safeguarding, such as the Single Central Record and how we safeguard students with their needs are effective. Improvements with how the school utilises our safeguarding system, CPOMS, has already been put in place to streamline our logs and record keeping. Alongside this we have already provided clarity of what everyone's roles and responsibilities are which will strengthen a culture of safeguarding. This includes ensuring that all staff are trained in all elements of safeguarding and able to articulate the training that they have received.

Unfortunately, there were some concerns highlighted with the gatehouse at the front of school and the staffing of this. From January, there will be an updated system for entering and exiting the school site. Details of the planned procedures will follow next term.

Curriculum

- SEND – Chellaston has an average number of students with additional needs. Since the inspection, plans have been written and costed to extend, improve provision and move the 'extended learning' department. We have now appointed a Deputy and Assistant SENCO to support the strategy, structure and operational running of Extended Learning. We have also appointed more Learning Mentors so students with additional need have access to more support.
- In addition, SEND concern forms have been launched with staff and further training has been scheduled as a priority in next year's training and development plan.
- Extended Learning staff have already received training on additional assessments for cognition and emotional need. In addition, some staff have already been trained in therapeutic interventions and students are already accessing some of these interventions. Over time, there will be a wider range of interventions.
- Students with additional needs have a 'passport' or 'picture of me' document. This is written to provide staff with a more detailed background of the child and includes advice of how to support those needs. There have been some changes to these documents and how they are accessed to ensure that all staff have easy access to them. The use of these passports is also part of the quality assurance processes at Chellaston Academy.
- Quality Assurance [QA] at Chellaston was already in place, but we have had a strategic rethink about QA and there will be some changes in place for September. More training will be put in place, so every department completes termly QA, as well as receiving more thorough Deep Dives. The Trust, through the CEO and Directors of Education, will be included in these Deep Dives.
- Reading – We are passionate about reading. There are already a number of ideas in development for next year, including embedding Reciprocal Reader activities into every lesson and, now that form time has been extended, some reading activities will take place in form time. Reading interventions for those students who fall below their chronological reading age will be embedded.

- Library – To further support a reading culture, the school library will be re-opened and staffed accordingly. Library activities will be introduced, and students will be able to access the school library before, during and after school.
- Wider Curriculum – We are still keen to provide, safeguarded, wider curriculum opportunities both in and outside of the school day. As part of the rewards curriculum, we are planning to run activity days for students who qualify. This will also extend the variety of experiences our students will receive.

Teaching and Learning

- Assessment - An updated assessment and marking protocol was launched two weeks ago and will be embedded next year. The protocols centre around students leaving classrooms knowing what they have learned following an effective piece of AFL [Assessment for Learning].
- Expectations and Reports - In addition, the quality and commitment to learning of every child will be assessed and communicated to parents through Go4Schools every half term. This will also be accompanied by teachers providing an estimated grade from the work that a student is producing. This will also be available on Go4Schools every half term with an attitudes to learning score which mirrors the school rewards and culture of Integrity, Care and Excellence.
- Assessment - Every half term, students will receive feedback on an assessment and given the time to improve their work and understanding. I am keen for students to have learning conversations with their parents at home so, where appropriate, I am more than happy for students to take books home.
- Homework – Currently there are no established homework protocols. This will be a focus in the AIP as I believe that regular revisiting of concepts, facts and skills develops knowledge.

Workplace

- Governance – I am unaware of the reasons for the departure of the governing body following the Ofsted inspection, but I would like to thank them. Being a governor is a voluntary role that holds such importance. I am pleased to say that I will be meeting 18 members of the community who have shown a desire to establish a new governing body at Chellaston.
- Staffing – Chellaston is a big secondary school. There are a number of staff who are leaving the academy, but the decisions to leave were made before the Ofsted report. I can reassure the community that the colleagues who have left, have either been replaced or are in process of being replaced. Chellaston still gets competitive interviews fields, enabling us to appoint quality practitioners. As with all staff, there is a robust and developmental induction programmes as well.
- Cover – Rightly so, concerns about cover have been raised. There are a number of factors that currently affect all educational entities. We do work hard to cover lessons with specialists, but sometimes, due to supply, there are not subject specialists available. This does disproportionately affect the sixth form as subject specialisms become more detailed. We are working on strategies to address this. We are already looking at the wellbeing of staff, including thorough return to work interviews and absence management processes to support sustained attendance at work.
- Funding – The Trust are committed to supporting leaders at school improve the school. All schools endeavour to run a balanced budget, even in these challenging times, and the Trust are supporting us do that, whilst embedded robust and effective processes, flows and interventions.
- Funding – Chellaston Academy were looking forward to investment from the DfE to improve A Block. Although this is on hold, we are all working hard to keep the original plans and commitments so that

Chellaston students can benefit. At this point we are confident that the original commitment will be met.

- Communication – I have received concerns about communication from the school. I would like to apologise as some of your experiences are not good enough. We have got a new administration structure as well as the Deputy Heads of Year in place for September, which I believe will support more effective communication. In addition, the community will receive more regular updates from my team and myself, including a celebration blog.

If you believe that I have not addressed your concerns, then please contact my PA Mrs Rachel Sande at r.sande@chellaston.derby.sch.uk and she will arrange a 15-minute face-to-face meeting with me in the new year.

In my short time at Chellaston Academy I have already experienced so many positive and amazing things. I can clearly see why our students excel in the Sixth Form and I also believe that examination outcomes will remain high with Level 2 qualifications.

I passionately believe that this is the best job in the world, and I am committed to improving the life chances of ALL of the students at Chellaston Academy both in the short and long term.

Yours sincerely



Phil Smith
Proud Executive Headteacher