

2 November 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Following the Ofsted inspection of Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form (TSAS), on 5 and 6 July 2022, I am writing to let you know that whilst the school was graded good for the Quality of Education and Sixth Form provision, the overall grade the school has been given is 'Requires Improvement'.

Teaching across the school was recognised as a strength and safeguarding found to be effective. The Inspectors noted that students enjoy and value the friendly atmosphere around the school.

The full inspection report can be viewed [here](#) and our detailed Ofsted Responsive Plans are available [here](#). You may recognise that many of the changes introduced in the school since September have directly targeted areas that were identified as areas for school improvement in the inspection.

I know you will be concerned to receive this news and am writing to you now to provide important context as well as an assurance in relation to moving the school forwards.

The school was last inspected in March 2014 under a long-obsolete Ofsted framework. Having been graded as 'Outstanding' under that framework, the school was effectively ring-fenced indefinitely from further inspections. At the end of 2019 Ofsted introduced a new, wider-reaching and more rigorous inspection framework and set the objective of inspecting all schools by 2025. This brought TSAS back into scope for inspection.

Mrs Bignell was appointed as Principal in April 2020 not long after the first period of lockdown had begun. When a detailed assessment of the school's provision was undertaken, it was the view of leadership within the school, Governing Body and the Trust that a significant amount of improvement work was required.

As a result, a wide-ranging school improvement plan was established which was acknowledged by the Inspection Team who noted that leaders and trustees had "*...introduced a large programme of change to address declining standards at the school*". However, whilst implementation of the plan started immediately, the scale of the required changes together with the challenges related to COVID meant that they needed to be phased in over time. Unfortunately, despite making good progress in implementing many necessary changes, the timing of the inspection meant there was insufficient opportunity to fully realise the benefits of the change programme. Our ongoing work to foster the personal development and behaviour management of our students was not yet found to be good and is the top priority for the school.

Whilst we were disappointed with the overall grading, we were pleased to see that Inspectors have highlighted the following strengths:

- Our refinement work on the curriculum was identified as a strength
- Our work with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND)
- Our focused work on the importance of reading
- Our students are safe and feel safe in school

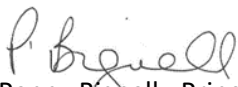
- Our students know that the school's behaviour support team, along with other staff, are willing and able to help.
- Our Sixth Form was identified as being 'high quality' provision where 'Students achieve well'

Throughout this term there will be a series of sessions for parents, prospective parents and the community to attend to hear about the vision for the school moving forward and the actions that are being taken to address the issues identified. We also wish to gather your views on how the school can continue to improve. Invitations will be sent later this week.

The merger of the Yare Education Trust and Boudica Schools Trust to create Broad Horizons Education Trust was finalised in June this year and was specifically designed around delivering improvements in all areas of our schools' functioning, including school improvement resources and practice. To that end, TSAS will benefit from direct support from our highly experienced and skilled Central Education Team, providing further expertise with our improvement agenda, an immediate focus being the refinement of our approaches to behaviour management and the personal development of all students.

Having ensured that our students are effectively safeguarded and secured a good quality of education provision for all students, the positive achievements of our change programme give a strong foundation to build on and reflect that our school improvement approach is working. We are confident that the changes we have already made and those that will be implemented across 2022/23, will ensure that the outcomes from any future inspection better reflect all of our aspirations for Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form.

Yours faithfully



Penny Bignell - Principal, Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth Form



Don Evans - CEO, Broad Horizons Education Trust



Mrs Gibson - Chair of Trustees