

Dear Parent/Carer

I am extremely pleased to inform you of three very important items of news relating to each of the schools within Aspire Learning Trust. Two relate to Ofsted inspections and the third concerns the development of one of the schools.

Following an Ofsted inspection in January 2019, the inspection team have concluded that **Park Lane Primary and Nursery School** is a **“Good” school**.



The inspection team were very impressed by the pupils and have reported that the behaviour of the pupils is good, with a calm and orderly atmosphere in the school. Pupils are *“polite and well-mannered towards adults and each other. The relationship between pupils and staff is positive. Pupils say they enjoy their learning and relish being challenged in lessons”*.

The inspection team found the quality of teaching to be good overall and improving. Phonics is deemed a strength and the *“children in the early years are given a good start to school life. They are well prepared for the next phase of their education.”*

In terms of outcomes, the inspection team recognised that *“pupils, including those with SEN and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points”*.

Governors have monitored the work of the senior team to help drive forwards improvements since the previous inspection and have a clear understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. *“The executive Headteacher and senior leaders are fervent in their vision to ensure that pupils at Park Lane Primary School receive a good quality of education.....Senior leaders have taken appropriate action to improve the school since the previous inspection”* and they have used a range of approaches to improve aspects of provision. They are *“enthusiastic and provide strong leadership in the areas and subjects they are responsible for.”*

The Trust are very proud of the progress the school has made in the last two years, as what takes place on a daily basis in the classroom is unrecognisable from the practice which took place back in 2016. A huge amount of credit needs to go to all the teaching staff, who along with the Teaching Assistants, now provide a very good education for your children: *“Teachers have increasingly high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve”*. We would also like to thank all the support staff who work tirelessly behind the scenes to provide the very best education for your children.

You may also be aware that **Sir Harry Smith Community College** was visited by Ofsted on the 10th October 2018 and the governing body, staff and I are delighted to report to you that **“this school continues to be good”**.

The Inspection team found the College to be *“a vibrant, welcoming and caring school, in which pupils enjoy their learning and feel valued”* and where *“staff ensure pupils behave very well”*. This was supported by *“a high proportion of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire”*.

Inspectors also commented that *“pupils benefit from learning within a calm and productive classroom environment; they get to work quickly and maintain their focus, including when the work they are completing is challenging”*. Furthermore, the inspectors found that *“pupils participate in the exceptionally rich range of cultural, musical and sporting activities that the school has to offer.”*

Students made it clear that *“teachers go the extra mile to help them”*. Students also reported to the inspectors that *“they feel safe at school and enjoy their learning”*.

The College has an extremely positive relationship with all its local primary schools. Inspectors recognised that *“in the College’s pursuit of improvement ... these developments in Year 7 have enabled pupils to make a strong start to their secondary education”*.

In relation to the Sixth Form provision, inspectors also commented that *“students’ progress was strong in both their academic and vocational qualifications...the proportion of students who gained places at the country’s most selective universities was above the national average”*. “Leaders and teachers are encouraging a sense of high ambition and aspiration among the students who attend it.”

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team together with other leaders, including governors, are rigorous in checking the quality of the school’s work and are determined in our pursuit of improvement.

The College has a very hard working and extremely professional staff who go the extra mile in supporting the students. The Senior Leadership Team work effectively to implement positive change and the College continues to be oversubscribed and to attract students from other local towns.

As you may know we are planning to increase the size of **New Road School** and to improve the current facilities. This is to allow the school to increase the numbers of children on roll, to manage the increase in pupil population forecast in the town over the next few years.

The Local Authority have allocated over £6.2 million for the project and it will transform the school into a wonderful environment for learning. We are delighted to be working with Kier, who did such a great job at the College. Work will start on the 18th March 2019 and is due to finish on the 14th April 2020.



NEW ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT

The school will gain an additional eight classrooms, a new hall, all-weather games area, library, and reception as well as the existing areas being refurbished.

There will also be two brand new purpose built classrooms for the pre-school.



In the coming weeks we will be working with Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to finalise the traffic management arrangements in readiness for when the school grows. More detailed information will be going to the parents of New Road Primary School pupils in due course.

The Trust and Sir Harry Smith Community College staff have also been in discussions with the Local Authority about plans to increase the school size to cope with future demand for places. At the moment we are considering taking another form of entry per year group, which would eventually mean another 150 students in years 7 to 11 but these discussions are still in the early stages of development. The Local Authority has committed over £5 million to further expand the College facilities to allow the extra student numbers. We are also looking to expand our Sixth Form provision over the next few years.

The Trust have also put in funding bids to the Government for over £1.5 million for infrastructure improvement projects within the three schools and we hope to find out whether we have been successful by the end of the term.

If you feel that you could add to the governance of the three schools in the Trust, either as a member of a school Local Governing Body, or as a Trustee, please contact John King, the Chair of the Trust Board, for more information: John.King@sirharrysmith.cambs.sch.uk

We are looking for people who want to help further develop our schools to provide the very best education for all our children. You would need to commit to at least six evenings per year for formal meetings and to play an active role in the governance of the school or the Trust.

In conclusion, we are very proud of the achievements of the three schools within the Trust and the improvement all have made in the last three years. We also really appreciate the very hard work of all the staff in each of the schools and the support of our parents on our journey. We have some wonderful children and young people in our schools, and we will all do our very best to give them all the very best education that we can.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Digby".

Jonathan Digby
CEO
Aspire Learning Trust