

Stafford Junior School Ofsted report and presentation

Questions Raised by Parents and Responses.

The questions have been organised into common themes and responded to accordingly.

Where questions or comments related to individual staff or particular children we have not replied as this would not be appropriate. However, Mrs Siddall-Ward will contact parents regarding concerns about their child.

Academisation

As parents we are very concerned about the Ofsted report and change to an academy. Does this mean Stafford will forever be an academy?

The Department for Education (DFE) has made it clear that as Stafford Junior School requires Special Measures the school should become an academy. The intention of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) is to work with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to identify a strong academy trust that will be able to provide appropriate direction and support to the school. The expectation is that the move to academy status will be permanent.

Also, is it possible to elaborate what the problem was with the curriculum that it was so bad? I understand that the school is now following different themes and that it is more cross curricular than before, is that what was missing or was there something else? Are specifics allowed to be mentioned so we get a better understanding?

National Curriculum is not well thought out - WHY? as it is a National Curriculum for all schools to follow - with the now proposed Academy - don't Academy schools follow their own rules on the curriculum where is this going to lead to??

As yet insufficient attention has been given to planning and providing a coherent and well sequenced curriculum at Stafford. This is a key priority for the immediate future. We have, however, already revised the curriculum map to begin addressing the weaknesses identified by Ofsted.

Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum. However, they do have to teach a broad and balanced curriculum and their curriculum provision will be inspected by Ofsted according to the same criteria as local authority (LA) maintained schools.

Provision

What measures are being taken to allow our children to catch up to what is expected during this uncertain time and away from school. Dojo is great, but they are falling behind, and this is going to set them back even more.

Staff are providing pupils with a range of curriculum activities to support parents with learning at home during these unprecedented times. Staff are sharing supportive resources by key educational providers to enable children to continue their learning as best as possible.

Our children have been let down massively by the school and are now deemed "inadequately prepared for secondary school"? As a parent along with others I am disgusted at the level of failings this school has given.

I would totally agree with the comment relating to children under performing and then struggling in secondary school, every single one of my children have had to have private tutoring and booster lessons, and there's been continuous excuses from the school as to the reasons for this. I appreciate none of them are Einstein but they all have strengths in various subjects which I feel diminished at Stafford and have not really been restored.

Reasons for the girls under-performing have included "there is a drastic change in the curriculum, which this year group are struggling with" to "with the national change in how we are marking work is leaving us in sure of how we are marking work" , whilst I acknowledge both of these reasons to be contributors, quite simply the leadership and quality of the teaching has been sub standard in many instances, which this report supports.

There are some fabulous teachers at Stafford, when any one of my daughters has been taught by them this has been very evident. This should not be the case. The standard should be the same across the piste.

On many occasions I've considered moving the girls to an alternative junior school but have felt compelled to stand by my local school, this report is leaving me wondering how I can risk watching another one of my children struggle to get the marks they truly deserve and can achieve.

The IEB and Interim Executive Headteacher (EHT) fully appreciate how concerned parents are having read the Ofsted report. We are absolutely committed to addressing the issues identified by Ofsted as quickly as possible.

In relation to the children's lack of preparation for secondary school, we will be liaising very closely with the secondary schools to ensure that they are aware of any gaps in learning children have.

One of the very few things the school was complimented on was the fact that children like to come in and "access sports equipment in the mornings and after school"...this has recently been completely taken away from the children, with them now having to go straight in to school at 8.20 when the gates open with no outdoor time at all, they are rushed right in through the door! Are the inspectors aware of this new rule? This has added 15 minutes to our children's school day with absolutely no consultation to parents at all. Surely this should go back to the old way as it was one of the only things that was good about this report!!! All the children I know were hugely disappointed with this action and used to thoroughly enjoy the time they did get in the mornings with their friends.

I was pleased to note on the report the good feedback regarding the school equipment in the playground for the children to use so it was disheartening to hear from my son that this has been removed since they go straight into school as he enjoyed this part of the day and it was the one good part of the report with such good feedback.

A decision was taken to reorganise the start to the day for the children in order to provide a calm entrance into school. The close of register is 8.40 so the 20 minutes at the start of the day is designed to support all pupils with a smooth transition into the school day. Early morning work is available for the children to access and leaders have already noted a calmer transition into school. There is sufficient provision within the school day to allow pupils time to engage in physical activity both during playtime and lunchtime alongside their PE curriculum.

I am a parent of a YR3 pupil from Stafford School, my son is exceeding in learning and performs very well across the board in all subjects, After reading the report I was obviously quite shocked and worried about his future at the school, especially that he has adjusted very well and enjoys learning and environment he is in.

I wanted to ask how quickly is the school going to have next OFSTED check after the school joins an academy trust, Also related to that is a question of how long does it usually take for the implemented changes/improvements to be visible so that we, as parents and our children could observe, hopefully positive results, will the school have small targets to work towards to, so that they can see/ measure (e.g by tests, screening children) whether they are all heading towards improvements in all areas?

The first Ofsted inspection will be in the third year from the date the school converted to academy status.

In normal circumstances we would expect to see significant progress in provision within three months and accelerated progress by the children at the same time.

We have written a detailed improvement plan and there are small targets and milestones within. However, these will be subject to review once we know much more about the probable length of the current Government policies on tackling COVID-19

As a parent who has had 4 children attend this school now for around ten years, I'm wondering how you can truly assure me you can turn this around and not continue to affect the performance of my daughter who is in year 5. Beating in mind ten years ago the school was in special measures and I was given this assurance I'm not really seeing any evidence of this.

Nothing has changed I feel like I am in a time warp- I would like to be part of the team resolving the endless problems

I am currently watching two of my girls really struggle at secondary school , and I'm watching my youngest struggle in year 5. They're grades have all slipped considerably, as a parent, this leaves me with a dilemma. A child whose always thrived in many subjects and is enthusiastic to learn is lost much of this at Stafford and has not yet regained this in secondary school, and after reading this report I'm wondering what impact this is having on my year 5 daughter and even her wellbeing.

The school was in special measures when we first registered there.... and whilst I was assured at the time this could be turned around.... and there were some improvements, here we are again watching it decline. At the expense of our children's education. My knowledge of your inspections is limited but I am intrigued as to why you were inspected by 2 personnel from HMI

On many occasions I've considered moving the girls to an alternative junior school but have felt compelled to stand by my local school, this report is leaving me wondering how I can risk watching another one of my children struggle to get the marks they truly deserve and can achieve.

I look forward to hearing how this can be turned around in the current climate and in a short time frame for my daughter. We finished her final year in Roselands counting the days down till she left due to issues there, and now we are heading in the same direction with Stafford. Such a shame.

Identifying the key issues and addressing them through a detailed improvement plan and rigorous monitoring will secure rapidly the progress the school needs. The IEB is responsible for ensuring the trajectory for the school is rapid and this will be further supported by the academy conversion. One of the significant benefits of joining an academy trust will be that the trust will be able to provide continued support to the school to ensure the improvements are maintained.

HMI do not share with schools how the inspectors for each inspection are identified.

As we move forward we will be establishing parent forums so that parents can contribute their thinking and be part of a wider team working together to resolve problems.

Given the current climate and uncertainties regarding dates to return to school, I am incredibly concerned how this improvement can confidently be achieved and not further impact on my daughters move to secondary school on 2022

Whilst the current situation nationally is of much concern and will impact in the immediate future on what actions can be taken, we are absolutely committed to doing what can be done to secure improvement whilst the school is closed. As soon as the school re-opens we will be addressing with absolute urgency those issues which will secure rapid change to classroom provision and making sure children have the targeted intervention they need.

Communication

Can a meeting be live-streamed or zoomed as parents cannot attend due to the current pandemic?

It was felt that it would be very challenging to conduct a live-streamed meeting for parents due to the potential constraints with technology and the possible number of parents under these challenging circumstances. The decision was made to provide a clear set of slides detailing the key discussion points of the meeting. This ensured all parents received the same clear messages and had the opportunity to raise any questions with the Chair of the IEB and have them answered through a clear Q&A process.

Poor communication with parents.

Worse communication with working parents.

Decisions made without any communication with parents.

Communication is a key priority moving forward and although we are currently reduced to communicating via email or through the school website whilst the school is closed, we will ensure that a parent meeting is arranged as soon Government policies allow this to happen.

Once the school is back to normal the Interim Executive Headteacher will, of course, be available to meet with parents about any concerns that they may have. Regular information will also go out to parents regarding their child's progress.

Blatant disregard for professional advice for poorly implemented 'new regimes'

We are unable to comment on this as we are unsure as to what professional advice it refers.

Will the parents be receiving a clear cut plan of what will be happening in the future with efficient time lines and realistic goals to rectify the multitude of issues the school currently has?

Communication is an extremely weak point for this school and maybe this would be a small positive step to make parents feel more reassured in what is a worrying time in regards to our children's education.

We have just submitted a plan to Ofsted, as we are required to do. We will now produce a summary of that which sets out key priorities and the success criteria and practice indicators we have identified. We will put that on the school website by the beginning of term five.

It is really sad to hear other parents say negative things about the school, and to hear that filter down to their children too as I know how hard teachers work to make it better.

It is heart breaking to read such a negative review of a school which I know is not as bad as people are saying or as bad as Ofsted has said it is

Leadership

Several comments were made about current, previous and future leadership. It would not be appropriate to comment on these as they relate to particular individuals.

Developing processes

I really hope the school is able to put some good plans in place and teach the children basic right from wrong.

Tolerance and understanding of victimisation of children.

Ofsted has identified personal development as a key priority and we will be ensuring that pupils are taught to be respectful, to be tolerant and understanding of others.

Lack of homework.

We are going to review and revise the Homework Policy

Endless requests for 'dress up days' requiring homemade costumes.

We are sensitive to ensuring we do not overload parents with such requests

Disregard of 'other' family members who supply care for children.

Total lack of interest in children's interest out of school.

Total inability to embrace 'hobbies' and activities out of school and utilise them in the child's school development.

Recognising children's interests and particular circumstances is important to us and our practice in the future will reflect this

Finally, the point about assembly and not all pupils participating. Is this not when interventions are run for children to catch up or be challenged with extra work? Does the point refer to these children? Or does it refer to the number of children who refuse to participate and will opt to wait outside instead of go into the hall with their peers? Are you able to clarify that point.

We have already changed our policy on attendance at assemblies and in the future all pupils will be included and welcome

Behaviour

Notoriously poorly behaved children being star of the week.

The fact my child is told to be tolerant when she has been kicked in the back all day by a poorly behaved child.

The mention of off task behaviour being left unchallenged is probably right, because surely when a class teacher has one or more disruptive children who constantly ruin lessons and even though they upset other children in their class and the teacher and TA - the sanctions have become habit to these children and they pay no mind to them, so the class teacher has probably found the best way to continue teaching is to not pay any attention to their disruptive behaviour anymore.

Or was the off task behaviour relating to specific children running wild around the school with little more than temporary, inexperienced, young staff following them around not knowing what to do because a permanent member of staff had not been recruited? I know they advertised and interviewed for support roles, but to the best of my knowledge no one suitable was ever found. I know a young apprentice was employed in September to work with one of the more challenging pupils, she was completely out of her depth and left by Christmas. Maybe it was that the report was referring to? Again, a specific would be good.

I understand the school has had some problems over the past few years, I was on the PTFA for 5 years and a TA there for 2 years recently. However, I firmly believe that most of the issues lie with a couple of very tricky cohorts with individuals who exhibited incredibly disturbing behaviour, which over the course of their time at Roselands and Stafford influenced their classmates and caused a knock on effect.

It is just that there are a few children who ruin it and it is obvious that mainstream school is not the place for them, however as there is no other option due to cut backs, they remain at Stafford and cause havoc. The knock on effects are now that the school is in special measures again.

I also fully understand that it is not the fault of these 'challenging children' and that it is their upbringing which has made them that way. It is just sad that the school suffers because of them.

Lessons are disrupted and learning time lost, because of them. Displays ruined and other children hurt because of them. Classroom atmospheres made unpleasant and children made to feel unsafe – because of them. Staff are upset and go off sick with stress – because of these few children.

Or was the off task behaviour relating to specific children running wild around the school with little more than temporary, inexperienced, young staff following them around not knowing what to do because a permanent member of staff had not been recruited? I know they advertised and interviewed for support roles, but to the best of my knowledge no one suitable was ever found. I know a young apprentice was employed in September to work with one of the more challenging pupils, she was completely out of her depth and left by Christmas. Maybe it was that the report was referring to? Again, a specific would be good.

We recognise that there have been significant issues in relation to maintaining good standards of behaviour from all children. The Behaviour Policy has already been revised and the impact is being seen with fewer children presenting challenging behaviour and disrupting the learning of others. New behavior plans have been introduced for some children and behaviour incidents are being monitored very closely. The Behaviour Policy is now much clearer and better understood by children. It has been placed on the school website.

SEND provision

Luckily my daughter no longer attends so while this isn't something that effects us personally right now I find it shocking that this style is allowed to continue in such a downward spiral, very disappointing but has to be said not surprising at all. Will the staff now be given immediate extra training on SEN needs?

I subsequently hope the SENCo's role across both schools will be very carefully rethought. Terrible show for those most vulnerable....

With regard to the SEND provision, I read the positive note that Starlands facility got in the report, which is good as I know how hard the team work. When the Starlands house was opened 4 or 5 years ago now, it was 'billed' as a facility for all the children to use. Since then it has been exclusively used for SEND children. How can this not be enough provision for them?

I understand that there is a large number of children with additional needs at the school, but surely no more than at any other local school, and not every other local school has a whole house designed specifically for these children to utilise. What were Ofsted looking for on top of this? Can more information be supplied regarding this?

What further intensive Training are the staff going to have for SEN children? and how do you as a school expect them to catch up with their peers. Is there going to be enough time to get them secondary ready. Our concerns of them being Secondary school ready have been spoken about since year 3.

Our main concerns are to do with the SEN aspect within the school as we have 2 children on the SEN register and would like reassurance that the proper provisions, assessments and help they are going to need to complete their time at Stafford will be met. What can you confirm to worried parents of how you are going to achieve this?

One of the very first things we will be focussing on is to improve the identification of children's SEND needs, the planning to meet those needs and the timely review of individual children's progress towards their targets. All of these processes will involve the parents. There will also be a range of professional development training to ensure all teachers have the confidence to, and are skilled in, meeting the needs of individual children.

**Kyra Siddall-Ward
Interim Executive Headteacher**

**Penny Gaunt
Chair of the IEB**