

23rd June 2017

Dear Parents / Carers

Re: Ofsted Inspection Judgement June 2017

This communication makes reference to Staffordshire University Academy's most recent inspection report. We were not allowed to write to you until it was published on the Ofsted website.

As you know, SUA was recently inspected by Ofsted. The inspection was carried out under the new Ofsted framework which was introduced by the Government on 1st September 2016 and which has been promoted as being more demanding than the previous framework.

The overall judgement of the inspectors was that Staffordshire University Academy requires Special Measures. This is clearly a major disappointment to us and is not good enough. We were surprised by this judgement given the significant improvements at the academy in the last two years.

We are encouraged by the fact that the level of support given to the academy by staff, pupils and parents indicates that our community recognises we are improving and that we are striving to provide a good quality of education for our pupils. Indeed at every parents' evening we have held this year, we have been overwhelmed by positive feedback from parents. Over the last three years the number of pupils being admitted to SUA has significantly increased in each new year group; we feel that this is an expression of the confidence that our community has in the academy.

Nevertheless we need to become a 'good' school and we will be working extremely hard to achieve this grade at the next inspection.

The inspectors' analysis of our data for our disadvantaged pupils was the main reason for the judgement; there was no recognition at all of the tremendous improvements in the exam results for many of our pupils over the last year. Whilst I understand the reasons for this judgement it has to be pointed out that they used a very narrow range of data to inform this judgement. **THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT REASON NATIONALLY FOR OBJECTIONS, FROM MANY SCHOOLS, TO THIS NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK.**

Our own analysis of our examination results shows a rising trend in outcomes over the last two years since the previous inspection. 2016 saw record levels of performance across all the key measures for Year 11 and Year 13; pupils generally made good progress.

However, it is Ofsted's view that SUA requires Special Measures. Clearly this is not good enough and I want to reassure you that we will continue to be relentless in driving standards forward to help all of our pupils be as successful as they can be.

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The academy has already started its work on an Improvement Plan to effect rapid change. This plan will bring about improvements quite quickly. We have already made three additional external appointments to the Senior Leadership Team for September 2017 to increase our capacity. We have commissioned support for key areas of the curriculum, from two outstanding academies in North Staffordshire. We will also be supported by Her Majesty's Inspectorate and we are currently starting work with a number of Teaching Schools and Ofsted Inspectors. Their expertise will quality assure what we are currently implementing in order to bring about the changes needed.

A significant amount of this work is being funded by the multi-academy trust that the academy is a member of: Staffordshire University Academies Trust. The Trust is committed to ensuring they play a significant part in supporting the role of leaders and staff at the academy. The Trust's Chief Executive Officer, Keith Hollins, said, "The rapid response of the academy and its senior staff is an encouragingly positive demonstration of the academy's strong determination to address the issues contained in the report".

We are also fortunate to have a very supportive local governing body. Governors will be also taking an important role in supportively challenging leaders at all levels within the academy to ensure rapid progress continues to happen from this point. The academy would like to acknowledge the work of these governors who have supported us and our community by working tirelessly as critical friends over the last two years.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the support you gave the academy in connection with the inspection. The exceptionally high levels of backing from parents and pupils were noted by the inspectors. I can reassure you that the academy is working even harder to address the issues raised in the report. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of the Ofsted report in more detail.

I will ensure that we keep all parents up-to-date with current developments and strategic planning through our website as well as other means. If you would like a hard copy of the report please contact reception and we will issue a paper copy.

Yours sincerely



Mrs R. Hillier
Principal