

Lowbrook Academy Trust
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Wednesday 8th March 2023

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Ofsted Report on Lowbrook Academy

Today marks the formal publication of Ofsted's report, following its inspection of Lowbrook Academy on the 6th and 7th December 2022. We have not had a full "graded" inspection since 2008/2009; an unusually long period of time. Publication of Ofsted's report was delayed by a formal complaint made by the school where we raised serious concerns about the inspection procedure, the framework applied and the lack of experience of the inspectors involved.

We are delighted with the Outstanding grading in the three key areas of Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development and Early Years Provision. However, we were shocked and surprised by the other gradings and the overall grading of Good from Outstanding.

We believe we have an Outstanding school and do not feel the report is an accurate or fair reflection of the school. We appreciate that no school is perfect and that there is always room for improvement; like all schools, we have priorities for development but this report does not, by any means, reflect these.

Based on our academic progress and outcomes alone, our school is a truly Outstanding school. Our academic results far exceed the national average in Math and English, with 99% achieving the expected level over ten consecutive years – placing Lowbrook in the top 1% of schools nationally. During our Ofsted inspection, the inspectors insisted we use one published scheme for mathematics. We do not; we successfully use a variety of schemes and teach to the principles of *stage not age*. We are one of the highest performing schools, if not the highest performing school, in the country for maths. The inspectors further felt we needed to re-sequence the religions in Faith & Belief. Similarly, we see the teaching of RE as a strength, following the Discovery RE model and Pan Berkshire agreed syllabus.

Our focus remains heavily on ensuring children are happy, healthy and, by the time they leave, ready for secondary school. Tackling the wider issues of children's mental health, the cost-of-living crisis' impact on schools, recruitment and retention, the training of quality teachers and supporting emerging leaders remains our focus.

We openly encourage you to review and consider our academic outcomes – [school performance and results](#). Most importantly, if you haven't done so recently, visit the school to meet our amazing students and staff during assemblies and whole school events. Here, you will see a thriving school community which celebrates and supports its students, teachers and staff.

To give you some context on our school's new grade, it is Ofsted's stated intention to reduce dramatically the number of schools graded Outstanding. Consequently, Ofsted has downgraded 82% of previously Outstanding schools that it has inspected since January 2021. Even Ofsted's own complaints procedure is challenging. Ofsted itself has admitted its complaints policy was "not working" for both schools and the inspectorate at a recent Confederation of School Trusts (CST) and will be reviewed, as reported in Schools Week on 9th February 2023.

Like many other primary schools, we have spent the past three years managing the impact of a global pandemic on our students, teachers, and wider community. During this extraordinary time, we have provided the highest quality of remote learning, additional social support to pupils focusing on mental health and their families. This included, for example, delivering meals to children most in need when vulnerable families were housebound with Covid.

Throughout the pandemic, our staff have gone above and beyond to ensure the well-being and education of our pupils, demonstrating time and again their tremendous dedication to our school community. As children, parents, staff and governors returned to in-person schooling, we successfully welcomed pupils back to a formal school environment and, as a testimony to the hard work over this period, 100% of pupils passed their exams in 2022.

Our results speak for themselves and this, combined with the health, well-being and happiness of our pupils, parents, staff and governors, is at the heart of what we do and who we are. We want to thank our parents, carers and wider community for your ongoing support and if you have any queries, please do get in touch with us by emailing lowbrook@lowbrookacademy.co.uk.

The Ofsted report is available and can be viewed on the school's website here – [latest ofsted information](#).

Kind regards,



Dominique Du Pre
Co-Chair of Governors



Stuart Muir
Co-Chair of Governors

References

- 1 Source <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/spielman-1-in-10-outstanding-schools-more-realistic/>
- 2 Source [Ofsted admits its complaints policy 'isn't working' \(schoolsweek.co.uk\)](#)