



Dear parents/carers,

I am pleased to provide you with further information following a recent visit from Ofsted on 17-18 November 2021. I can confirm that this was not a graded inspection, so our most recent designation of 'Good' remains until the next graded (or 'section 5') inspection. As you know, Ofsted said in 2020 that:

“There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection”

When that time comes, we anticipate being in the strongest possible position. Scholars in year 11 remain on track to achieve exceptional academic outcomes, which we believe will place them firmly in the top 5% of all UK schools this year. We predict at least 50% of our scholars will achieve academic outcomes which are strong enough to gain entry to a grammar school sixth form.

Although no grade was awarded following the recent visit, we have received a letter which is packed full of positive feedback. Here are some of the highlights:

“Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils...You want them to ‘stand shoulder to shoulder’ with their peers in every walk of life”

“Pupils said that they feel happy and safe in school...Bullying and discriminatory language is not tolerated. Pupils said that bullying rarely happens...”

“Teachers have high expectations of pupils in lessons”

“Pupils are focused on their learning”

“There are clear routines for pupils to follow and these are well practised. This helps create the calm and orderly environment that we saw in classrooms and throughout the school”

“Leaders and staff are clear about the rules and routines in place to ensure that pupils learn and behave well...Corridors are very calm spaces”

It is always nice to hear such positive feedback about the school we are all so proud of. In this case, the visit came about because of a small number of concerns being raised directly with Ofsted. Ofsted carried out a thorough and detailed two-day inspection and its encouraging and positive findings are set out in its letter.



Ark Greenwich Free School

I am aware that parents greatly value the school's high standards and expectations for behaviour because they understand how this creates an environment where our children are safe from bullying and our school is free from disruption and disorder, allowing us to provide the highest quality education. Indeed, our approach to behaviour management is often cited as the top reason parents send their children to us and why AGFS remains heavily oversubscribed.

Our model has been likened to a 'grammar school culture' with a firm but fair style of behaviour management and a strong emphasis on delivering a broad and balanced academic curriculum. But we also take a 360-degree approach by providing both support and motivation to meet our high standards, for example, through investment in our rewards system and extensive programme of excursions and celebratory events.

Educationists from across the UK visit AGFS to observe our renowned 'Mary Poppins' style culture, with government education behaviour advisor, Tom Bennett, describing it as "fantastic and extraordinary". We are proud of our respectful and disciplined school community and know you are too.

The recent visit from Ofsted highlighted that ***"behaviour records show that sanctions are appropriate and proportionate, and that staff typically follow the behaviour policy consistently"***.

In respect of SEND scholars, who are once again on track to achieve extraordinary academic outcomes this year, the review noted that: ***"expectations of pupils with SEND are equally high. Leaders identify pupils' needs and put in place appropriate support. Leaders work closely with staff to make sure that they know about and understand the needs of pupils in their classes. Teachers use this information effectively. They develop suitable approaches to support pupils with SEND to learn well. Leaders and staff also take into account pupils' additional needs when applying the behaviour policy. They make suitable adaptations to sanctions and rewards for pupils with SEND"***.

We remain fully committed to our high standards approach because we know this is revolutionising the life chances of our scholars and helping to create one of the very highest performing UK schools right here in Greenwich.

We want to continue to work closely with all members of our community to help them understand the link between high expectations and our behaviour and rewards systems. Indeed, a suggestion that we continue to develop this understanding within our school community was the only recommendation that Ofsted made during its visit, and it is one we are committed to. As part of this drive, I am pleased to be able to confirm the reintroduction of parent tours with the Headteacher, where you will be able to observe our amazing school culture in person, followed by a cup of tea with the senior team. If you are interested in attending a guided tour of AGFS, please email lcripps@arkgreenwich.org.

Through scholar voice assemblies and other activities, we will also be redoubling our efforts to ensure every scholar understands why the school has such high standards and how these expectations prepare them for future success.

You can access our recent letter from Ofsted about its inspection by clicking [here](#).



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Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our committed staff, parents, and scholars for their continued support, as we seek to make a difference by creating a school, we can all be proud of.

Yours faithfully,

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'Ambition, Growth, Fellowship, Scholarship'