



COTHAM SCHOOL STAFF AND STUDENTS CELEBRATE AFTER SUCCESSFUL OFSTED INSPECTION IN OCTOBER 2023

Cotham School has been praised by Ofsted inspectors for the 'breadth and ambition' of its curriculum and for its 'calm and harmonious' atmosphere.

The two-day inspection, which took place in October 2023, highlighted how students are 'polite and friendly' and enjoy attending the school, secure in the knowledge that staff cared about them.

Inspectors noted that teachers at the school had strong subject knowledge and delivered lessons which improved students' life chances.

There was further praise for Cotham's range of extra-curricular clubs which helped to develop students' talents and interests, as well as the many leadership opportunities available, ranging from being a reading buddy to becoming a sports leader or house captain.

Headteacher Jo Butler said she was thrilled by the report. "This kind of feedback from Ofsted means so much to students and their families, the staff, my senior leadership team and the board of governors," she said.

"We have such an amazing school community here where everyone plays their part on a daily basis to make it the place it is. Ofsted's very positive report is wonderful news for us all – something for everyone to celebrate."

The inspection took place on 17 and 18 October during which time inspectors surveyed students and staff, met with senior leaders and several governors. They evaluated the school's approach to safeguarding and carried out a 'deep dive' into English, maths, history and modern languages. Inspectors were very positive about all these areas.

Verbal feedback by lead inspector Sarah Favager-Dalton to the senior leadership team and governors highlighted the very positive contributions made by many parents, carers and students. Parents and carers remarked that the school's behaviour policy was 'strict but fair' and inspectors said that the school's core value of respect was 'tangible across the school.'

In a letter to parents and carers, Mrs Butler thanked the school community for the valuable part they had played during the inspection. "I would very much like to thank the many parents and carers, students and staff who contributed to the inspection procedure," she said.

"The prospect of a visit by Ofsted is daunting for every school, but to hear the many wonderful things said during the inspection has made the process really worthwhile."

Only one area was noted for improvement – that work given to students does not always reflect the ambition of the curriculum. Ms Butler assured parents and carers in her letter that the Senior Leadership Team was already addressing this.

Sandra Fryer, Chair of Governors, also expressed thanks to "everyone who has contributed to the success of our amazing and multicultural school leading to this excellent Ofsted outcome."

This was the first post-pandemic inspection for Cotham School - its last was in 2018 when the school was also graded 'good'. Any school judged to be 'good' undergoes an inspection every four years to confirm that the school should retain the same grade.

Additional notes

Cotham School is an 11-18 comprehensive secondary school with academy status in Cotham, a suburb of Bristol.

The school operates a highly successful Post 16 (sixth form) provision with nearby Redland Green School.

Cotham School dates back to 1856. It became a comprehensive school in 2001. Notable alumni include Maya Jama and two Nobel Laureates: Paul Dirac, who received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1933, and Peter Higgs who received the same award in 2013.