

We are proud to celebrate our recent Ofsted report from May 2023, which has confirmed Gillingham School to be 'Good' in all areas. As a school we are committed to not only providing the best possible academic outcomes for all our students, but also aim to prepare them for life in the 21st century, equipping them with the values, attitudes and skills required to thrive in an ever-changing and competitive world. The report noted 'there is a shared and clear moral purpose to provide every pupil with the best opportunities in life' which reflects the values that lie at the heart of our school.

The inspectors spoke of our school reflecting the long established motto of 'through teaching we learn', and stated that Gillingham leaders 'remove barriers to learning to ensure pupils succeed'. They drew attention to the well-planned curriculum, which is wide ranging and 'ambitious for all pupils', with nearly all pupils studying a modern foreign language to the age of sixteen. They noted that at Key Stage Four 'most students study the 'English Baccalaureate. This includes those pupils who are disadvantaged'. This is part of our commitment to expecting 'the very best for every pupil', ensuring they have a broad basis of subjects upon which to build when entering further study, employment or apprenticeships. At Key Stage Five, the qualifications available are 'well suited to their interests and future plans'. Teachers have 'strong subject knowledge' which they use to 'support and challenge pupils'. The report noted that lessons are 'focused and purposeful', with students taking an active role in their learning. Further opportunities for development occur by our 'well planned careers programme, which provides information to support their next steps'. We are particularly proud that Ofsted praised the strength of our support for students with additional needs, confirming our commitment to equity of provision for all. They noted that 'staff know the individual needs of pupils with SEND well' and through carefully planned teaching, pupils are supported to 'successfully progress through the curriculum'.

Another strength of the school highlighted by the inspectors was the 'wide range of clubs and activities available', which 'pupils enjoy and make good use of'. Again, the report noted the importance we place on ensuring all students are able to participate in these opportunities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Alongside this, pupils 'particularly value the many opportunities for leadership, such as being part of the school council or becoming head students, and can see how these enable them to contribute to the further development of the school'.

These opportunities all form part of the wider personal development programme in our school. There is a 'restless determination' amongst leaders 'to create a culture of equality and mutual respect'. We are proud that Ofsted have recognised our commitment to prioritise this work, noting that pupils 'learn about and understand the school values. These include treating everyone with kindness and dignity'. They spoke of the positive relationships between staff and pupils and the active role sixth formers play in modelling our school values. When issues of bullying arise, leaders take 'swift action to resolve it' and have 'instigated alternative ways to encourage pupils to speak up about this issue', for example through the newly launched 'itsnotbanter' email address. To support this work, all pupils study a PSHE curriculum taught by subject specialists, described by Ofsted as a 'well designed curriculum which is responsive to current and contextual issues' where pupils learn about 'tolerance, respect and the importance of how other people live'.

The outcome of this report, in confirming the quality of our education, the strength of pupil behaviour and attitudes in our school and wider personal development, reflects what we see on a daily basis. Our commitment to ongoing staff training has created a 'culture of continual reflection, which is leading to sustained improvement'. It is a reflection of the dedication of every member of our staff, who are committed to providing the best opportunities for all the pupils in our school community. We would like to thank our pupils, all staff, families and Governors who have all played a role in positively shaping our school, and to reaffirm our commitment to continue to strive to improve the provision for our young people.