



OFSTED Frequently Asked Questions

1. *To what extent were the school aware of the problems highlighted in the OFSTED report?*

The school were aware of many of the issues which were outlined in the report and were already putting a number of measures into place around behaviour. However, these strategies had not had enough time to embed prior to the inspection and therefore they had not had the desired impact. These changes should have moved at a faster pace, so a number of these approaches have been adapted to ensure quicker impact.

2. *How are you going to improve the behaviour of the 'significant minority of pupils' who have a negative impact on the learning of many?*

We have adopted a two-pronged approach to tackling behaviour. Firstly, we have introduced a new 'C' System, with C standing for both choice and consequence, which give students the opportunity to modify their behaviour, but with clear consequences if they do not. There is greater responsibility for behaviour placed on the class teacher and the curriculum leader, who will feel more equipped through specific behaviour management training. The Behaviour and Learning Hub provides a space to remove students from lessons in order to provide them with the interventions they need to behave appropriately. If students continue to refuse to conform to behaviour expectations, they will be dealt with most severely. Secondly, an increased focus on recognising the positive aspects of behaviour with clear rewards coupled with more engaging lessons will lead to a culture of higher expectations and less behaviour issues.

We believe that the move from a vertical to a horizontal tutoring system will have a significant positive impact on behaviour by streamlining pastoral systems, creating stronger relationships with tutors and Raising Standards Leaders (RSLs) with the year group and creating high expectations of behaviour.

3. *How are you going to make sure that students feel safe at school?*

During lockdown we have spent time developing, sharing, and promoting our vision for a *culture of care* in order that all students at Notley feel safe and supported by staff. It is imperative that students trust staff and feel that they will be supported and helped if they have a problem. We have replaced the role of Student Support Officers with Pastoral Managers, who will systematically work closely with pastoral leaders to ensure that student concerns are dealt with in a timely and effective manner. Although still accessible, their officers are in a more discreet location providing students with increased privacy. There will be specific zones for year groups as well as a greater staff presence in lesson changeover and in the corridors. Senior leaders will be doing daily walkabouts to increase their presence and profile with students. Also, we will continue the weekly Student Voice sessions with the senior team, where every student, in small groups, will have the chance to share the positives and identify what needs to improve at school.

4. *How are you going to resolve the name calling and bullying which is described as features of everyday life at Notley?*

The promotion of a culture of care, is not only about staff's attitude towards students, but also students' attitudes to each other. We have appointed a Student Ambassador Leader whose role is to work with and support the Student Ambassadors in promoting equality and diversity throughout the school. Additionally, Personal Development Time (PDT), tutor time and assemblies will be used to encourage tolerance and celebrate diversity as well as increase awareness of what bullying is and its impact. We will be working towards the Diana Award as a school, whose anti-bullying approach encourages changes in attitudes and behaviours for young people by young people through a mentoring scheme. We are focussed on empowering students to have the confidence to report unkindness and bullying whether witnessed or experienced.

5. *Please outline how you will ensure high quality teaching across all subjects/year groups to develop students 'enthusiasm for learning'.*

During the lockdown each subject area has revisited their curriculum plans to ensure that they are appropriately sequenced, that they build on what students have already learnt and prepare them for future learning. They have identified for each unit – what students must know in order to be on track and to make progress. Once these curriculum plans have been checked and discussed they will be put on the website for everyone to see.

We have developed a new approach to the delivery of the curriculum, in other words what happens in lessons, called the Notley 10 (N10). These are 10 core principles for excellent teaching and learning that will characterise lessons moving forward such as high expectations, catering for the needs of all students and effective home learning. Staff and subject leaders have evaluated their existing skills in these areas and there is an extensive training programme underway to address all areas for improvement. Subject leaders have already started working closely with experienced colleagues in other schools, with whom they can collaborate and share expertise.

Through a more robust programme of monitoring and quality assurance, all subject leaders will undertake a substantial self-evaluation programme of their department which will require them to identify strengths and areas for development. A succession of challenge meetings will ensure the quality and appropriateness of teaching, learning, and outcomes. Similarly, there are a number of highly experienced and effective teachers and subject areas in the school who are able to model excellent practice.

6. *How will you improve the quality of provision for SEND pupils to ensure that teachers are aware of their needs and are able to overcome all barriers to learning in lessons?*

It is important to point out that the key area for improvement identified by OFSTED is that the needs of SEND students are not being consistently met in all lessons. The information shared by the Learning Support Faculty, which is high quality, is not being applied consistently nor effectively in all lessons. In order to address this, we are ensuring that students' one-page profiles are used in all lessons and that class teachers have all the skills needed to support students. During lockdown, all staff undertook SEND professional development and there was an audit of teacher knowledge. We have introduced a link teacher within each faculty area who will liaise closely with Learning Support and ensure that key information and training cascades down to other colleagues. Learning Mentors have been assigned to faculties with increased time given to planning in order to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students. Further strategies and processes are being introduced to improve communication and facilitate joint planning.

7. *How will you raise expectations and create a culture of high aspirations?*

We believe that when students are given responsibility, they will rise to the challenge both academically and personally. Whether it is through Student Voice, student leadership or through building resilience through creating a culture of challenge. We will be introducing

ambitious target-setting for all students, based on FFT 20 targets (the outcomes of highest 20% of schools in the country). In Years 7 and 8 this will be a split grade flightpath model, whilst in Year 9 and beyond it will be a single target grade. We will report termly on student progress towards this target in each subject area. Through achievement board meetings, parent/carer-teacher consultations, student review weeks and tutor intervention we will address underperformance regularly and systematically.

There will be increased expectations on staff to ensure that students perform through clear and measurable performance management targets, robust line management meetings, honest subject level self-evaluation processes, and external review and challenge.

We will continue to report on students' attitude to learning and effort through commenting on their *learning behaviours*. Students in each subject area will be identified as: outstanding, engaged, compliant, reluctant. This will be reported termly to supplement the progress information.

It is important to develop the 'whole' student experience and recognise success can be achieved in many ways. The Notley Achievement Award (NAA) is being introduced to encourage students to make good progress in their academic studies, have high levels of attendance and complete a variety of tasks linked to developing their 'life skills' and wider personal experiences. The NAA will be awarded each year and form a key element of the students' learning journey through the school.

8. How will you plan, monitor, and evaluate the school's improvement? How long will it take before the school will be good again?

We have written an extensive school improvement plan called a Statement of Action which has 8 priorities: improve the quality of pupils' behaviour and safety; improve the quality of education; improve the implementation and delivery of the planned curriculum; improve the quality of provision for SEND pupils; rapidly improve leadership and management at all levels; raise achievement and accelerate pupils' progress in all curriculum areas; develop the culture and ethos of the school to improve pupils' awareness of cultural capital and life skills; and improve the quality of the provision in the sixth form. We will be publishing the Statement of Action onto the website.

North Essex Multi Academy Trust (NEMAT) have established a Governor Intervention Board (GIB) to meet monthly with the Senior Leadership Team to challenge the progress being made against the planned Statement of Action and report to the Local Governing Body (LGB) and Trust Board. The GIB is made up of two Notley LGB governors and an external educational expert.

Our original intention was that the school would no longer be judged to have Serious Weaknesses by Spring 2021; this is still our intention but it is dependent on when OFSTED resumes its monitoring visits to schools.

9. Are there any plans to teach students in ability groupings?

Yes, from September 2020, students will be in sets in Science and Maths from Year 7 until Year 11.

10. How will you improve communication with parents and carers?

We hope that there has been a visible improvement in the communication between home and school despite lockdown. During the last few months, we have introduced weekly parent/carer and student bulletins. We have changed the Pastoral Manager's role in order to facilitate communication and ensure that it is responsive. The publication of the curriculum plans will be available on the website in September and will ensure that parents and carers are clear about what is being taught and when, whilst the termly

reports will provide an insight into whether students are on track or not. From September, we will be organising year group welcome evenings to provide more information about the new initiatives and explain the individual focus and challenges for that year group. Half-termly parent-carer forums and surveys will promote honest communication between school and home and will help us evaluate some of the school improvement initiatives. As mentioned earlier the Statement of Action will be published on the website with half-termly updates, so that the wider school community can regularly monitor the school improvement journey.

11. *Is the school at risk of being re-brokered into another Trust?*

We are unable to answer this question at this point. Since the OFSTED inspection, we have been in regular contact with the office of the Regional School Commissioner to make them aware of the school improvement measures being put into place. They have been supportive of our actions so far.

12. *Does the senior leadership, including the Trust Board and governors, have the capacity to lead school improvement?*

The OFSTED report acknowledged that leaders had a clear and accurate picture of what needed improving and had responded appropriately, however these initiatives were not fully embedded and therefore had not had the desired impact yet.

During lockdown there has been a review of leadership competencies identifying strengths as well as areas for development, leading to a restructuring of the roles and responsibilities with the Senior Leadership Team.