

26 March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Firstly, I want to thank parents/carers for the numerous positive response we have received following the letter we sent you about our Ofsted report. We appreciate the recognition of the hard work of our staff and wider community to provide the very best, well-rounded education for our students in a very challenging landscape.

You may have seen the Bristol Post article yesterday, 25 March, regarding our recent Ofsted report.

Due to the headline, I thought it would be helpful to provide some more detail. The key point is that we are being judged on a completely different framework and set of criteria to the one used ten years ago.

A very high number of previously outstanding schools in the local area have had the same experience (Redland Green, Gordano, Backwell, Bristol Cathedral Choir School, etc) under the new framework and of course there is no longer a single word judgement made about schools after the tragic death of Headteacher Ruth Perry.

Under the new framework, far fewer schools are being deemed outstanding in the various areas of focus.

We think the report highlighted perfectly reasonable areas for development, particularly around our classroom practice for SEND students and the use of Pupil Passports. You will be aware that in the last ten years the numbers of students with complex needs have increased dramatically and we still have work to do to ensure our classroom practice reflects this, so please rest assured that we have detailed strategic plans in place to address this. This area for development alone is sufficient reason not to award an outstanding in terms of quality of education, regardless of all the great things that we do already do. The school inspection handbook outlines the criteria for each judgement (see [here](#), scroll down to Part 3) and you can see how exacting they are: they work on the basis of best fit and so Ofsted deemed us to be securely "good" rather than "outstanding" in each area.

In the same way, the results our students achieve are as good, if not better than they were before our previous inspection in 2015. 2023 saw our best ever Progress 8 score and our disadvantaged students outperformed non-disadvantaged students nationally, which is an incredible achievement, and our three-year average for GCSE scores is the highest we have ever achieved, and our A Level outcomes are better than they have been for twelve years, and look set to improve further. However, this new framework looks much less at the data and student outcomes than the previous framework.

By the time of our next OFSTED, the grading system will have changed yet again, as will the criteria on which we will be judged, so it is impossible to compare one OFSTED with another (other than the two we had in 2012 and 2015, which were both done under the same system). Our results are as good as ever and improving, the OFSTED parental survey showed that more parents and carers were positive about the school than ever before, and, as the report suggests, the children the inspectors spoke to were also incredibly positive about their experience here.

I would like to pay tribute to our staff and partners who work tirelessly to provide such rich opportunities for our students to develop the skills, knowledge, and Alive qualities that we so value at SMRT. Sincere thanks again to our parent/carer body for your ongoing support.

I hope this is useful context, and please be assured that we are striving for the best education possible for the young people in our community and we are hopeful that the next iteration of the OFSTED inspection framework will recognise this.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Del Planter', with a stylized, cursive script.

Del Planter  
Headteacher