

Dear families

I hope you are well. I am writing to you today to give you a very positive update on the progress that Dixons Unity Academy is making.

You may recall that in July last year we wrote to you about the Ofsted inspection of the school early in 2023. Ofsted's report highlighted a number of positive aspects, including that students feel safe at school and that most are happy, and that "behaviour in classrooms is routinely calm and orderly. This allows teachers to teach and pupils to learn." However, inspectors also highlighted some areas for improvement. In our letter to you, we said we disagreed with a number of these and had lodged a formal complaint with Ofsted.

However, it was also important that we addressed the areas where we agreed there was room for improvement. We have, therefore, been working extremely hard over the last six months to deliver the action plan we drew up to achieve rapid improvement of the school.

Ofsted inspectors visited Dixons Unity just before Christmas for a monitoring inspection and I am delighted to say their report (available to read in full on our website) confirms we are making good progress. I would like to thank all the staff for the work they have done, and for the support and advice provided by our new academy improvement board.

In particular, they have praised the impact that a number of new staff have made alongside our excellent existing team. These include new subject leaders in maths, PE, business, and information technology; an assistant principal in charge of alternative provision; a number of appointments to increase the capacity of the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) team, including a new special educational needs co-ordinator; and extra staff in the pastoral team and the attendance team.

Ofsted says that the hard work the Dixons Unity team has put in has improved even further the quality of education at the school. The inspectors also praise Mr Jacobs, appointed last year, for his leadership.

The final highlight I would like to pull from the report is the recognition Ofsted gives to our work to make the school "a community hub". It is so important to us that our academies are central to their communities, supporting families and students beyond the school gates. At Dixons Unity, through our 'Unity Community' hub, we provide direct support for essential resources, and we signpost families to external services, so they get the help they need. Staff have reached out to families at summer and at Christmas fairs; and they make regular calls to parents to build stronger bonds and overcome some of the barriers to students' education that have intensified in the post-COVID period. Links between home, the community and school have never been as important as now and I am very proud Dixons Unity is a beacon in this area.

However, the positive comments throughout the report do not mean we will stop working hard for your children. There is always more to do, and we are looking forward to making the school even better. Thank you for all your support as we do this.

Yours faithfully

Luke Sparkes
Chief Executive