



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

Astley Sports College & Community High School
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Executive Headteacher Mr M Bowler

6th July 2016

Dear Families,

As you are aware the school was inspected by Ofsted on the 10th and 11th May 2016. We have now received the final report and enclose a copy of the report with this letter. The inspection team judged Astley Sports College to be a school that 'requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it should.' Since taking on the role of Executive Headteacher in January, I and my team have worked tirelessly to address the issues that have been facing the school. We understand that it is difficult for everyone involved in the school to recognise the extent of the challenges facing Astley, but we have also been clear with you as families, both in the letters we have sent home and in our parent meetings that the school has been underperforming for a long period of time. It has been very important to us that you understand the issues that face the school in order that we can have your support in addressing them.

The report highlights the many challenges facing the school, however you can be assured that all of these areas were already being addressed. We have developed new approaches to a whole variety of areas in school which will improve those areas that are currently weak. Understandably, of most concern to parents will be the judgement on behaviour. At the time of the inspection the new behaviour policy had only been in operation for a week. The previous approach to behaviour management within school had broken down and the staff were still getting used to a new inclusive system. In addition, provision for some of our most vulnerable and challenging students has not previously been adequate, and this has led, in part, to an increase in poor behaviour choices by a minority of students that has impacted on the culture within the school. The new ASPIRE core values that have been prepared for launch in September will help redefine this area of school as we seek to build a school community based on inclusion, support and aspiration. Ms Beach has held assemblies with all year groups and outlined her high expectations of impeccable behaviour. We have also sought to include students more proactively in the work of the school and student leadership has been given far more importance than previously was the case. We have invested significant resources into a complete redesign of our inclusion support in order to address the issues around behaviour. We will update you in September on all of the work that has been done and how all of our systems will operate for the coming year. We are also happy to report that we have undergone an intensive period of recruitment to address the issue of supply within the school and have made twelve fantastic new appointments to the school to fill the gaps that were experienced this year.

The report confirms the success and positive impact of the shared leadership solutions that have been in place since January 2016. It provides recognition of how far we have been able to move the school in a very short space of time. The need for 'root and branch' change that has taken place since January is starting to show impact in a number of areas. Leadership has been strengthened considerably and the improvements in outcomes and teaching and learning have also been recognised in the report. Many of the changes are still in the implementation stage and there is a lot of work to do to embed improved practice in these areas but improvement is taking place swiftly: ***"The Executive Headteacher has brought a clear vision for improvement that is ambitious and achievable. He has a proven track record of outstanding leadership."*** The section on leadership and management makes clear how far the support of Longdendale High School has been critical in securing improvement. It recognises that the new leaders at Astley ***"have inspired confidence and momentum for the school to improve quickly"*** and ***"clearly accelerated the improvements needed and the confidence and capacity of the staff at the school."*** We can be confident that the improvements already evident will continue

to develop and embed as we now have permanent leadership arrangements in our partnership. All staff are committed to ensuring that Astley develops into a truly great school, by any measure of performance, and does so quickly.

In addressing areas of underperformance and improving outcomes for students Astley is now improving rapidly and we are committed to ensuring that this progress is accelerated and extended in the future. We are well aware that all of our improvements need to be firmly embedded and applied with rigour and consistency by all staff. We pleased that the inspectors recognised that the school is on a clear journey of improvement and could see the impact of the high expectations and raised aspirations which are core aspects of the new vision for the school we have brought since January. You have our commitment that we will continue to drive this improvement and ensure we provide opportunities for all our students to achieve, succeed and be happy.

We will keep you well-informed about our progress in all areas of improvement, not just the areas identified by Ofsted. In addition to the targets for improvement set by Ofsted, which you can read in the report, we have a set of key priorities identified in January which represent our focus for the school as we seek to make it a fantastic place of learning. These key priorities are:

- 1. To raise achievement by ensuring that all students make at least expected progress in all areas of the curriculum.**
- 2. To ensure that teaching across the school is consistently good or better, and meets the needs of all students.**
- 3. To develop good attitudes to learning amongst all students.**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their continued hard work and commitment to the changes we have implemented so far, the Governing body for their support and challenge in supporting our vision for school improvement and finally, you, the parents and carers for your support in seeking to make this school the best place of learning it can be. We look forward to working with you all to address the areas for development in the coming months and continuing this exciting journey of improvement.

Yours sincerely,



Matthew Bowler
Executive Headteacher



Fay Beach
Associate Headteacher