



8th March 2018

Ofsted Inspection 20th February 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you know, on 20th February this year we were visited by inspectors from Ofsted. Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. This organisation is responsible for inspecting and regulating services that care for children and young people, as well as services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

During the day-long inspection, safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures were checked, along with information about pupils' academic progress. The inspector observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects and year groups, including Cedar class. The inspector met with senior and middle leaders at the school, and with our Chair of Governors and representatives from EMLC Academy Trust. She scrutinised pupils' work and met with a group of eight pupils. The inspector also spoke informally with parents at the end of the school day and analysed the responses of staff, parents and pupils that completed the Ofsted questionnaires. After this process was completed, the inspector came to her judgement about the quality of provision Orchard Academy delivers to your children.

Following this inspection, I am delighted to confirm that **Orchard Academy continues to be a good school.**

This judgement is testament to the commitment, passion, professionalism and hard work of our staff, to whom I'd like to place on record my thanks for their continued efforts in their duties. It is also a real credit to the fantastic attitudes to learning your children come to school with. The children spoke with real enthusiasm about the school, and the inspector was particularly pleased with their ability to quickly pinpoint pieces of work they were especially proud of, as well as their ability to explain *why* they were proud of it. She was also very impressed with the level of ambition and aspiration your children have for their own futures. I was truly proud to show the inspector around school, see the fantastic learning that takes place in our classrooms on a day-to-day basis and let her experience the wonderful, focused, purposeful family atmosphere around our Academy.

Previous Interim Principal, Mike Lavelle (now Head of Education at EMLC Academy Trust) passed on his congratulations. "I was very pleased by the way the children conducted themselves throughout the inspection. They are a huge credit to their families and to Orchard. In addition, the inspector acknowledged the excellent work of staff and the strong leadership provided by the Headteacher. Well done to everyone and thank you for your continuing support."

Principal: **Mr C Brown** Assistant Vice Principals: **Mr L Bartishel and Mr J Wilson**
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EMLC Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, registered number 08149829. The registered office is Bridge House, Bridge Street, Olney, MK46 4AB.

Orchard Academy is a business name of EMLC Academy Trust.



Orchard and Shepherdswell
Academy
Together we will achieve

Key highlights from the report of which we should **all** be particularly proud:

- **The values of tolerance and high ambition that are expressed in our ‘school creed’ are promoted effectively.**
- **There is an impressively purposeful atmosphere in the school.**
- **Pupils who spoke to the inspector were very positive about their experience of school, acknowledging how pupils’ behaviour in class has improved.**
- **Pupils’ progress in writing is remarkably strong.**
- **Due to better teaching, progress in mathematics and reading is generally improving.**
- **Work belonging to pupils who are supported in the base (Cedar) indicates that they take pride in their writing and are making progress.**
- **The school has benefited from support provided by the EMLC Academy Trust. They insist that improvements are pacy so that the high expectations they hold for all pupils, including those eligible for additional funding, are met.**
- **Mrs. Stockton, our SENCo, has made a good start on improving many aspects of the provision, including the way that progress is tracked for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.**
- **Our designated safeguarding lead Mrs. James has ensured that safeguarding records and procedures are effective and fit for purpose. She has established a tight system which provides a helpful overview of each pupil’s concerns, no matter how minor.**
- **Pupils’ responses to the Ofsted survey were very positive. Of the 182 responses to the pupil survey, the overwhelming majority said that they enjoy learning and that they feel safe. The pupils with whom the inspector met spoke about their school in glowing terms. They described how the school is friendly and how any kind of bullying is ‘simply not permitted’.**

As with any Ofsted inspection, there are always areas on which to improve. Our key ‘next steps’ are:

- **Ensuring most-able pupils are provided with the level of challenge they need to make the very strong progress of which they are capable, particularly in reading.**
- **Ensuring improvements to the Cedar provision continue to be swiftly implemented and carefully checked to make sure that pupils’ individual needs are fully met.**

Please be assured that everyone here is committed to improving the school further in **all** areas – not just the ones listed by Ofsted during their inspection. We have just as high aspirations for your children as you do and are dedicated to giving them the best opportunities/ preparation for the rest of their school life and beyond.

The full Ofsted report is now available on our website, and I would encourage you to please read it in its entirety. If you have any thoughts or comments about its contents, please feel free to contact me through the usual channels at school. I would like to thank those parents that filled in the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire – your views were very much taken into account by the inspector.

“Enjoy the journey. Enjoy success. Together, we will achieve!”

Yours sincerely,

Mr. C. Brown
Principal

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