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Head of School

Andrea Jones

Executive Principal

Melanie Wicks

13th March 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Last month a full external review of the provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at Longdendale High School was carried out by a specialist team from the National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN). This was carried out as part of the Stamford Park Trust monitoring and review process to support our school to continue to offer the best possible provision in all areas for all of our students.

The review included a thorough scrutiny of the school's own evaluation of our SEND provision, as well as the plan in place to develop and improve this further. The reviewers also visited a wide range of lessons to see the provision and practice first hand, speaking to groups of students and reviewing the work in their books over time as well as meetings with a range of school staff and speaking to parents.

We are delighted to share that the review highlighted many strengths in our provision for our students with SEND, and the support in place to ensure all students are able to make strong progress across the curriculum and achieve their full potential. As a result, our SEND students are well prepared for their future lives and careers, and leave Longdendale with results that are above national averages for this cohort of students, and go on to successfully access a wide range of post-16 opportunities. This review also recognised that students with SEND at Longdendale attain the relevant skills for progressing to the next stage of education, employment or training. The review highlighted that students with SEND at Longdendale have full access to all areas of the curriculum and all areas of school life. This is based on a culture of high expectations and aspirations for all students. The report notes "The leadership team have a clear vision for SEND and know what needs to be developed. The vision is communicated to and understood by all staff. The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear and ambitious vision for SEND curriculum provision and outcomes in the school based on a culture of high aspirations for all pupils." Our students also shared how much they enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities on offer at Longdendale and how they are able to access them fully.

As a school, we recognise that the transition to secondary school from primary school can be challenging for some students, particularly those who have additional needs, and we were pleased that the review recognised the careful planning and consideration that we put into our extensive transition and induction programme to support this. They noted that "additional support for pupils with SEN is provided for all points of transition. As a result, pupils with SEND are well prepared for their next phase of education."

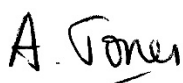
Throughout the review process, the highly positive relationships between staff and students were recognised as a real strength of the school, along with the commitment by teaching and inclusion staff to ensure that needs are identified and supported at every stage. The assessors commented that "Relationships are extremely positive between staff, parents and pupils and this is due, in large part, to extremely effective methods of communication." The review also identified that "all staff understand their responsibilities towards pupils with SEND... and the school is committed to a person-centred ethos which informs all aspects of school life".

There were many areas of strength identified regarding the provision for students in the classroom across subjects, and the skill of many of our teachers and teaching assistants in adapting practice to ensure needs are met. As a result, the reviewers noted that "Pupils with SEND develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum and gain the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed." In lessons, they saw a range of strategies being used by teachers to ensure all students could successfully access their learning and achieve well. As part of the review, we discussed how this can be further improved to accelerate progress and to ensure this is consistent in all lessons for all students, and this is an area we are continuing to focus on moving forwards. This includes ensuring that all our staff continue to be provided with high quality training and development on an ongoing basis. The reviewers were impressed with the clear identification of the key priorities for improvement and the next steps and action in place to support this and shared that "The SEND implementation plan is comprehensive and the SENCO being part of SLT will help to ensure that it is achieved." It was fantastic to hear how positive our students and their parents and carers are about the support they receive in school. From discussions with both students and parents, the reviewers shared that "Pupils with SEND and their parents speak positively of the support they receive, and the outcomes achieved. They are able to communicate how the support has made a difference to their learning and development." This is clearly an excellent foundation for us to continue to build on.

The reviewers looked at the wide range of interventions and support available for students with SEND and recognised that this was extensive and builds on the strengths of a highly skilled and trained team of staff. We discussed how we can further develop the monitoring of the success of these interventions and the different tools and approaches we could use to further strengthen our assessment and identification of need to ensure all interventions are very specific and adapted as necessary.

We have worked exceptionally hard to work in partnership with our parents and carers, and the review highlighted real strength in this area, and that the school provides a range of opportunities for parents to communicate with the SEND team in school and to work collaboratively to support their children. The reviewers commented that "Communication with parents is a strength; we feel that in some channels of communication the school undersells how accessible they are to parents." The reviewers also noted that "The school is proactive in ensuring that parents of pupils with SEND are well informed" and we were delighted to hear that parents and carers were "extremely positive about the provision made by school; this included communication and development of personalised approaches." We will of course continue to work in partnership with our families, and identify areas where we can further develop our practice and provision to support our students. If there is anything further you would like to discuss about our SEND provision or if you would like a copy of the full report from this review, please contact Miss Gill, our SENDCO or Mrs Parker, our Assistant SENDCO, in the first instance. We look forward to working with you to continue to provide all of our students with the best quality provision in all areas of school life in order to support our students at every stage of their education.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Jones'.

Andrea Jones
Headteacher