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**ABBEYFIELD
SCHOOL**
*Creative
Education
Trust*

20 April 2026

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to share Abbeyfield School's new Ofsted report card which has now been officially published.

Ofsted has recently changed the way it reports on inspections and schools no longer receive one-word judgements.

To help families understand the new system, we recommend watching Ofsted's short video guide for parents (<https://youtu.be/kbl0FvY976g>). This explains how the five new standards work and why the new 'Expected Standard' is now the benchmark for effective, high-performing schools doing everything they should. Ofsted has also been clear that the new grades can't be compared to the old ones, since this is a different approach to inspection and a new way of reporting.

I am pleased to share that our **Leadership and Governance** at Abbeyfield meets the 'Expected Standard', with inspectors noting that: "Leaders are taking thoughtful and well-considered action to improve the school, and their work has had a clear and positive impact in a relatively short period."

The report highlights that leaders' actions are "improving pupils' day-to-day experiences" and Creative Education Trust is noted as providing effective support and helping to ensure that improvement work stays focused and coordinated.

Importantly, safeguarding standards have also been met, with the reporting highlighting that Abbeyfield has "an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed." As a result, "pupils are made safer and feel safe."

Among many highlights, it is very encouraging to see that Ofsted recognises elements of our values and culture in their findings. We are described as "a values-driven school that nurtures ambition, respect and kindness." Inspectors highlighted that many students "feel that they belong to the school community and value the pastoral support available" and they appreciate the "safe spaces... and the help they receive to manage their emotions."

As Ofsted has acknowledged, leaders at Abbeyfield "have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve, and they use this insight to make decisions that help pupils learn more successfully." The areas that Ofsted has categorised as 'Needs Attention' all closely mirror the areas already in our school improvement plan. We have included below an update on the next steps we will be taking to ensure continuous improvement.

Achievement: Inspectors noted that "Outcomes in national examinations are broadly average overall", however performance varies between subjects and for different groups of learners. We are working at pace to ensure every child secures strong foundations in reading, writing and



mathematics, and that teaching is consistently precise and well sequenced across all subjects. Our define/decode literacy strategy, and our recent focus on feedback and assessment ensures that students are clear on how to improve their work.

Attendance and Behaviour: Behaviour around school is mentioned in the report as generally calm, however we are aware that behaviour is not consistently calm in all lessons. Inspectors have also tasked the school with ensuring that attendance rates further improve.

We have strengthened our attendance and behaviour systems this year including the implementation of our new attendance handbook and a tiered approach for support. We recently launched the Abbeyfield+ platform which offers a one-stop hub and personalised support for attendance. You will continue to see us prioritise attendance, routines and positive relationships so that every classroom is a place of focused learning.

Inclusion: This is an area of positive transformation for us, however Ofsted rightly noted that provision is not yet consistent for every child with additional needs. Since the inspection, we have continued to embed higher quality adaptive teaching and sharper early identification systems so that students with SEND, and those who are disadvantaged, receive the reliable support they deserve.

Separately, we are also pleased to be able to share that we have recently been awarded the IQM Inclusive School Award with Flagship School Status, the highest level awarded by the Inclusion Quality Mark.

Personal Development & Wellbeing: Our Ofsted report highlights that although we have a planned personal development offer (including extra-curricular clubs, assemblies and PSHE lessons), however this is not yet having the full impact we want it to have for every child.

We are working hard to ensure that PSHE is well taught. We have reviewed our curriculum and accessed expertise from the PSHE association to ensure that the topics covered are relevant and build on prior knowledge. We are also striving to ensure that more students are able to take part in the wide range of activities, clubs and leadership opportunities available. Expanding participation, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs, will be a key focus for us over the next 12 months.

We are very proud of the cast of The Little Mermaid, and we hope to see even more students involved with our upcoming production of Oliver Twist. We will also be encouraging more students to try out taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which builds resilience, teamwork and leadership, and offers unforgettable experiences through volunteering, skills development and expeditions. Our students are designing and building a racing kart ahead of the national finals this summer - an inspiring opportunity to apply science and technology in the real world.

Post-16

Our Sixth Form was praised for its “supportive learning environment”, positive relationships and opportunities for students to grow in confidence and develop leadership. Over the summer we invested heavily in our Sixth Form facilities, building a beautiful and inspiring new Sixth Form base for our post-16 students. Inspectors noted that some post-16 subjects require further work to ensure

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consistently strong outcomes, and we have already begun this curriculum strengthening through a comprehensive review of our assessment points to ensure that all students receive accurate and timely feedback to support their progress.

I would like to thank our students, families and staff for the energy, commitment and warmth you show every day. The inspectors recognised Abbeyfield as “a values driven school that nurtures ambition, respect and kindness.”

We are on an improvement journey and we have already started making progress across the areas Ofsted recognised as needing attention back in January. We look forward to continuing our strong improvement journey together with your support, and the support of our staff and students.

I hope this letter has helped explain the report (and the important improvements taking place at Abbeyfield) clearly and openly and I encourage all families to read the full report on the Ofsted website at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/23/138858>. If you would like to discuss any aspect of it further, I would be very happy to meet with you.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry Gowney-Hedges". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Henry Gowney-Hedges,
Principal