

THOMAS HEPBURN COMMUNITY ACADEMY RECEIVES ENCOURAGING FEEDBACK FROM OFSTED

Northern Education Trust's (NET) Thomas Hepburn Community Academy in Gateshead has received encouraging feedback from Ofsted and is now rated as a school that 'requires improvement', in stark contrast to its former full inspection judgement in November 2016 as having serious weaknesses. Thomas Hepburn was one of the most improved schools in the North East of England in 2018 for student attainment in English and Mathematics.

During the inspection, a wide range of evidence including action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records as well as governor minutes were scrutinised. The contribution made by executive principal, Jo Nolan and acting principal, Hijab Zaheer, were particularly noted by Ofsted. Both were described as providing 'passionate leadership' and determination to do their very best for the pupils in the school.

The report says that 'despite managing difficult circumstances following the decision to close the school' the 'quality of education that pupils receive is much stronger than at the time of the last inspection'. It also states that 'teaching continues to improve and current pupils are now making better progress, attaining higher standards than they did previously'. Staff morale is high because staff feel well supported and pupils recognise the improvements to their school.

Commenting on the positive report, Mr Tarn, Chief Executive said:

"What this report demonstrates is that even under the most difficult circumstances, students at Thomas Hepburn have not only continued to learn, but have begun to thrive. To read that pupils' attitudes to learning have improved and that staff and pupils say that the standards of behaviour are much better, makes me very proud. I feel that we are preparing students well with a more robust attitude towards their education so that they are well equipped for the next stage in their learning journey.

"I should like to take this opportunity to endorse the work of the teaching staff at Thomas Hepburn, particularly the leadership of Jo Nolan and Hijab Zaheer, who have not slackened the pace of improvement for one second. Set against a backdrop of imminent closure, their commitment and the hard work of the students is to be applauded."

Notes to Editor:

- Thomas Hepburn Community Academy has continued to make good progress following the implementation of the NORTHERN model of school improvement - which was introduced by Mr Tarn. Its widespread implementation throughout the Trust has led to an improving position in each of its 19 academies.
- The vision of NET is '*We constantly focus on standards as we understand outcomes are paramount. Our decision making is driven entirely by what is best for children. By doing this we enhance the life chances of the children and young people in our care.*'

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