



Clarity Independent School

Wednesday 11th January 2023

Regarding our Recent Ofsted Inspection 21-23rd September 2022

Dear parents and care-givers,

You may remember from our communications that the school was inspected back in September, by Ofsted. Thank you for your feedback during this inspection in the scheduled phone calls with the inspectors. They reported to us that each parent had given positive feedback in these phone calls and said they felt confident in us as a provider of their child's education, and that they felt their child was safe here. We really valued your feedback to the inspectors as part of their inspection process and it went a long way in assuring them that we are delivering a high quality, safe, well-resourced special needs school.

Unfortunately, since then, in October 2022, I received the draft report about the inspection, and this does not share the same positive viewpoint our stakeholders gave at the time, nor it is consistent with the evidence provided for them during the inspection or the activities and lessons seen at the school, which were also formally observed at the time of inspection.

I am deeply saddened that even when raising my concerns at the time of the inspection and during the feedback session with them on the final day of the inspection, as requested in Ofsted's quality assurance procedure, the inspector was not willing to hear, view or consider my comments or the *full* evidence base provided for them. Judgements were then made by the inspector using this incomplete evidence base, in a light that has prohibited the school from a successful outcome. The inspector has omitted, both from the evidence base and report, information provided to her that is favourable to the school. Additionally, I am very disappointed that the inspector seems to have inaccurately presented information about the children and the school both in her evidence base and in the inspection report, which has created a misleading impression of the children and the school.

Since October 2022, I have spent a disproportionate number of hours in communication with Ofsted, following their complaints procedure, in order to correct the factual inaccuracies contained therein. I am determined for the children's special needs and social communication difficulties not to be misrepresented this way to the public, nor the staff or the reputation of the school, as it is not commensurate with the progress the children make here and the hard work and specialist therapeutically-rich approach provided at Clarity. No child here is 'violent' or has 'bad' behaviour, or exhibits 'offensive extremist language'. Children and staff are not 'at risk' from 'incidents of violence' from the children here at Clarity, we take



Approved Assessor for
Disabled Students'
Allowance



Guild Member
Assessment Practising
Certificate holder



INPP
Practitioner



AMBDA Status

every opportunity to proactively keep children safe every minute of every day, and safeguarding is at the forefront of everything we do.

Ofsted has a nationally published agenda to downgrade schools and after months of consideration of 'our' particular data which they intend to publish publicly tomorrow, I feel we have fallen foul of this. In addition, after following Ofsted's published complaints procedure 'to the letter', I have come to the conclusion that there is very little accountability and they have not adopted a check-and-challenge approach to accountability.

The work we do at Clarity is uniquely specialized and tailored to the children's: special educational needs; their social, emotional, mental health needs; and their social communication needs. In October 2022, I presented 27 pages of evidence to Ofsted, again highlighting the factual inaccuracies in the evidence base collected and interpreted by the inspector, supplemented by a plethora of Ofsted's own regulations, DfE regulations and recommended best-practice documents, with which our practice agrees, to illustrate the school's case to them, hoping they would consider the true evidence and include it in the report. I was met with a 'case-closed' type response.

Further to this, in November 2022, again I challenged the school's outcome with a formal complaint to Ofsted, detailing my disappointment in them deciding not to consider the full evidence I had presented to them at the time of the inspection and had since clarified following that, in my 'factual accuracy check' communication. Again, their response was curt and inferred almost a bias against the school, in issuing a final report which was almost completely identical to the original draft, which had preceded my two vigorous arguments against the contents. It is clear they have a certain pre-formed viewpoint about the school to meet their agenda, and do not wish to consider true evidence contrary to it.

Further to this, I have taken legal action to protect the children, staff and school from the likely impact that hearing such a judgement could have. The timeframes Ofsted provide for responses between communication are extremely narrow, so this process has been a challenge. Yesterday, our school's solicitor filled a Pre-action Judicial Review against Ofsted, requesting a stay (postponement) of the publication of the report, whilst we work together to find a resolution. Again, Ofsted responded to say they are not prepared to concede to this and that they will publish the report at 7am tomorrow, Thursday morning.

I can understand that hearing this information about your child's school could be extremely concerning to you and wish to reassure you that we *do* have your children's best interests as our ultimate aim. We work tirelessly to keep them safe and do our best by them. We ensure that all methods applied are to provide the best outcomes for the children.

Most of all, I find it too difficult to understand how only 9 school-weeks earlier in May 2022, Ofsted conducted an inspection and found that the school had **met all the Independent School Standards**. Many of you celebrated this success with us through positive congratulatory comments. We have continued, and will continue to, celebrate that success and build even further upon it, through our continual development plan, training and applying objective accountability to feedback to continually improve our practice.

I am very keen to be open and transparent about this inspection, the process and judgements and would like to invite you to contact the school office if you have any questions or concerns you wish to discuss further and find reassurance for. I would be delighted to openly discuss these with you and support my reassurance with as much evidence as I can, if this is helpful to you. You are welcome to visit the school at any time to have a tour, look at the environment the children experience and see the activities they

undertake, although owing to the nature of the work we do and being a small school, we would of course request that you make an appointment so that we can make sure we are available for you.

I hope that you can still have a good evening and sincerely hope that you can continue to be reassured that our school is a safe, positive learning and therapeutic environment for the children and staff.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debbie Hanson', written in a cursive style.

Debbie Hanson, Head Teacher and Director

BSc (Hons), QTS, PG Dip (Dyslexia and Literacy), AMBDA, APC

Member of the Dyslexia Guild

Associate Member of SASC (SpLD Assessment Standards Committee)

NPQH in progress