



Dear parents, guardians and students.

As you may know the school was inspected by Ofsted in January. The Ofsted report, which will be published on Thursday, March 13, reached the same conclusions as an earlier assessment carried out by International English Schools. The school has been found inadequate and placed in special measures.

International English Schools' assessment in late Autumn that the school must improve meant that by the time of the Ofsted inspection, changes were being made. The school was recruiting staff and reviewing policies in a drive to provide quality in education.

Ofsted's role was to judge the school it found on the day, rather than our plans for improvement. The ongoing staff recruitment and work which had begun to transform the school were, quite rightly, not under consideration. Likewise the fact that this short-term process will mean long-term gains could not affect the report.

However, the changes we are now making in the school will have positive effects which will be felt by all. The task given to me as principal, which I have been glad to take, is to turn around the fortunes of this school, to support staff to improve, and to make beneficial recruitment decisions. This is a challenge for all involved, but one which we are equal to. The atmosphere in the school is fantastic and there is a real determination to succeed from staff and students. Our students are incredibly willing to learn and up to the challenge of working to achieve the best results they can. I would also like to thank the community for all the support they have given to me and to the school since my appointment as Principal was announced.

The Ofsted report will shortly be made public on their website. In the meantime there is a copy available to view at the school and in the attached document I would like to highlight some of the key points and provide an outline of how we will respond.

You are invited to a parental meeting to discuss the Ofsted report, which will be held at the school on Wednesday, 12 March from 6.30 pm, at which the board of governors, the Sabres Trust, and the schools' leadership team will present our improvement strategy and take questions.

In the meantime please feel free to contact me with any more immediate questions.

Yours Sincerely,

Alison Tilbrook, Principal, International English Schools UK Breckland.



Summary of weaknesses identified in the Ofsted report into IES Breckland – January 21 and 22, 2014:

Too many students fail to make sufficient progress and they do not attain the standards of which they are capable.

We are recruiting new subject specialists and implementing an enhanced programme for continual professional development lead by our vice principal and a consultant brought in from IES. Many of the lessons that were criticised were in departments where we are currently recruiting a new head. Heads of department will have improving teaching and learning within their departments as a priority and will strive to support improvement among their new teams.

Teaching is inadequate. It does not expect enough of the students. The work set for students is based on an inaccurate understanding of what they can do. In some instances, for example in English, the standard of students' work has declined since they started at the school.

While a quarter of lessons were deemed inadequate, some were seen to be outstanding. All staff are being observed by me as principal with a view to identifying key areas where they can be supported to improve or where changes are needed. We are currently recruiting a new Head of English and supporting improvements within the department is a priority for the school and will be a priority for the head of department.

Too many students have experienced frequent changes of teacher. In autumn 2013, the departure of some key staff, including the Principal, seriously disrupted the education provided by the school.

This Ofsted inspection came in the middle of a process of change at the school, strengthening the leadership and teaching staff. This is an ongoing process which sees some upheaval in the short-term in order to produce a long-term result. While there is still a long way to go, the report recognises that “IES has acted promptly to appoint a new Principal and other managers” and that “school leaders have begun to tackle some of the weaknesses identified by inspectors.”

Behaviour is inadequate and disrupts some lessons. Students, parents and staff all expressed concern about misbehaviour.

We are recruiting more new teachers who share our ambition to create a safe, calm learning environment and staff and students will work together to improve behaviour in the school. We will be looking at this issue across the school as a whole. Behaviour policies will be reviewed by the new principal and the organisation's chief operations officer who is currently seconded to Breckland at no cost to the trust. We are also

reviewing our positive rewards policy and consequences as part of the whole school behaviour policy.

The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching and student achievement is inaccurate. The school has not been able to improve because school leaders have not assessed the school's performance adequately or devised strategies to improve it.

The management of teachers' performance is ineffective. Improvement targets for individual teachers lack precision. Leaders rarely check whether teachers are making progress towards meeting their targets

We are increasing the number of dual lesson observations, using external and internal observers concurrently, to enable us to ensure accurate assessment. The external observers will be experienced teachers and managers from other schools and will work alongside our own staff on grading, setting targets and assessing progress. All staff are being interviewed and having their lessons observed by the new Principal in order to drive improvement and ensure quality of teaching.

Governors have not ensured that the school meets requirements to keep children safe. Governors have been inquisitive but insufficiently challenging. They do not know how well the school is doing.

The governors are full of drive and determination and are playing a major part in improving their own performance. Over the first 15 months of the school there have been significant changes to the composition of the governors and trust. However, governance has now been stable for more than five months. Governors and trust members have carried out a comprehensive review with IES management and this will be followed by an independent governance review to highlight further improvements. We have already identified weaknesses and started to bring about improvements including training for all governors through a number of scheduled courses. All meetings are being correctly documented by an experienced clerk.

Summary of strengths identified in the report:

Standards in mathematics are generally high.

Some teaching is outstanding which helps a few students to make exceptional progress.

The quality of the school's provision for students' spiritual and cultural education is good.