24th January 2019

Dear parents,

As you will be aware, Ofsted Inspectors recently visited The Ashcombe for a one-day, focused review of the school. We are delighted to confirm that, as a result of this visit, Ofsted have reconfirmed our existing status from the 2015 full inspection as offering a good and well-rounded education. The inspection concludes that "*The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The Ashcombe School's vision for pupils' social and academic success is evident throughout the school*".

We are pleased to share their letter of confirmation with parents, pupils and the wider community and we are extremely appreciative of the tremendous response to ParentView from over 250 families within just 24 hours. The overwhelmingly positive responses were acknowledged by the Ofsted team, who chose to quote several of those responses in their report. They concluded that "*Parents are very positive about the quality of education provided to pupils",* picking out one example that was "*echoed by others*" and highlighted *"that the school has 'dedicated, enthusiastic, skilled staff' ".*

The Ofsted team noted in particular that "*the focus on improvement has not altered. Your vision for an academic curriculum, supported by high quality teaching and learning, that prepares pupils well for life in 21st Century Britain is shared by all staff at the school. You have embedded effective monitoring and support systems that ensure strong teaching, learning and assessment*."

We share the Inspectors' aspiration to ensure that children from disadvantaged backgrounds improve both their attendance at school and their academic results so they are in line with pupils nationally. We were pleased to see that the Inspectors "*observed many disadvantaged pupils making strong progress…through bespoke support adapted to suit pupils' learning styles and social and emotional needs*" and we take on board their comments that "*such strong progress is not consistent in every area of the curriculum*".

The Ofsted team praised the atmosphere and ethos permeating the school: "*Pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive. Pupils are attentive and responsive in equal measure in lessons. As a result, there is a very harmonious learning atmosphere"* and were clear that the school is a safe place: "*Leaders, including governors, are vigilant about keeping pupils physically, socially and emotionally safe at the school… Pupils spoke very positively about how staff help to keep them safe*."

As parents will be aware, this school has always followed a broad and balanced GCSE based curriculum irrespective of the short-term impact on league tables, and this approach was commended by the Inspectors: "*Leaders have a highly ethical approach to the curriculum placing pupils' needs and interests at the centre of its design." "Leaders have established a very effective GCSE examination focused curriculum that both challenges and enthuses pupils."*

The Report also praised the 6th Form "*…leaders have ensured that students in the sixth form continue to make strong progress and attain well. Leaders have devised a curriculum which places students at the very heart…..Students told inspectors how much they valued the opportunities offered by the sixth form."*

We will continue with our policy of maintaining and improving The Ashcombe's already high standards across the academic, pastoral and extra-curricular areas for the benefit of all pupils and hope that you will find time to read the letter in full.

Yours sincerely,

D.J. Blow — Executive Headteacher

T McDonald — Chair of Governors

C.G. Panting, Mrs A.S. Reed — Joint Heads of School