

External evaluation of the school

Sir Henry Fermor CE School became a sponsored academy in April 2016 as part of the **Tenax Schools Trust**. As a consequence, it is a new school which has not yet been inspected by Ofsted.

The predecessor school was most recently inspected in 2013 and again in 2015 and some of the strengths recognised on those occasions are listed below.

The new school has been formally audited by Tenax twice since April 2016. These external reviews were conducted by Alan Taylor-Bennett, ex-Her Majesty's Inspector, and key points are listed below. A further external audit is scheduled for March 2018.



October 2016

- The new headteacher is bringing his considerable experience and wisdom to bear on the challenge of improving this school. He has already identified the root causes of many of its problems accurately. He has a very good grasp of the school's current situation and its needs. The process of addressing what has to change, how and when has begun well.
- There is, therefore, a clear sense of what teaching is currently like and how it has to change. As a result there is also good thinking around how a programme of CPD may be constructed and drive improvements in the short and medium term.
- Early years is an area of relative strength in the school, with the percentage of children reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) having risen from below average in 2014 to comfortably above average in 2015 and 2016.

June 2017

- Some long-standing and serious impediments to the school's development have been addressed this year. As a result, the school's underlying capacity is stronger than it has been for some time.
- There is an understanding of what needs to be done and plans are in place to consolidate gains and to continue to address shortfalls in the quality of provision so that the current generally positive trajectory is maintained. This has driven a number of improvements in provision and has led to a significant and necessary change of culture in the school this year.

- Morale is significantly better now than it has been for a long time. Most staff understand that the significantly higher levels of monitoring, and the evaluation of their teaching and its impact on the progress being made by pupils this year, are necessary aspects of school improvement and see the processes as fair and reasonable.
- Any underlying improvement in learning is associated with the steady improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are now felt to be more accurate. Teachers know and understand more clearly and more accurately how well pupils are learning.

Parent surveys conducted twice-yearly indicate that approval for the school is currently high and compares very favourably with other schools:

- 98% of parents say their children are happy at school
- 98% say their child is well looked after at school.
- 97% feel that their child is well taught at this school.

Key strengths from Ofsted reports following inspections of Sir Henry Fermor's predecessor school:

July 2013

"Behaviour is typically good, pupils respond well to praise and rise to meet high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils behave well and they have good attitudes to learning. They try hard in their lessons and get along well together."

Good relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils cooperate well in groups. They are courteous and polite to visitors, show respect for each other and respond quickly to instructions from their teachers.²

"One reason pupils enjoy coming to school often is because they feel safe. Most parents agree that the school keeps them safe and that their children like school. In lessons, assemblies and daily routines, pupils find out about a range of dangers and how to avoid them."

October 2015

"Parents feel that their children are happy, safe and well cared for at school. The strong Christian ethos, based around the value of respect, prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain."

"Pupils are confident that adults will respond quickly to resolve incidents or problems that they might have. Some pupils say that adults have helped them build and sustain friendships."

"The curriculum teaches pupils about safety well. For example, they have thorough knowledge of how to stay safe when they are using the internet. As a result, pupils confidently express and understand how to keep themselves safe."

"Strong relationships with parents and local pre-schools are in place. Parents appreciate opportunities to bring their children to join in with lunches and story sessions before children start school. Workshops and newsletters ensure that parents work in close partnership with the school and share information about their child's development that helps teachers to understand their needs better. Teachers visit pre-schools to get to know children and find out about what children can do before they start school.