

January 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to share some information with you regarding two recent events; the parent/carer and student surveys from November 2024, and the recent review of the school, by the River Learning Trust, that took place on January 16 2025.

Please read below the summary of how we would like to move forward with the feedback given. I would also like to remind and encourage you to attend the Headteacher's Open House event at 5.00pm on Monday 3 February 2025.

Parent/carer and student surveys, November 2024

Thank you for completing the parent/carer surveys late last year. Alongside the student and staff surveys, they paint a very encouraging picture of Denefield. Key points include:

- Parents/carers, students and staff are all significantly more likely to recommend Denefield as a place to study than the national average. For example, 79% of Denefield parents/carers would recommend Denefield, compared to 69% nationally.
- Parents/carers, students and staff understand and support the school's values. Students and staff feel safe, behaviour is strong and bullying is rare and dealt with well. There is widespread support for the school's approach to behaviour and culture. Some students expressed that they would like Denefield to be even clearer with behaviour.
- Parents/carers are very happy with Denefield's communication, particularly regarding attendance, punctuality, behaviour and homework. Some parents/carers said they would like more information on their child's progress and some students said they would like clearer explanations and more help in lessons.
- Some parents/carers would like more help with supporting their child's social and emotional development. This includes both their ability to socialise and mix with others and with their resilience.
- Parents/carers feel optimistic that their child will do well at Denefield.

River Learning Trust review of Denefield – Thursday 16 January 2025

The River Learning Trust (RLT) is a large multi-academy trust consisting of over ten secondary schools and many primary schools. The RLT provide educational support for Denefield, though we are not part of their trust. On 16 January four senior members of the RLT spent the day in Denefield, observing lessons, watching the school at social times and transition times, and conducting focus group interviews with students and staff. This was the first external review of Denefield since the RLT review of October 2023 and Ofsted's inspection of November 2023. We

asked the RLT to focus on whether students at Denefield were proud and kind, and whether they felt fully included in the school. We also asked them to look at the quality of teaching and learning at Denefield.

Their reflections align strongly with those of the surveys above:

- There is a very strong culture at Denefield. Denefield is warm, welcoming, calm and purposeful. Staff and students are proud of the school and work together well. All students have the opportunity to succeed. Student behaviour in and out of lessons is very strong. Tutor groups are sociable and there is a strong community feel.
- Teaching is good and students learn well. The observers supported the school's focus on teachers questioning, modelling good answers and providing high value tasks. They wondered whether occasionally teachers could move more quickly to the high-value tasks, and whether this would further improve student engagement in lessons.

What the school will do next

As Headteacher I am encouraged by the findings both of the surveys and the RLT review. The school has a three-year strategic plan and one-year action plan: the findings of both the surveys and review will inform these plans. Adjustments are likely to include:

- a continued and possibly greater focus on teacher explanation, checking for understanding in lessons and use of high-value tasks
- further focus on developing students' pride and self-confidence
- increasing the clarity of reporting student progress to parents/carers, and investigating whether it would be possible to report more frequently
- supporting parents/carers with the social and emotional development of their children (see invitation below)

Headteacher's Open House - Monday 3 February 2025 at 5.00pm

I would like to invite you and encourage you to attend the Headteacher's Open House. During this event we will do two things:

- Share with you and ask for your feedback on national resources available to help parents/carers with supporting the social and emotional development of their children.
- Discuss any other matters of interest, including anything relating to the surveys or review above.

Please click [here](#) to register your attendance.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your support for Denefield and for completing the parent/carer surveys. Your views and your support are crucial in ensuring that Denefield is the very best school it can be.

Yours faithfully

Mr Towill MA (Oxon)
Headteacher