

16th May 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

When Ofsted published their report on County Upper at the end of March the media was full of worrying headlines like '*County Upper School in Bury St Edmunds rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted after police raise concerns about pupils' safety*'. These headlines were based on this text in the report:

"The local police have raised concerns with inspectors about pupils' safety..."

On 2nd May, Ofsted republished their report on County Upper, with absolutely no announcement, with the above text changed to read:

"Inspectors were made aware that the local police have forwarded third-party concerns about pupils' safety..."

The importance of this change can hardly be overstated – it completely changes the message – the **police did not raise any concerns about pupils' safety** at County Upper.

This crucial change has come about because of an intervention by Suffolk Constabulary. In summary, the only contact between Ofsted inspectors and the police was a telephone call to the police Intelligence Unit. This was about a piece of third party intelligence that had been passed to the police in November 2017. The Police handled this intelligence in the usual manner and in this case shared it with the Local Authority.

We are grateful to Ofsted for recognising the need to amend its report given the fact the original statement was completely wrong and seriously misled those who read the report. However, this has wider impact on the inspection than the wording of a single sentence. This is because the supposed police concerns were central to the Ofsted inspection team's "triangulation of evidence" on safeguarding.

Given how this serious error undermines a crucial plank of the safeguarding aspect of the inspection, we continue to engage with Ofsted in an attempt to get them to acknowledge the difficulty this creates for the integrity of their findings on safeguarding.

Page 1 of 2

Whilst the Trust maintains, based on external validation, that safeguarding at County Upper is effective, as a result of the Ofsted report we have thoroughly reviewed safeguarding in the school and all students have been reminded how they can voice any concerns. We have provided further training for governors and staff so that students, staff and governors were amongst the very first in Suffolk to see a new play on County Lines with a follow up by the police community support officer in assemblies. Staff and sixth formers are now wearing lanyards and work on an additional gate and some secondary fencing is almost complete.

Please do feel to contact me if you would like to via countyupper@burytrust.org

Yours sincerely,

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

Steve Boor
Chair of the Trust Board