

June 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

I thought it was important to write to you at this point in the year to reflect on what has gone well this year but also to share with you some of the things we have identified this year which need to improve next year and what we have put in place already for September to address those concerns.

Improvements in Student Progress

Building on our improvements last year which put us in the top 7% of schools nationally for improvement in the new key performance measure Progress 8, we have seen a significant improvement in the quality of teaching overall in lessons and the quality of work produced by our pupils in their books. Our analysis of the data from the Learning Progress reports is very positive in every year group. We are as confident as we can be, given all the new GCSES this year, that our current Year 11 will improve further on the progress made last year.

Smart New Uniforms

Our new uniforms in Years 7 to 10 and Year 12 have proved a resounding success, with so many positive comments from parents and the wider community about how smart our students look. One regret we have is not doing the same for our Year 11 students who we thought parents might appreciate staying in the same uniform for their pre-sixth form year. Unfortunately I think they felt they didn't look as smart as younger students in the new uniform.

Again, parents have commented on how much easier (and cheaper it has been) for students to wear a uniform in Year 12. They again look very smart.

Improved Attendance and Punctuality

Our drive to improve attendance and punctuality has been unrelenting as we all appreciate how important a life skill it is to be in work and to be in on time, and in the context of learning in schools how much effect poor attendance has on results. Our whole College attendance has improved by 2.5% on the same point last year which represents a massive improvement but we cannot allow it to slip back.

Our recent drive on punctuality both to College at the start of the day and to lessons has had as significant positive impact on the start of lessons with reduced disruption to learning from late arrivals.

Better Behaviour

Behaviour in lessons and around College has improved significantly, supported by our Consistency Across the Classroom Expectations and the introduction of ClassCharts as a means to record good and less than good behaviour. Our external fixed term exclusions have reduced by 59% compared to the same time last year. Again, we know that we can still improve behaviour for learning further and will accept nothing less than the best from our pupils.

What do we need to improve on next?

We are not complacent and are aware that there have been a number of significant areas where our pupils and parents have not the quality of experience that we want.

High Quality Teachers in Every Subject

Any school can be subject to staff changes due to illness or teachers securing posts elsewhere. We know that this is not good for our pupils who benefit from a teacher that knows them well and understands how they learn best.

This has been a particular issue in some of the core curriculum areas this year. We have sought to mitigate against this as far as possible but it has, nevertheless, been less than good for some pupils. Unfortunately as you might be aware, teachers who are in posts currently can only join a new school at the start of a new term.

With the support of governors, we have been very determined to recruit the highest calibre of staff for September and been prepared to offer very attractive salaries to get them. I am pleased to report that in September we will have a full complement of staff in every area, who want to be here and who are determined that they will play their part in securing a Good OFSTED judgement and then on to Outstanding.

We are using the current exams as diagnostic tools to inform our new teachers where there have been gaps in pupils' learning due to staff absence and these will be addressed as the first priority in September.

Improve Communication

We welcome parental feedback as to how we can get better. A number of you have told us that you think our website could be better in terms of how easy it is to access information for you as parents. In September, we will be launching a new College website that we believe will address many of these concerns.

Parents have also asked if there can be a mechanism by which they can raise concerns beyond the current mechanisms – student planners, phonecalls to Heads of Year and Heads of Departments. In September we will be introducing a half termly forum where parents will receive an update about a particular aspect of the life of the College but also have the chance to raise any concerns that I can take away and respond to.

The first of these will be on 26th September at 6pm. I will write at the start of term to remind you of this meeting. I would particularly welcome feedback from you as to whether the new staff are impacting positively on your child's learning but also anything else we have missed in our plans to improve further next year.

Yours faithfully



Mr A Boyle
Headteacher



Mr T Quinn
Executive Headteacher