

March 21st 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

In January, following the publication of the Ofsted Report, I said that I would write with an update each half term.

One of the recommendations of the report was that the school development plan be tightened up and made more precise in terms of dates and milestones. This has now been done by the Leadership Team and Governors working with Middle leaders in the school and it was submitted to the Local Authority at the end of February and given approval. The renewed emphasis on differentiation – or appropriate challenge for all – is very much at the heart of this plan and the plan will inform quality assurance processes, teacher appraisal and continuing professional development as well as day to day planning of lessons. This development plan will now be our working document through to August 2019 and the Governors have established a new committee which will meet termly to assess progress against the plan and targets within it. The final predicted data for Year 11 and 13 will be submitted this week and that will be the focus of the first committee meeting on May 2nd. Current data is suggesting a real improvement in the overall attainment scores and we know that our Ebacc entry has gone up from 13% last year to 35% this year. It is impossible to calculate the Progress scores as these will be done nationally based on how well all 16 and 18 year olds perform in the summer.

Another area highlighted by Ofsted was the literacy and numeracy catch up funding. We have now completed an analysis of the progress made by the students involved in these programmes and it is pleasing that collectively they are making good progress from their starting points.

There have been two important decisions made this term. Firstly, following a consultation period, the County Council approved the Governors' proposal to phase out post 16 education at Carr Hill by August 2019. This is a really sad reality in many ways as the Sixth Form has been very much a feature of the school for many years. However, like many schools around the country, Post 16 education was becoming financially impossible to sustain. Now that the decision is made, I renew our commitment to those who will be in Year 13 next year. We need to reduce staffing by the equivalent of 8 teachers this summer and I am relieved to say that we have managed that without any compulsory redundancies. Moving forward we need to see this change as an opportunity to focus on 11-16 education.

The other major change which has been agreed by Governors is to change the pastoral structure to year groups from September 2018. This will mean a complete change of mentor groups and mentors from the current vertical system. This will be done in a planned way and we have set a deadline of June 15th for this process so that students will have an opportunity to meet their new mentor group

and mentor before the summer holidays. We will inform parents and carers of their child's new mentor later in the Summer term and early in the Autumn term we will hold a 'meet the mentor' opportunity. There will be a permanent Head of Year 7 but the Head of Year students get in September in Years 8-11 will then be their Head of Year for the remainder of their journey through school. I did say in the consultation document that these changes would not mean any costs for families and we will arrange for all students in Years 8 -11 to have the appropriate tie for the year group which they will keep throughout their time in school.

A further change to the pastoral system from September is that there will no longer be the Care Leader posts in their current format. Mrs Germaine and Mrs Shepherd will continue to work in school but primarily with those families needing additional support because of attendance, behaviour or social needs. Mrs Birch is leaving the school at Easter and I would like to thank her for all she has done as Care leader for Apollo and Mercury and as a member of the Governing Body.

As reminder, I would ask that if you do need to speak to a member of the pastoral staff about your child that you do phone in to make an appointment as staff are not usually available if you just turn up.

Finally with regard to behaviour and attendance, I am pleased to say that attendance is very close to national levels (94.6% compared to 94.8% nationally) but is something we constantly focus on and we have very clear protocols for contacting home when attendance drops or for fining when appropriate triggers for absence are reached. We want to be nearer 96% with attendance moving forward.

I have unfortunately had to permanently exclude 3 students since the start of term and these exclusions were all upheld by the Governors. Fixed term exclusions are much reduced on the same period last year and we continue to monitor behaviour closely with a number of students who were causing some disruption now being educated elsewhere through managed moves or alternative placements. Our own Step Up unit continues to provide early support and intervention for a small number of students.

As always, if you wish to discuss any aspect of school with me then please do get in touch.

Yours,



Andrew Waller

Headteacher