# THE wensleydale School and sixth form

# ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE GOVERNING BODY

**INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of the Governors of The Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, I would like to extend a warm welcome all students and staff who have joined us this year and I hope they will have an enjoyable time and thrive at the school. It has been another busy and highly successful year with far too many academic, sporting and extra-curricular events to include in this report and so I recommend that you visit our website to read the newsletters, Governing Body minutes and the Head’s blog to gain a fuller picture of daily life and the achievements of the school.

The function of the governing body is to support the Head and her leadership team whilst also being a critical friend, challenging new proposals to ensure the best possible education and opportunities for our students, as well as closely monitoring financial spending. In February 2017 we were inspected by OFSTED. In their report they confirmed that we are a good and effective governing body fulfilling high governance standards. Details of the members of the governing body and the committees they serve on are also available on the school’s website. Minutes of governing body meetings are available in school.

Another function of the governing body is to support the key behaviours of the school, which were revisited this year and chosen by our students. Students voted for the school to focus on developing students to become ‘**Positive, Hardworking and Respectful’.** This encapsulates the high calibre of our students and Governors are proud to support them in these aims to become responsible, caring citizens of the future.

**ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS THIS ACADEMIC YEAR.**

**OFSTED**

The OFSTED report confirmed that ‘The head, governors and the senior leadership team have high expectations of both staff and students and are collectively uncompromising in their standards working to ensure they meet the needs of individual pupils….. The school is going from strength to strength’.

Our ‘robust, honest and open self evaluation completed with governors, local authority and the leadership team’ was praised by OFSTED. They also observed that ‘pupils have a positive attitude to learning’.

**Go 4 Schools**

Parents in most schools nationally are generally informed of their child’s attitudes to learning, behaviour and homework completion at the midpoint of the school year when, should there be problems, half of a year has lapsed and it is difficult to make up for lost time. In September 2016 we purchased a new management system called Go 4 Schools which has transformed home/school communications. Parent input and support is vital to student progress: parents can now access their child’s academic profile, monitor progress, discover what homework has been set, when it should be completed, if it has been handed in, their attitude to learning, general behaviour and the targets they have been set to achieve in each subject.

**Exam results**

In 2017 our A level results were excellent once again, with a number of students achieving results beyond their targets. Over the last four years, our value added trend has improved significantly year on year. All students who wanted to go to university have been accepted for the subjects of their choice. Eighty per were accepted for their first choice of university.

 In Maths, Physics and the Extended Project Qualification results were in the top 25% of results nationally. Results in History, English Language/Literature, Geography, Psychology, Product Design, Drama and Theatre Studies were in line with national averages. English Literature, Music, Biology and Chemistry did not perform as well as we had hoped, we are fully aware of the reasons for this and have addressed the situation.

At this point in the term the outcome of GCSEs compared with national statistics is still not available due to the DfE’s changes to the way school performance is measured. This year saw the first exams under the new GCSE grading system of nine to one; nine being the highest. It is estimated that a former A\* is now an eight, seven equals a former A, six a B, five a good pass and four a former C grade. A grade 9 is in excess of a former A\*and provides greater opportunities for the most able learners to demonstrate their true ability. The first exams under the new grading system were in English and Maths with many more subjects following next year. Exam board marking has been an issue this year; the school has requested remarks of approximately sixty exam papers which is significantly higher than previous years. Of the results received so far, two thirds have been awarded additional marks. In two cases, this was a difference of two grades. When the final results are known

and the national picture has been collated the Head will post the outcome on the website.

This year our teachers provided revision sessions during lunchtimes, after school and during the Easter Holidays for students sitting exams. In addition they also ran pre exam breakfast clubs to support our students in every way they could.

Parents need be aware that if their child chooses a college pathway for their further education they are informed by the college that they have secured a place without the need to gain GCSE ‘C’ grades. This can have a negative impact on the students’ attitude to learning whilst at school. It can therefore require extended time at college whilst they achieve the Level 2 grades needed to qualify.

**Parental voice**

The school continues to improve communication with and for parents, the launch of the new website will further improve day to day communication. The Head is always available to meet and talk to parents who have any concerns at all.

**Finance**

The school’s finances remain on a stable footing despite increasing pressure on costs.

**Safeguarding**

OFSTED praised our Safeguarding judging us as having ‘highly effective policies and procedures in place to ensure pupils are safe’. Since this judgment, the Head has secured over £40,000 from the Local Authority to install secure fencing around the school perimeter. Although this has been controversial, the school was never a public right of way however dog walking on the school field has become a real problem with dog faeces. This is a significant issue for students using the field for athletics for example. An unfortunate side effect of the perimeter fencing is that students are no longer able to access the school field during the holidays however school grounds are not safe places for students to be unsupervised. Our perimeter fencing brings us in line with Leyburn Primary School and the Wensleydale Rugby Club and ensures we have appropriate procedures in place to protect our students, should the need arise. Young people are more than welcome to join the free clubs that are organised on the school grounds after school, weekends and holiday periods.

Mr Barnett is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for all Child Protection concerns.

**TARGETS FOR DEVELOPMENT THIS COMING YEAR**

**Attendance**

The annual attendance figures of 94.6% are slightly below the national target of 95%. This was partly due to a prolific novo virus in the Spring Term which affected a large number of staff and students. Our target this year is 97% which will exceed the national target. To help us achieve this we have appointed an Attendance Manager to monitor late arrivals and absences. Prompt contact is made with parents to ascertain the cause of absence. A greater emphasis is being placed on trying to ensure that every child attends the greatest number of sessions possible: attendance is a key factor in securing successful outcomes.

**Go 4 Schools**

We will continue to embed the use of target setting, pupil progress and achievement of goals set throughout all faculties. Governors will also monitor and evaluate progress, attitudes to learning, attendance and behaviour via a governor link.

**Achieve ‘Outstanding’ judgments in all areas of the School’s Self Evaluation form.**

We have already achieved over one third of the approximately forty six OFSTED ‘outstanding’ judgments and our school improvement plan has been rewritten for 2017/2018 to include the remaining two thirds as targets. This is a challenging target for us all, but we are aiming high.

**6th Form**

Governors, school leaders and the local authority are currently exploring an innovative and unique 6th form provision based on a Business Studies model providing internships during the summer break with both large and small companies locally as well as far afield as Teesside.

**Academisation**

Government directives for all schools to become academies have changed a number of times since they were first introduced. We are continuing to explore all options and will not rush into a decision until we firmly believe we have the very best outcome for our students and the future of the school applying due diligence to the process. The Head will consult with parents when we believe we have found the best formula for our school.

**Pupil Premium**

OFSTED reported that our teaching has the most impact on disadvantaged pupils. However, we are not resting on our laurels and are focusing on continuing to close the gap between these pupils and those who are not disadvantaged.

**Develop leaders of the future and further improve teaching**

We intend to continue to support our middle leaders to develop into effective school leaders of the future. We intend to achieve this with a range of coaching techniques and further professional development opportunities. We have recently purchased a lesson observation system called Lesson Box. This will allow us to record outstanding teachers’ lessons and share good practice with aspiring outstanding teachers. This equipment will also be used as part of all teachers’ formal lesson observations for their continuing professional development and performance management. It will undoubtedly improve teaching standards further.

**Create independent learners**

We want to support our students to become independent learners taking greater responsibility for their own progress rather than relying on teachers. To achieve this we have fully embraced the Kagan method of cooperative learning. Staff will receive full training by Kagan specialists in October 2017 and January 2018. We are also focusing on setting stretching and challenging targets for all our students.

**Behaviour for learning**

There are still a few pockets of negative behaviour in school. The school is tackling this through a renewed positive approach from staff. They have been training in the Pivotal technique of behaviour management and Mrs Stanyon is the Pivotal Instructor in school.

**2017/2018**

Over the summer holidays, we received the very sad news that Mrs Kath Barker had passed away after a valiant fight against cancer. Mrs Barker had been the school’s Music teacher for 15 years; she was an outstanding practitioner and a dedicated musician who had touched the lives of hundreds of students over the years. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband David and son Alex.

We look forward to another exciting and successful year and are now attracting interest from international students who are making enquiries to join our 6th form. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Head, her dedicated staff and governors for all their hard

work over the past year and to congratulate them on the successes they have achieved. Everyone working at the school endeavours to go the extra mile to support our students. Finally I would also like to thank you – the Parents and Carers who are extremely valued and who support their children and the school superbly.

Julie Woodyer

Chair of Governors