



THE WENSLEYDALE SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE GOVERNING BODY

INTRODUCTION

It's not possible in this short summary to comprehensively detail everything that has gone on in the life of the school over the last year, and my apologies to colleagues for what has been left on the cutting room floor! I'd encourage all parents and other interested in the school to read the regular newsletters, to visit the website and to read the Head's blog to get a full flavour of what goes on. Nevertheless, I hope what follows provides a brief overview.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

We have said farewell to a number of colleagues over the last year and welcomed others. We thank those that have left for their contributions over their time at school and extend a warm welcome to those that have joined us; the most notable of which has of course been Mrs Julia Polley as Headteacher. As a Governing Body we have been delighted with Julia's appointment and the excellent start in her two terms here and look forward to working with her over the forthcoming academic year, continuing to both support and challenge her along with the rest of the Senior Leadership team.

The school leadership has been restructured at senior and middle leadership levels in response to the demographic downturn in Yr2-6 across all feeder primary schools which corrects itself by 2020. The restructure also realises other savings in terms of teaching hours and allows us to redeploy staff to more strategic roles which improves the lines of accountability within school.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The School Improvement Plan – a key document – has been rewritten to more fully reflect the latest Ofsted framework and to tighten targets and success criteria. All actions and key priorities from the previous SIP are covered in the new version. This has been welcomed by the senior leadership team and governors as the new format enables us, as a team, to look strategically at actions taken and the impact they have had. Pupil Premium has also been added as a key priority. The updated document has been reviewed externally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

This has been a real focus over the last academic year, with all colleagues formally observed and the outcomes discussed. Non negotiables, (such as high quality marking, evidence of progress, strong learning objectives) are now in place and "learning walks" have allowed colleagues to see and be inspired by best practice elsewhere in the school.

We have updated the criteria which we use to judge the quality of teaching, in line with the current Ofsted framework and we look at 6 specific aspects. Each aspect is also graded, so that we can see any emerging patterns / needs within the school. These include student progress, subject knowledge, behaviour for learning, assessment and feedback, the degree to which pupils are stretched and challenged and the quality of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision). As a GB we have seen improvements as a result in good, purposeful teaching focussed around clear learning objectives, intelligent and targeted questioning demonstrating clear progress; good, authoritative explanations; students' questions being well handled and some great examples of a variety of techniques to ensure that all students are actively involved.

There is – as in all schools – more we can do and this will continue to be a focus in the next academic year.

ATTENDANCE

New initiatives have been introduced to further improve this, with attendance being tracked in detail with actions being taken on the underlying reasons for poor attendance identified. Whole school is better than the same time last year but it is not yet at target of 96%. Part of the restructuring plan will address the best use of personnel to ensure timely intervention and action for all students' attendance, behaviour and welfare. It is proposed that a bespoke Attendance Officer be in post following the restructure, to ensure whole school consistency. Furthermore the move to year group tutoring will improve accountability.

SAFEGUARDING

Mr Wilkinson remains the Designated Person for Safeguarding and Child Protection issues in school Mrs Polley is Deputy Designated Person for CP in school.

PARENTAL VOICE

Mrs Polley wrote to all parents inviting them to talk to her directly about any concerns and we are in the process of setting up additional forums to aid parent / Headteacher. A full parental survey was conducted in February. All of the written responses have been addressed on the website, via the You Said, We Did page.

The parental open evening held on 7 July was successful, with over 100 parents attending. Parents expressed their satisfaction at recent revisions to the uniform policy and the parent working group was launched. Feedback on online homework, and greater information on tracking students' progress was noted and will be followed up.

The online parent questionnaire will be available for parents to complete over the summer and the Parent Handbook is almost complete and will be ready in September 2016.

FINANCE

The school's finances remain on a stable footing despite increasing pressure on costs. The outturn in 2015-16 was significantly better than that budgeted; and although for 2016-17 it has been necessary to set another deficit budget surplus funds carried forward allow this with a view to continuing to improve efficiencies to allow a "soft landing" when it comes to set the budget for the academic year 2017-18 in May 2017.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

Parents will be aware of the Dales Education Partnership (DEP) set up earlier in the year to promote closer working between Bedale, Richmond and Wensleydale schools, particularly around continuing professional development for staff. As a school we also continue to keep a close eye on the academisation agenda, recognising that relatively few schools have so far followed this route in North Yorkshire, where across the county, 91% of children go to a good or better school (in OFSTED terminology), including those here.

We believe the foundation of any successful collaboration is likely to be based on shared vision and values and a focus on school improvement, and this will continue to be our starting point as we review what looks to be the right future for our school. We recognise that academisation is the clear and

settled policy of the present government but parents, needless to say, would be consulted at an early stage if the GB wished to explore the idea of academisation more formally.

SIXTH FORM

We remain proud of our sixth form and the personalised learning it offers to our students and those that join us from other institutions (including Ripon Grammar and Bedale schools). We are heartened by projections that indicate improved outcomes at A level for this Summer.

All year 13 students wishing to apply to university have now done so, with all receiving at least one offer or invitation for interview already – over 40% have received an unconditional offer, if they choose to accept it. Apprenticeship CIAG (Careers Information Advice and Guidance) sessions have been delivered to all Post 16 students, and targeted one to one sessions/small group sessions have been conducted.

Our new brochure has been completely revamped and is much improved. We plan to offer 11 subjects in 2016-17 - Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Psychology, Maths, English Literature, Drama, History, Geography; Business, and IT

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A full H&S site visit took place on 29 February 2016. No major issues were highlighted but a number of recommendations were made which are being addressed.