

- Next week is week beginning 17/06/2019
- End of KS4 Exams

- Immunisation catch-up session

# Newsletter

## We have vacancies for Parent Governors!

Anyone who may be interested in becoming a school governor, please drop Michelle Shorten the Clerk to the Governors an email on [michelle.shorten@open-academy.org.uk](mailto:michelle.shorten@open-academy.org.uk). Although we would be particularly interested in those who have skills in data analysis, law and Human Resources experience, anyone is welcome to apply. Michelle can arrange an informal chat with the Chair and send the relevant forms if required.

## Message from the Principal

After a really helpful parent forum meeting this week, parents highlighted some aspects of our communication which are very helpful (Parent App and a detailed website) they did however, highlight that there were areas where we could do better, particularly around keeping you up-to-date with what is happening in the Academy.

I therefore suggested I could try a weekly newsletter and see whether you find this helpful – and if so ask what you might want to see in it.

They also said it would be good to hear about what has happened since our disappointing Ofsted report in November so I thought that in this first newsletter I would focus mainly on how we are responding to Ofsted's comments.

Gradually, over the coming weeks I hope to expand what is in this communication and eventually hope that each year group will have their own news section after the general school news each week to keep you in the loop as to what is happening for your children. I will highlight our planned changes in pastoral care next week as we move towards a more traditional Year team structure but for this week I will concentrate on Ofsted with a 'They Said / we did (or are doing) format.

Please do let me know what you think of the idea over the coming few weeks ( via email: [principal@open-academy.org.uk](mailto:principal@open-academy.org.uk)) I will try to incorporate ideas as I receive them and see how things develop.

### Ofsted Developments

They said - Improve leadership and management by:

- ensuring that leaders across the school, including governors and trustees, have a clear understanding of the progress that pupils make from their starting points

***We have already started more frequent progress testing across Key Stage 3 and have a new assessment structure and reporting process calendared and ready for September (More on that in a future newsletter!)***

- making sure that senior and middle leaders evaluate the impact of their work precisely and accurately

***We now have termly faculty and area reviews where lessons, work and progress are in the spotlight for a faculty or group each week***

- ensuring that those responsible for governance have a realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and are effective in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

***The governors have a new tracking dashboard and match the data regularly to the progress seen in faculty review and through weekly student voice focus groups***

They said - Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by:

- raising teachers' and pupils' expectations of how much effort and care pupils need to put into their work

***We have introduced the LEARNT behaviour training program from this term to focus on high expectations in the classroom. We have also been working on tightening our approach to homework and you should have received a letter from Mrs Clayton this week detailing our new approach and expectations***

- reducing incidents of unacceptable behaviour so that they no longer happen

***As well as developing supportive provision for those who struggle in school, we are also refreshing our behaviour policy for clarity and have a programme of staff development to support the introduction of the new policy which will be finalised over the next few weeks. We are also introducing a peer mentoring scheme which will start later in the term to allow students to support and encourage each other more.***

- improving rates of attendance so that persistent absence and overall attendance are at least in line with national averages.

***We have already improved the attendance this year by 1% and are very focussed on working with those who are struggling to come in regularly to school. We no longer authorise any holidays or time off unless it fits the NAHT guidance for exceptional circumstances.***

They said - Improve the progress pupils make, including those in the sixth form, by:

- making sure that teachers consistently take pupils' starting points into account when deciding on the work they should do

***As well as setting ambitious internal starting grades now, we have been working on a programme of staff development based around our 'Great Open Teaching' programme. Using the tried and tested Teacher Enhancement Programme methods, we continue to support our staff to develop their approach in the classroom.***

- raising teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities

***Through training we have introduced the idea of Applied Learning time in lessons for students to show what they have learnt alongside the greater homework expectation where we hope you will work with us to ensure no homework goes uncompleted.***

- analysing and reviewing the impact of additional funding for groups of pupils and making better use of that funding so that those pupils' progress is maximised.

***After a review of our pupil premium spend, we now have a costed action plan with each activity monitored for impact – externally monitored and already now due for its first review.***

I am pleased to note that Ofsted did have some good things to say too, which we see as strengths we can build on:

- Leaders have designed the curriculum effectively to provide pupils with a breadth of knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values is well developed by leaders. Being different in this school is fine.
- The independent advice and guidance leaders provide works well. The proportion of pupils remaining in education or moving into employment or training has risen markedly.
- Leaders have secured high staff morale. Staff feel well supported by leaders and enjoy working at the school.

So that is quite a long article from me to get us started.

## A Final thought this week

I would imagine that as we get you up to speed with developments in the Academy over the weeks, my articles and messages will get (a lot) shorter and the calendar, news, useful information and year information will become much more prominent – I am however really keen that you let me know what information would be of most use.