



9th March 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

Parent Forum

As advertised earlier this term, the first 'new style' Parent Forum was held at the Academy on Wednesday 25th February.

Although attendance was a little disappointing, with thirty parents coming along, those who did attend reported that the evening was both very useful and very enjoyable. Parents said that they valued the opportunity to listen to the report about our current condition and our plans for the future and the chance to contribute thoughts and ideas about how to improve things further.

The evening began with a presentation from me on where I believe the Academy is at the moment in relation to our 'Ofsted journey'. I then went on to talk about aspects of our finances and how we are working hard to recover from the fall in pupil numbers caused by being placed in special measures three years ago. I concluded by describing some of the areas of development we propose to take forward, including improving transport links for new and existing families and our links with feeder primary schools.

This was followed by a group discussion session where parents were invited to comment on a number of aspects. These included: students' achievement, their behaviour, links with parents and links with the wider community. The full list of points raised is now being used by the Senior Leadership team to reflect on our current approaches and our future plans and it will also be used with the Parent Planning Group to guide the content for the next Forum, but here is a selection of some of the main issues arising:

- teaching has improved but there are still concerns about the quality of our management of pupil behaviour in some contexts;
- we should be developing a more aspirational 'can do' culture;
- there are concerns that pupils are still flouting the rules on smoking both on-site and in near proximity (Clench Road);
- there is a view that Go4Schools still isn't understood by all, isn't updated frequently enough and that the progress reports it produces are negative and demotivating;
- we need to strengthen our progression activity;
- aspects of our communication need to be improved, particularly in respect of providing more direct contact addresses for key staff (e.g. tutors), clarifying who is responsible for what, publishing weekly, termly and annual calendars highlighting notable events and becoming more electronic in the way we promote ourselves and communicate (Facebook, online forum etc.). Why do we have 'three websites' (main, Go4Schools and now Show my Homework) – we should have one integrated system. Other aspects (e.g. texting) is excellent;

- there should be more opportunities for outsiders to come in and for our students and staff to get out into primary schools to promote the Academy and
- all children should have access to free drinking water.

Towards the end of the evening we were updated on the valuable work being done by the Friends of Holbrook Academy (FHA) to raise funds for projects to enhance the experience of our students. More information about how to get involved in the work of the FHA can be obtained from Mrs Tess Brown in the Academy office on Tess.Brown@holbrookacademy.org

We plan to hold the next Parent Forum at **7:00pm on Wednesday 29th April in the Community Room** and to use this as an opportunity to develop some of these themes further and, hopefully, open up new ones. The planning group will meet beforehand to draft the programme for the meeting.

In the interim, you are able to contribute any ideas about what you would like to be included in the programme by e-mailing: parentforum@holbrookacademy.org. Your views will be seen by me and members of the Planning Group.

I would strongly encourage you to come along to the next Forum and to take the opportunity to contribute to the exciting developments taking place at the Academy.

I look forward to seeing you then.

Yours sincerely

Dr Simon Letman