



Headteacher : Dr Simon Letman BA, MA, EdD

Deputy Head : Nicola Shelley

22nd June 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

Parent Forum

As advertised in my letter to you earlier this month, a Parent Forum was held at the Academy on the evening of Wednesday 17th June.

Attendance was encouraging, with nearly forty parents coming along. Once again, those who did attend reported that the evening was very useful and very enjoyable.

The evening began with a presentation from me on how we support students' learning journeys through our academic and pastoral support systems. The presentation I used can be viewed on the new 'Parent Forum' section of the Academy website which can be found by clicking on the 'Parents and Carers' tab at the top of the homepage.

During the presentation, I explained that a number of changes had been made to the management structure of the Academy with effect from September, necessitated by Mr Barrett's decision to stand down as Assistant Head (Pupils). I am including a diagram with this letter which shows how the new structure looks.

In short, below the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of me, Miss Shelley and Mr Hart, there will now be a team of five Senior Teachers with very clear responsibilities. Mr Bartholomew and Mrs Cooke will share responsibilities for pastoral provision under the line management of Miss Shelley and Mr McGlone and Mr Livingstone will share responsibility for monitoring academic departments under the line management of Mr Hart.

Mr Anstee-Parry will have responsibility for further developing our links with feeder primary schools and for creating new partnerships with other secondary schools. In this, he will be working under my direction. I will be writing separately about all staff changes in due course, but if you would like more information at this stage then please contact me via the Parent Forum e-mail address given below.

I also spoke about some adjustments that we were making to the internal organisation of the school day in the light of running the new extended day programme this year. Taking account of feedback from students, staff and parents, we feel that a six lesson day is too punishing for learners and teachers alike. As a result, and applying the belief that the most productive learning takes place in the morning, the new day will contain four lessons before lunch and one in the afternoon with each lesson being slightly longer than at present. School will start and end at the same time.

One consequence of this change will be that morning break will be 25 minutes later but 5 minutes longer (10:55 -11:20am) and lunch will 40 minutes later but five minutes longer (1:30-2:15pm).

Some concern has been expressed about the lateness of the breaks, particularly for students in receipt of free school meals, and we will be addressing this issue for these students. I will be writing separately to the parents of those students explaining what the new arrangements will be. However, for all students I would like to emphasise more than ever how important it is that they have a decent breakfast before leaving home. A considerable number of students clearly eat their 'lunch' at break time and the canteen will continue to sell range of sweet and savoury items at this time as well as at lunch time. We are confident that students will settle into the rhythm of the new day very quickly, but if you do have any concerns about the new arrangements as they will apply to your son or daughter then please do contact me via the parent forum e-mail address.

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The discussion section of the meeting focused on 'Aspiration'. I was keen to listen to parents' views about how we could work more closely together on ensuring that Holbrook Academy students had the best preparation for the next stage of their learning journey after the age of 16. Four discussion groups looked at how we could encourage more students to remain in education after the age of 16, how we could raise the aspiration level of boys to match that of girls, how we could provide really high quality careers advice and work-related learning and how we could provide inspirational mentoring to broaden students' horizons.

An analysis of the ideas parents came up with generated six key messages:

1. We should **start our progression work earlier** and focus on the 11-14 years phase more than we do at the moment.
2. We must ensure that we equip children with **key employability skills**, including interview skills, CV writing, etc.
3. We should **focus our attention on local employers** as well as encouraging a wider perspective and develop stronger links with those local employers.
4. We should **build a wider database of parents** who are prepared to contribute to the progression process through their business knowledge and experience.
5. We should **pay particular attention to boys** with low aspirations.
6. We should **draw on recent former students**, to whom the present generation can relate, who can act in a mentoring capacity and as role models for boys and girls.

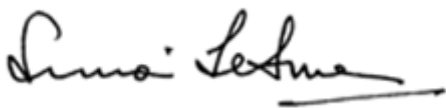
Our current work in these areas is already of a high standard but it was extremely useful to have this input from parents as we work to improve things even further.

I would welcome any comments you might have about this topic. You are able to do this by e-mailing: parentforum@holbrookacademy.org or by sending me a note. Your views will be seen by me and members of the Planning Group.

We will be planning next year's Forums and planning meetings before the end of term and the dates will be published in the calendar. If you would like to be a member of the planning group then please do get in touch with me.

I would like to thank the members of this year's planning group and all of those parents who have attended meetings and shared their views with me. The relationship the Academy has with parents is crucial and the Forum is a key aspect of our drive to continue improving.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Letman', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dr Simon Letman



Management Structure : September 2015

