

LETTER FROM MR WILSON: OUR STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVE AGAIN

Welcome to the first edition of Newsflash for this academic year. I hope that everyone has had a pleasant and relaxing summer and that all our students have returned well prepared for a successful and rewarding year.

For parents and carers of students who have joined us this September, Newsflash is a weekly bulletin that you will receive every Friday which will give you news, updates, reminders and messages from the Academy. Newsflash was introduced last year and feedback from parents and carers would suggest that they found it interesting and informative; we hope that you will find this the case too. As the new term only started yesterday, this first edition focuses mainly on our recent OFSTED Monitoring Visit and our GCSE performance this summer, but future editions will include reports and photographs of trips, activities and events that have taken place during that week. A copy of Newsflash will be emailed out each Friday or, if we have no email address for you, a copy will be posted on Friday evening.

We were delighted that, this summer, GCSE performance improved again with 53% of the Year 11 cohort achieving five or more higher GCSE grades including English and Maths, an increase of 6% from our previous 2 years results. This improvement was even more impressive against the backdrop of GCSE examinations becoming more rigorous and harder to pass. More importantly, the proportion of students making expected progress in the two core subjects is now in line with national figures which is very pleasing; we are confident that, for the first time, our measures of progress will be above national. Due to our improved performance we find ourselves in the top half of Tameside's 15 secondary schools. Success was not just limited to English and Maths with students performing really well in Geography, History, French, Drama and Photography. More of our students than ever achieved the highest GCSE grades with 25 of them achieving at least three A or A* grades. Exam results day was a wonderful occasion with so many students delighted that their hard work had paid off and that they now had the opportunity to progress to College and Further Education. It was also lovely to see, amid all the excitement, how many students took the time to find their teachers and thank them for their help, support and advice.

Based on student performance at GCSE, Droylsden Academy is now in the top half of Tameside secondary schools. The improvement in exam performance was no surprise to us and came on the back of the pleasing monitoring report from OFSTED; further details about the monitoring visit can be found over the page.

Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work

I hope that all parents and carers had the opportunity to read the letter that I sent out over the holidays. I apologise for the length of the letter but there were so many important messages that I wanted to convey to you and, of course, your child.

If your child adopts our key values of politeness, hard work and honesty, they will develop great learning habits. If we have your absolute support, then he or she will achieve and be successful; there is no reason for any child to fail.

This is an important year for the Academy. I am pleased with the progress that we are making and excited about our future; we will be an outstanding school. Thank you for reading this edition of Newsflash. I hope that your child will have a happy, successful and rewarding year.

Best wishes

Mr. P Wilson
Headteacher

IT'S OFFICIAL: DROYLSDEN ACADEMY IS AN IMPROVING SCHOOL

We are delighted to be able to let all our parents and students know the outcome of the most recent OFSTED visit to our school in July 2015. Her Majesty's Inspectors visited and observed lessons, met with groups of children, staff and senior staff, studied lots of exercise books and examined the progress and learning of our students.

The great news is that the Inspectors praised us for the significant changes we have introduced and can see the difference it is making to the education and teaching of the children and their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Please have a read for yourself, some of the findings:

- ✓ There have been **significant changes at senior leadership** level since the last inspection
- ✓ The impact of the focused actions of the new senior leadership team can be seen in the **improved progress** of the students.
- ✓ It is clear that **the senior leaders have the necessary skills and capacity to lead the academy on its continued journey of sustained improvement.**
- ✓ They are **benefiting from clear** strategic leadership.
- ✓ The strength of the team is a result of some **decisive and thoughtful action by sponsors and governors.**
- ✓ The leadership arrangements that are now in place have brought **much needed stability and capacity to the academy.**

Great learning through politeness, honesty and hard work

- ✓ The academy's self-evaluation is **accurate and underpinned by rigorous and robust quality assurance systems.**
- ✓ Members of the senior leadership team have a **high level of subject knowledge and expertise in key departmental** areas for which they are responsible.
- ✓ The checks on adults working with children **continues to be managed extremely well and fully meets all requirements**

PARTICULAR STRENGTHS: IMPROVEMENTS TO TEACHING, LEARNING AND BEHAVIOUR

- ✓ **English is strong** and so many other subjects did well in the recent Examinations at GCSE
- ✓ **The attainment and progress of students are set to improve in English and Mathematics** this year (**they did** – please see Mr Wilson's article, above)
- ✓ It is particularly encouraging to note that the proportion of students predicted to make **more than expected progress in these subjects is likely to be above or at least in line with the national figure.**
- ✓ **Attainment and progress of pupils from less advantaged families has also improved.**
- ✓ The lesson observations carried out by the Inspectors gave further evidence of **the improvement in teaching**
- ✓ There was **clear evidence of positive relationships between teachers and the students, along with improved attitudes to learning.**
- ✓ **Staff have high expectations of students' behaviour both in the classroom and around the academy.**
- ✓ **Students arrive punctually to their lessons and settle quickly to work.**
- ✓ **Students conduct themselves in a calm, orderly manner** during non-teaching time and clear away all their plates and litter and move promptly to their next lesson

OUR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN THIS YEAR'S GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

This Ofsted report was written July and the results came in at the end of August. **The results show the improvements we are making to the learning and progress of our students.** There is still much work to be done which started this week but we are confident that – with your support – **our parents and community can begin to feel much more proud of their local school** again. The school will continue to improve and your son or daughter will continue to make better progress **if we have your and their full support.** There remains much to do and we are counting on a strong team effort in school and at home to make it happen.

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GCSE COUNTDOWN

All Year 11 students will shortly be issued with their personalised "Lesson 6" timetable. As parents will be aware, all Year 11 students are expected to attend these compulsory lessons which run each day from 2.35pm to 3.30pm. Further information will be available next week.

Year 11 students taking Photography will be visiting Chester Zoo on 18th September as part their course.

There will be a Year 11 GCSE Drama Coursework Clinic on Sunday 20th and Sunday 27th September.

Science Controlled Assessments will take place for Year 11 students on Tuesday 29th September.

Mock GCSE exams will take place in the week beginning Monday 9th November.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Year 7 students will be taking their CATS tests in the week beginning Monday 21st September. Most schools use these tests which give teachers a general idea of a student's cognitive ability. Students need not prepare for these tests.

The Academy will take part in the European Week of Languages which will be held in the week beginning 21st September.

HPV1 vaccinations will be given to Year 8 girls on Tuesday 22nd September. Further information and a consent form will be sent out prior to the vaccinations taking place.

The Academy Open Evening will be held on Thursday 24th September.

The Academy closes for the half term holiday on Friday 23rd October. Full details of term dates for this academic year can be found on the Academy website.

HOMEWORK

Setting homework is one of the habits of good and outstanding schools. In today's news, the BBC are featuring a Cambridge University study that shows students who spend an extra hour on homework each evening increase their overall GCSE performance significantly.

Years 7, 8 and 9 will hand in homework each week in English, Maths, Science, Humanities and MFL. There will be a week every term where these subjects do not set homework and other subjects will be able to set extended homeworks.

In Years 7 and 8, students will receive the homework each week in English, Maths, Science, Humanities and MFL via a 'Homework booklet' that is prepared and given to students by the subject teacher. This allows students and parents to access homework for the full half term, allowing them

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to anticipate any potential problems and seek support. Homework is handed in as students enter reception on those days as detailed below:

Monday	English (set via class book) & Maths (booklet)
Tuesday	Humanities
Wednesday	Science
Thursday	Languages
Friday	English (set via booklet) and Maths (MyMaths to be completed on-line)

For Year 9, 10 and 11, homework is to be set on the days indicated on the homework timetables below. Homework will be returned to class teachers on the date specified by the teacher when the work is set.

Year 9 Homework Timetable

Monday	Languages and Humanities (9X groups)
Tuesday	English
Wednesday	Humanities (9Y groups) and Maths
Thursday	English and Science
Friday	Maths and Humanities (9W groups)

Year 10 Homework Timetable

Monday	English and Option B
Tuesday	Science and Maths
Wednesday	Option C
Thursday	Science and Option A
Friday	Maths and English

Year 11 Homework Timetable

Monday	English and Maths
Tuesday	Science and Option A
Wednesday	Option B
Thursday	Science and Option C
Friday	Maths and English

Show My Homework

In the coming weeks, the school is launching the Show My Homework website and app. This will allow students and parents to monitor homework that has been set and completed. Further information will be available in a future edition of Newsflash prior to the launch.

Planners: an apology to parents

Planners have been issued to all students, however, at the printing stage of the process, the suppliers have made an error on some Y7 and Y11 pages. Please accept our apology for this administrative error which was beyond our control. If your child was issued a planner with incorrect information in it, the suppliers have assured us that this will be rectified as soon as possible. Your child will still be able to use their current planner until he or she receives a replacement.

REMINDERS AND MESSAGES

There will be performances of this year's Academy production of *Singing in the Rain* on 30th November and 1st, 2nd and 3rd December.

Further news on the auditions and the progress of the production will be featured in future editions of Newsflash.

