

18 July 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

As the school closes for the summer, I would like to take this opportunity to share some thoughts with you.

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to those of you who have taken the time, at any point in the year, to either contact us to double check information, ask questions or raise a concern. I would also like to thank you if you have taken the time to contact staff to give them positive feedback; we have received some lovely comments from year 11 and 13 parents (in particular) which is a great motivator for the staff team here.

Over the course of this academic year we have also asked those of you who have attended Parents' Evenings to review the school and give us your thoughts. 350 parents responded and we are delighted by the results. The percentage cited are the responses 'Strongly Agree/Agree':

- Would you recommend the school to another parent. 91% (6% Don't Know)
- My child makes good progress at this school. 96%. (1% Don't Know)
- The school is well led and managed. 92% (4% Don't Know)
- The school responds well to any concerns raised. 88% (8% Don't Know)
- I receive valuable information about my child's progress. 91% (2% Don't Know)
- My child is taught well at this school. 96% (2% Don't Know)
- My child receives appropriate homework for their age. 91% (2% Don't Know)
- This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. 87% (5% Don't Know)
- My child is well looked after at this school. 97% (1% Don't Know)
- My child is happy at this school. 95% (1% Don't Know)
- My child feels safe at this school. 97% (1% Don't Know)
- This school deals effectively with bullying. 63% (28% Don't Know)

We will be dealing with any concerns raised in the surveys during the course of 2019/2020.

Communication, as we all know, is exceptionally important. In order to ensure we are up-to-date and meeting your needs we are shortly to launch a new website which has been built in-house by our ICS Team. It has a responsive, modern design which we hope will simplify your experience. The design will allow users to comfortably navigate the site on a whole range of devices (phones, tablets, laptops etc), with our website adapting depending on the size. We are currently liaising with a group of parent/carer 'testers' to check it works for them, thank you very much to those of you are helping us with this exercise. Crucially, the new site has a feedback form for parents/carers to use and I would like to encourage you to do this in the autumn when it goes 'live'.

Since I last wrote to you we have continued with our post OFSTED work which includes a monthly visit from Lisa Linscott, our Local Authority Consultant. Lisa brought a colleague



with her recently who is a registered OFSTED Inspector (Mike Randall). He conducted a formal review of our work for us. During the day he observed lessons, looked at student work, met a group of students and parents (Years 7 – 12) as well as had formal meetings with myself, the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Faculty and Governors. Mike was pleased with what he saw, believing we are focussed on the right actions as a school and are building on our 2018 examination success. The students he met privately were extremely complimentary about the school, they talked with him about the positive learning culture and the supportive and caring community. He shared with me some of the adjectives they used to describe the school: 'creative', 'inspirational', 'helpful', 'empowering', 'passionate', 'caring'. He was also very pleased with our whole school approach to reading; students were able to share with him the texts they are currently reading which he felt to be of good quality. In terms of the Governing Board, he cited compelling evidence of increased rigour at board level, governors are holding the school to account well and are 'open, honest and transparent'. He also stated governors are fastidious in overseeing the financial performance of the school to ensure monies are well-spent, including the pupil premium.

We have just concluded our major exams season and I would like to take the opportunity to commend Years 11 and 13 for their impeccable behaviour during the recent public examinations. It was a delight to see how well-mannered, respectful and polite they were to our invigilators. A massive thank you to Linda Bell our Exams Manager who is unfortunately leaving us this summer. I worked with Linda at Queen Elizabeth's School a few years ago and she joined to 'help us out' three years ago but has stayed with us since then. Managing exams is no mean feat so a big thank you to her. Her successor, Mr Adam Phillips has been promoted within the school and I wish him well in his new role.

Our new Head Boy and Girl have been appointed since the last time I wrote to you. Congratulations to Rosie-Belle Platts and Mansoon Tamang as well as their deputies, Emma Wright and Connor Joyce. This leadership team along with Sports Leaders, will be leading the Student Forum and ensuring our student voice is heard. The big focus for the next year is how we, as a school, positively impact on climate change. I look forward to working with students on this.

Mrs White has asked me to let you know there are other examples of students thriving on taking responsibility within the school. We now have a record number of trained Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. A representative ten of these attended the 'Diana Awards' event in Weymouth last month and have come back equipped with fresh ideas for the new school year. We have also just marked Schools' Diversity Week, a range of activities led by the LGBT Alliance in Schools, across all year groups.

Finally, I would like to say goodbye to colleagues leaving us this summer: Mrs Atkinson (Mathematics), Mr O'Brien (English), Mr Stone (RE), Mr Teversham (Science), Mr Cullen (Cover Supervisor), Ms Csonka (Design), Mr Dickinson (Design), Ms Bibby (Art), Mr Davidson (Design), Mr Lishman (PE), Mrs Lloyd (Cover Supervisor), Mr Cardno (Marketing/Publicity and Cover Manager), Mrs Gibb (Sociology/Psychology) and Mrs Bell (Exams), whether having been promoted, retiring, moving area, simply changing schools or leaving to commence a degree course or teacher training, I wish colleagues well.



Colleagues joining us in September are as follows:

Mr Hintze	HIN	Science Teacher
Ms Varley	VAL	Maths Teacher
Ms Gould	GOU	Maths Teacher
Mrs Bain	BAI	Maths Teacher
Mr Clinton	CLI	PE Teacher/Head of Year 7
Mrs Adams	ADA	PSRE Teacher
Mr Luxon	LUX	Head of Design & Technology
Miss Hayward	HAW	Art Teacher
Miss Rowland	ROW	Performing Arts Teacher
Ms Gallagher	GAA	Subject Leader Sociology/Psychology
Ms Rowe	ROE	English Teacher
Miss de Looze		D&T & PCA Technician

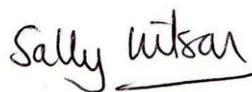
Please be aware we have recently stopped using lesson change bells and this will continue into the next academic year. The overwhelming view is that it has created a calmer learning environment with less intrusion every hour! If your child has a watch it would be great if they could wear it to help punctuality. If not, a future birthday or Christmas gift?

As I close this letter I would like to thank Year 6 parents /carers for your support to date. It was lovely to see a packed hall last Wednesday, for Transfer Evening. We really did have a wonderful transfer day with Year 6 students and we very much look forward to them joining us in September. Year 6 parents/carers are receiving a copy of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any information or wish to discuss anything with us over the summer. Please contact us on 01258 451121 or email office@blandfordschool.org.uk

There will no doubt be some wonderful images from our production of Oliver which will be posted on our website, our end of term newsletter also includes individual and team success from this term.

I am sure students will enjoy their summer holiday; we look forward to seeing them again in September. Year 7 and year 12 will be starting on Tuesday 3rd September and the rest of the school start on Wednesday 4th September 2019.

Best wishes



Sally Wilson
Headteacher

