

Questions and Answers from term 1 following parent discussions

Driffield School has been with The Education Alliance since February. We would like to provide parents with a Question and Answer sheet about this last term and the things that have been happening. We have based this round the questions we have been asked at Head of School surgeries, parents evenings and in correspondence. We hope this will be of some interest to parents.

Any parent who would like to ask a question, please do not hesitate to contact Francesca Roper, Executive Assistant via francesca.roper@theeducationalliance.org.uk

What is the current staffing situation at Driffield School?

The timetable for September is fully staffed and vacancies have been filled, including the full time appointment of a Director of English, Head of History, Head of House from South Hunsley and a School Improvement Leader in maths from Malet Lambert School, 11 subject specialist appointments from outside the Trust, including 8 appointments in core subjects.

In terms of contingency planning, the Trust proactively runs adverts for core subjects periodically in an effort to future proof (e.g. in readiness for possible maternities etc). In addition to new appointments, Driffield School has received significant support this year from Trust Directors of English, maths, science and SEN. This support will continue next year, along with additional input from School Improvement Leaders for English, maths and science.

The Education Alliance invests in training and development and all A level and GCSE staff are given extensive support and training to teach their subjects, sharing good practice, continually developing professionally for the benefit of students. There are very few teachers who teach out of their specialism.

How does the Trust work with staff and how does it improve staff relations?

The health and wellbeing of staff is important to us and the Education Alliance is one of the only Trusts in the region that meets with all the teaching and non-teaching unions each half term, working closely with them on issues relating to staff welfare and wellbeing alongside policy developments, organisational changes and school and Trust developments. Classroom teachers work to a 1265 hours contract which is nationally recognised and is in line with guidance from teaching unions.

Positive messages and achievements are celebrated every Monday morning in the staff briefing and we have organised staff sporting events, which have been very popular.

Recent activities linked to staff health and wellbeing include the following:

- The introduction of a staff suggestion scheme
- The delivery of a mindfulness programme
- The introduction of an employee assistance package which provides 24/7 access to confidential counselling, personal legal and financial information, health advice across a range of medical and wellbeing issues, and a GP helpline
- Implementation of a range of policies and procedures (e.g. Health and Wellbeing)
- Delivery of an Occupational Health Service provided by Hull City Council

We are going to undertake a staff survey in October 2017 across the Trust and will work with our Board, Local Governing Bodies and trade unions to analyse the data and initiate appropriate actions in line with feedback, which will be anonymous. The intention is that the survey will then be undertaken on an annual basis.

How are lessons monitored by senior staff?

An open door policy is in operation and senior staff visit classrooms on a daily basis. These visits are planned to ensure that lessons in all subjects and across all key stages are effectively monitored. Whilst senior leaders are in lessons on learning walks, they conduct book checks and have discussions with students over the year. There have already been 446 learning walks undertaken, these have been augmented by 7816 zonings (lesson drop-ins) by leaders.

How does the behaviour system work at Driffield School?

Driffield School operates a behaviour policy based on sanctions at the appropriate level. There is a clearly defined system of escalation of sanctions depending on the nature of the incident or whether a student's poor behaviour is part of a repeat pattern.

Every incident that occurs during the day is brought to a pastoral meeting by the non-teaching house tutors, which takes place at the end of each school day. All behaviour incidents are logged and this data is analysed each week by the heads of house to ensure that appropriate support is being put in place to help the student moderate their behaviour.

As well as appropriate sanctions for each incident, we have worked in a system of support and warnings, to work with a student to improve their behaviour. Head of House, Deputy Head, Head of School and Governor warnings have had a measurable impact, with the number of warnings declining since the system was introduced.

What are the priorities for the school going forwards?

Pastoral Care

We will move to our new electronic Rewards System, to award, track and monitor the fair application of our rewards policy and procedures, celebrating the great work of our students.

For all our students' wellbeing, we will embed the new Behaviour Policy with its clear layers of support, rewards and sanctions, placing a school-wide emphasis on the consequences of negative behaviours

We will Introduce the Trust Employer-Led Programme of business internships alongside the Oxbridge Programme will help students aspiring to the highest levels of employment and academic study to achieve their goals

Student leaders are to be given a voice at all levels in the school through our new Student Council platform

Teaching and learning

All teaching staff will use our new information management system to record achievement and effectively plan to meet all students' needs

Bespoke literacy and numeracy interventions at Key Stage 3 are to be delivered by qualified teachers

We will review our Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure appropriate stretch and challenge for all

Our new Year 7 'Life after Levels' assessment programme is to be rolled into Year 8

Following the appointment of the new SENDCo, the Learning Support provision is to be reviewed to create a programme which will improve the progress of the children with additional learning needs

Age-appropriate Personal, Social, Health and Economic education is to be delivered in 4 'drop-down' days

All new leaders to the school will be given access to the Trust's Leadership Development programmes to enhance and strengthen whole school and departmental leadership

Newly- and recently-qualified teachers will access their own Trust programmes of professional development

Our Teachers' Professional Development

Subject-specific training and enhancement will be ongoing, where teaching and support staff will work with their Trust school counterparts to share best practice; for example, developing new programmes of study for the Year 11 reformed GCSEs and moderating assessment processes

We will continue to work closely with the trade unions in school and across the Trust to ensure fair application of policies and procedures for all

Communications with parents and the community

Driffield School will move to two Progress Evenings a year for each year group, as in other Trust schools, to make sure all parents can meet fully with their child's teachers

Regular Parent View questionnaires are to be used to capture parents' feedback

A half-termly 'Head of School Round-Up' is to be shared with parents

The school Newsletter will continue to share information about whole school events on a half-termly basis

Regular Head of School Surgeries will continue to be offered to maintain the face-to-face contact established

We will continue to enhance the induction and training programmes for Governors on the Local Governing Body, which includes the governors who are parents

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will embed the Trust's monitoring processes, including the supportive presence of school leaders to identify best practice and respond to students' needs

We will further develop the role of governors in monitoring the School Improvement Plan's implementation and progress

We will use the feedback from students' views to inform our planning

There will be rigorous external moderation of our processes and impact from a National Leader of Education as an Improvement Partner

What input has the Trust had this term?

This term, the trust Directors have been taking extra classes and leading additional sessions for Year 11 and 13. There have been joint trust revision sessions for year 13 Chemistry and weekly lunchtime and after school sessions in science. Maths and English have run extra sessions, including Saturdays. 197 students attended the Saturday English session and in all three subjects Trust staff have led subject booster activities.

How does Driffield School support community events and how will the school engage with local employers and community activities in the future?

The school supports a range of community events. The whole of Year 7 contributed to the displays on The Show ground during The Tour de Yorkshire. Students can participate in an educational visit to Driffield Show and other events supported include the Citizenship ceremony in July where we will be welcoming 10 new British citizens to our local area. Some of our Year 7 and 8 students will be singing, and hosting the citizens. The school also supports events which are organised by the DSA, where they have free access to the school facilities.

In the future, we are looking at other ways the school can contribute to support the local community.

Engagement with local employers has been a key area for development this year. Sarah Barley, Head of Extended Studies at South Hunsley has worked one day a week at Driffield School to develop links and establish a group of employer mentors for Post 16 students. We now 20 employer mentors who have begun working with students. Next year, Sarah will continue her work to develop a bespoke new Post 16 pathway for sixth form students.

How was the governing body appointed and what are their main priorities

Following the Academy order being issued by the Regional Schools Commissioner, an open session was held for any interested parties to attend and see what training for Governors would be offered and what the role would involve. Following this, the Trust asked for expressions of interest from all interested parties including anybody currently in post. There were then discussions with all interested parties and a governing body was formed with an appropriate skills mix, including two members of staff and governors who are parents.

In terms of school improvement, the Local Governing Body will periodically implement and review the strategic plan for Driffield School, focussing on the school's performance, overseeing progress against school improvement measures.

What is the condition of the building at Driffield and what can be do improve them?

East Riding Local Authority assessed that there were £5,044,000 of repairs required on conversion in February.

The Trust is presently putting in a Condition Improvement Fund bid to the Education Funding Agency. This is a very competitive process but the Trust has an excellent record of gaining funding.

The Trust has agreed to support the reconfiguration of West dining facilities and the refurbishment of North toilets.

Have you any evidence that parents' views have improved since the Ofsted inspection?

All parents are invited to complete a questionnaire at parents' evenings. This year we have had 241 responses. Ofsted stated in their report that less than half of parents said they would recommend to another parent. This year, 77% of parents now say they would recommend the school to another parent. In addition, 91% say their child is happy at the school and 92% say their child feels safe at Driffield School.