

Senior Leadership Team Parent Update

Autumn 2015

Welcome to our first edition of our Senior Leadership Team Parent Update. The aim of our half termly newsletter is to inform you of the improvements made at the Academy since our last Ofsted report. You will notice the huge amount of change that has led to improved outcomes in Achievement (including that of disadvantaged students), Teaching & Learning, Behaviour, Attendance and Literacy and would like to thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions, queries or suggestions that you would like us to consider, please use the contact details at the bottom of this page. We are also currently launching our Facebook site to help parents and the community hear about the fantastic work of our whole learning community, and encourage you to 'like' our page to ensure you receive regular communication with us.



Meet the team



S.French

D.Kelly

S.Frost

A.Ellis

P.Smith

A.Lucy

Principal

Vice
Principal

Assistant
Principal

Assistant
Principal

Assistant
Principal

Director of
Finance &
Operations

Assessment &
Intervention

Behaviour &
Attendance

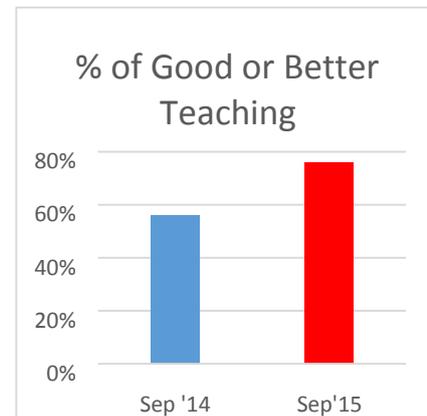
Teaching &
Learning

Additional
needs

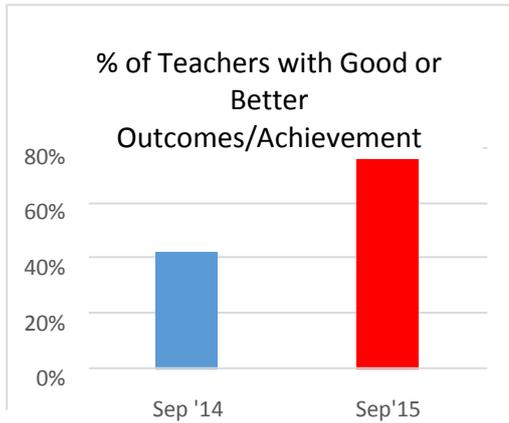
How well students are taught

A number of actions have been implemented as a result of the Ofsted inspection in January 2015. These include:

- A new Leadership Team with new staffing in the Mathematics Faculty
- Professional development for teachers to ensure there is appropriate challenge in lessons
- A revised marking and feedback system that supports students making relevant improvements to their work
- Support from outstanding academies within the local area
- New teaching techniques implemented to support better student engagement.



The impact of these actions is the standard of teaching has improved.



The percentage of teachers achieving good or better outcomes has increased, with the amount of inadequate outcomes significantly decreasing.

The Mathematics Faculty was reviewed by a consultant that was previously a HMI Inspector in September 2015 who evaluated the improved standards.

How well students behave at the Academy and attend regularly

Since January 2015 there have been yet more changes made to the systems that the Academy operates to ensure a higher standard of behaviour. Last year saw the lowest number of exclusions issued with no permanent exclusions at all. These are statistics that The Discovery Academy is very proud of. In September we launched a new

behaviour system that has really raised the

bar for student expectations. We now use a '1-4' grade system in lessons to judge student engagement, progress and attitude to learning. There is a higher expectation in all lessons and the students have responded extremely positively.

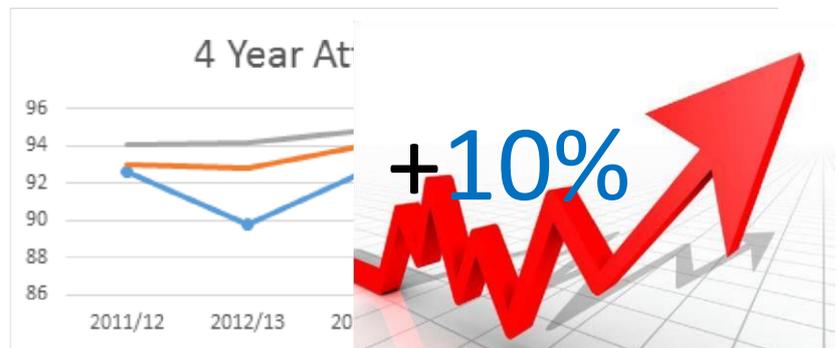
This sits in conjunction with a new rewards system that automatically rewards the students with the best overall behaviour scores each half term. This has seen the students really get stuck into their learning and the early signs are very positive.

In terms of student attendance the Academy enjoyed its best ever end of year attendance figure. The end of year result was 94%. A 1.8% increase on 2013-2014 which is a testament to the students, parental support and the hard work of the Academy staff. Over the past three years there has

been a sustained increase in attendance of all students which has been extremely pleasing. This shows us that the students enjoy coming to the Academy and we hope that this continues to increase further.

How well our students are achieving

Staff and students at the Academy have been working really hard to ensure that standards of achievement are improving. Last year we became the second most improved school in the City with 44% of our students achieving 5A*- C grades including English and Mathematics at GCSE level. This figure equals the best results achieved by the Academy and is even more satisfying as it comes at a time when the majority of secondary schools in the City (and many across the UK) are suffering from falling attainment.



We also achieved some remarkable individual successes in 2015, particularly in English where results rocketed from 46% A*- C in 2014 to over 64% this year. Modern Foreign Languages continued to produce outstanding results, with over 80% of students achieving A*- C for the second year running. Meanwhile subjects including Sport, IT, Business and Psychology achieved excellent results.

In addition to our Year 11 2015 cohort, our Year 7-10 students also performed well across their subjects throughout the year. In year

progress for these year groups demonstrates that they are performing at or above their peers in schools nationally, including groups of learners such those with Special Educational Needs and entitlement to the Pupil Premium, and reflects the improvements made in teaching and learning.

Our Awards Evening at the prestigious 'Victoria Hall' included over 200 current and former Year 11 students who have been awarded for a variety of achievements including behaviour and progress, as well as triumph against adversity and attainment. Students were lucky enough to meet our Guest Speaker, Ben McBean, a war veteran from Afghanistan who lost his limbs after stepping on a landmine in 2008. Ben, is a massively inspirational character who has since gone on to fundraise thousands of pounds to support fellow servicemen and been called a 'hero' by fellow serviceman Prince Harry for his bravery. Well done to all our prize winners.

Don't forget, as parents you have 24/7 access to our childrens' attainment and progress through our online 'Go4Schools' system. Log onto www.go4schools.com, click on 'Parents' and enter your email address you provided to us. An email will shortly follow with your password, where you will then be able to log on and see real time assessment data for your child.



How we keep your children safe

The recent Ofsted inspection was very positive in terms of our safeguarding procedures and how we keep children safe in education. Although Ofsted commented that Safety was good, the Safeguarding team strive to be outstanding and will continue to put things in place which enable children to *feel* safe and to *be* safe.

At the Academy, we have six Child Protection Officers who all the students know.



We have designed an additional 'safe place' for students to go to called 'DASH': Discovery Academy Safeguarding Hub. This 'safe place' allows students to access the Child Protection Team for any issues they have in or out of the

Academy. Last year we had 1440 concerns brought to the team from staff, students, parents/carers and agencies. This is excellent! As it shows the commitment we all have as a community to safeguard our young people.

Help & Advice



Press this if you are worried and feel unsafe.
Press this if you want to talk to a child safety officer



Press this if you are being or feel you are being bullied, in or out of school or online

We have also developed a further mechanism for reporting bullying or safeguarding issues this year using the student's homepages.

This has been used only a couple of times so far, but we hope it will be a good way for some of our less confident students

to tell a trusted adult about issues they may have. Bullying is minimal at the Academy, but we take it very seriously and act quickly to minimise it.

Our Academy website now has a Safeguarding section which you as parents can access, with some interesting and thought provoking films and advice to help keep children safe.

<http://www.thediscoveryacademy.co.uk/parents/safeguarding.html>

All our staff have been trained in various Safeguarding agenda's, most recently PREVENT awareness, which is about protecting students from Radicalisation and Extremism. All staff will be given the opportunity to have bespoke training this term based around Safeguarding issues.

Next Steps for the team include: a community safeguarding working party, further training for both staff and students; New Peer Mentor development; and 'Mindfulness' classes to help promote self-esteem and positive mental health.