



Penistone Grammar School Advanced Learning Centre Never Stop Flying

Principal: Ms J Higgins (BA Hons)
Huddersfield Road, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 7BX
www.penistonegrammarschool.co.uk
t: 01226 762114
f: 01226 370328
e: enquiries@penistone-gs.uk

Achieving Excellence through a Values Driven Education



Ref: JHI/PCR/CMA

Date: October 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the October half-term break and look forward to our first reward event, it feels a good time to reflect on everything that has happened over the past few weeks.

The new academic year got off to a flying start as we celebrated the excellent examination results achieved by our 2016/17 cohort. The summer was a particularly anxious time for our school community as this was the first year of the newly reformed English and Mathematics GCSEs reported under the new 9-1 grading system. As was the case in all schools across the Country, despite every effort being made to prepare our young people for their examinations, we didn't quite know what to expect of the outcome.

We were therefore, delighted when we had first sight of the results in August. Our year 11 students absolutely rose to the challenge of the new, more rigorous regime, with 80% of them achieving a grade 4 or above in English and Mathematics (61% of whom achieved a grade 5 or higher) and an impressive number achieving the new, elite grade 9.

We were also thrilled with the outcomes achieved by our Key Stage 5 students. Because of the performance of each individual student, our school has made significant gains in all the key headline figures which measure the effectiveness of our Post-16 provision. This looks set to continue, with the results secured at AS by our year 12 students placing the Post-16 Centre in the top 10% of schools nationally (according to ALPs).

We are extremely proud of our students and staff. These results are the product of their determination and commitment at a time when the bar has been raised higher than ever before. Our main aim has always been to empower our students so that they can go forward to the next phase of their education with absolute confidence; the sky really is the limit for them and these results are evidence of that.

It seems appropriate at this point to remind you that our Post-16 Open Evening is taking place on **Thursday 9 November** from **18:00 to 20:00**. This is an excellent opportunity for our year 11 students to find out what our Post-16 Centre has to offer.

The start of the new academic year also brought its challenges; not least in the form of implementing our new Values Driven Expectations (VDE) system. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those parents who came along to our parents' evening, or aired their thoughts in other ways, about the new approach.

We thought it would be useful if we shared some statistics with you from the first 6 weeks of implementation. On analysis we can confirm that 105,692 merits have been awarded to students since the system was launched in September. The number of lines taken for uniform on a 2-week basis has reduced from 367 to 68 and we have seen reductions across other key areas including behaviour (down from 1320 to 806) and effort (reducing from 218 to 177).

As with any new system however; it is essential that we continue to review its effectiveness, identify areas for development and ensure it is still meeting the purpose for which it was originally intended. We are in the process of collecting staff and student views and would like to invite parents to share their reflection of the first half-term with us. There will be two opportunities to do this, **Thursday 26 October** and **Monday 6 November**. Both sessions are open to anyone to attend and will run from **18:00 to 19:30**. The aim is that these sessions will provide an opportunity for parents to share their experience of the system over the first 6 weeks of implementation with all information collected helping us to further develop our Values Driven Expectations approach.

We would ask that parents sign up to attend the meetings using the links below:

VDE Parent Meeting: Half-Term One

Thursday 26 October from **18:00 to 19:30** sign up link: <https://parentvdemeeting1of2.eventbrite.co.uk>

Monday 6 November from **18:00 to 19:30** sign up link: <https://parentvdemeeting2of2.eventbrite.co.uk>

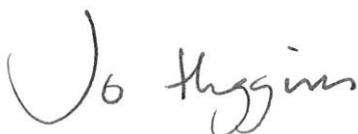
Please note; we will be unable to provide an opportunity to respond to specific, individual cases in detail at these meetings and would ask any parents who wishes to discuss the same to contact the school at the earliest opportunity.

The second challenge we faced this year came in the form of a telephone call on the afternoon of Monday 9 October when we received notification from Ofsted that they would be undertaking a monitoring visit the following day. Again, we would like to thank all those parents who took time to share their views with Ofsted via the Parent View questionnaire, particularly given the short turn-around time inspections allow.

The visit was extremely positive; the Inspection Team (comprising of three inspectors) were very complimentary about the work being undertaken by us and endorsed our continued areas of focus as identified within our School Improvement Plan. We are awaiting official communication of the team's findings from the Lead Inspector and will of course share this with you once received.

Finally, we can confirm that a date has now been agreed for the handover of the principalship from Ms Higgins to Mr Crook. Ms Higgins' last day will be Friday 10 November and there are a number of events planned over the course of next week and the first week after half-term to say goodbye, before Mr Crook officially takes up post as Principal on Monday 13 November 2017.

Yours sincerely



Jo Higgins
Principal



Paul Crook
Associate Principal

