

Sixth Form overview – December 2018

We are a broadly comprehensive Sixth Form of around 200 students offering a wide range of both academic (A level) and applied general (BTEC or equivalent) courses at level 3. We review and update our curriculum annually to meet the needs and aspirations of our students and informed by local employment needs. Our results in summer 2017 were our best in recent years – our applied general progress figure was +0.55, placing us as the top school in the local authority by a large margin on this measure. The A level progress figure of +0.02 and Academic figure of +0.03 place us as the third state school in the authority and represent a very positive improving trend from -0.37 in 2015 and -0.26 in 2016. This upward trend was not predicted to improve last summer and, despite intervention and support, the A' level published figure was -0.26 with the Applied General much more pleasing at +0.4. The A level figure is projected to improve slightly (to around -0.22) with the validated data set and Y14 students removed.

Structure

The Sixth Form is led by an Assistant Headteacher with line management by the Curriculum Deputy Headteacher. A change in staffing was made in 2016 with the appointment of a full time Sixth Form administrator replacing a part time Assistant Progress Manager. This was to give consistent support/contact for the students and was necessary with the introduction of supervised study sessions for all students. This year we have moved back to single-year form groups after 6 years of mixed 12/13 form groups to allow a more tailored form time programme to be established.

Performance Indicators

The validated L3VA data showed significant improvement last summer after 2 years of disappointing results.

Key figures:

Measure	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
L3VA A Level		-0.4	-0.3	0.02	-0.26
L3VA Academic	-0.04	-0.37	-0.26	0.03	-0.26
L3VA Applied General	-0.03	-0.41	0.3	0.55	0.4
A*-A (%)	12	5	6	10.1	7%
A*-B (%)	33	25	29	37.5	23%
A*-E (%)	100	99	99	99.5	100

We were pleased with summer 2017 results, particularly after the changes to A levels over the last few years from the removal of the January resit session in 2013 to the decoupling and reform of A levels and Applied General qualifications. 2018 results were disappointing. The A*-B percentage particularly disappointing with many students close to

B grades on analysis. Marking reviews were requested with a small amount of upwards movement. We were pleased that the performance of our disadvantaged cohort improved this year the unvalidated L3VA data showing 0 for Academic/A level measure (-0.1 last year).

Subject trends show that our applied general qualifications have shown very strong progress for the last 3 years. A level subject performance is more nuanced with long standing strong progress figures from some subjects – for example Product Design A' level has been had a positive figure for at least that last 5 years – and underperformance in others. There were upwards trends in History, Maths, ICT & PE amongst others.

In summer 2018, progress in English and Maths at level 2 was very good at +0.4 for Maths and +0.7 for English.

Tracking

Estimates are established for students using the L3VA Ready Reckoner. Students and staff then use these to set individual subject targets. The Ready Reckoner is used after each data point to estimate the progress made by students individually, by subject and overall. This data is shared with subject leaders, from tutors and students. This is then used to inform intervention by subject teachers, mentoring by form tutors, student trackers and intervention by senior staff if necessary.

Other tracking includes:

- New assessment schedule from Sept 2017 informed by decoupling and course reform – 5 formal internal examination periods throughout Y12/13 followed by the final external exams in the summer of Y13.
- Attitude to Learning per lesson – students graded 1-5
- Attendance tracker at fortnightly intervals – attendance c. 94% - staged attendance system.
- Monitoring Day (November), Parents' Evening (March) and reports.
- Engagement with CEIAG using ULAS

Programmes of Study

The study programmes fully meet the principles of the DfE's 16-19 Study Programmes by providing clear progression routes into and out of the Sixth Form; stretch and challenge; GCSE English and Maths where necessary; work experience and high-quality input on CEIAG, PSHCE/wellbeing/study skills content and voluntary work. All courses are 2 years' in duration; a decision was made to sit AS subjects in tranche 1 of reform but not subsequently.

Students' programmes of study are developed around their interests, skills and aspirations. Some students will start Y12 with 4 subjects but almost all will focus on 3 by October half term. Anyone without a grade C or 4 at English/Maths GCSE attends compulsory classes and re-sits in November and June.

The Form Tutorial Programme is designed to incorporate the principles of the VESPA (**V**ision **E**ffort **S**ystems **P**ractice **A**ttitude) programme based on 'The A Level Mindset' by Steve Oake and Martin Griffin. All students have an A Level Mindset workbook around which activities are designed. Alongside this there is a weekly school focus which is adapted in an age-appropriate way using TEDtalks (or similar), fortnightly Sixth Form assemblies, a weekly current affairs quiz and dedicated time for Y12 to engage with ULAS whilst form tutors meet with Y13 students around UCAS/progress/applications etc.

A number of students pursue extra-curricular/enrichment opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh award, AfriTwin trip to South Africa, ski trips, school production, Art gallery trips etc.

Careers advice and Guidance

CEIAG for those considering the Sixth Form starts in Y11 (alongside the main school CEIAG) with assemblies, Sixth Form open evening (January 2019), subject talks and parent/carer meetings at Y11 Parents/Carers Evening (February 2019). Individual meetings to discuss post-16 options were offered by the Assistant Headteacher i/c Sixth Form with students/parents/carers last year and take up was excellent –over 100 meetings have been held with potential applicants. The same is planned for this cycle. Historically (pre 2012) too many students were selecting, swapping or dropping subjects at AS in a chaotic fashion throughout the year (or leaving completely) and failing to proceed to and then complete the Upper Sixth with 3 A levels. There is now far less volatility both in terms of those who leave without completing Y13 and their subject choices.

Students receive an excellent diet of CEIAG. We place equal weight on both Higher Apprenticeships and university as high quality progression routes. ULAS (an online, integrated careers and university platform) has been used for the last 2 years and has been firmly embedded this year. All students use ULAS to build up an individual profile showing their interests, soft skills and experiences it also allows them to search careers information, courses, vacancies, build CVs, write personal statements etc. Year 12 use ULAS weekly in form time. Staff use ULAS to monitor engagement with the platform and also career aspirations to help planning for CEIAG opportunities.

Career interviews are given as a priority to Upper Sixth students between September and December. Year 12 all visit the University of Chester, the University of Liverpool and the UCAS HE exhibition in Manchester. They all take part in two 'Pathways' days in July which comprise talks from universities, the ASK apprenticeship programme, local employers and broader wellbeing content such as St John's Ambulance, sexual health, driver safety and stress input. Students can opt-in to other CEIAG opportunities held in school such as the Oxford & Cambridge student conference, 'So you want to be a...?' talks, UCAS clinics, CV workshops and higher apprenticeship mock assessment centre sessions. A parent/carer evening session on post-18 options was well-attended and supported by the University of Chester, the ASK programme and the National Careers Service. A bulletin is produced fortnightly and sent to students/parents/carers via email and Twitter detailing upcoming university open days, discover days, higher apprenticeship vacancies, internship opportunities etc. Work experience has been developed this year to be 5 days of authorised absence (outside of exam periods) throughout the year to increase flexibility with work places.

Retention and Destinations

We currently retain around 40% of our Y11. This is a slight decline in student numbers over the last 5 years. However, the numbers are now far more stable and students are more likely to complete their courses. Retention between Year 12 and Year 13 has increased from 49% in 2012 to 73% in 2016. Those who leave usually do so because they have secured apprenticeships locally – usually in the Engineering or Business administration sectors. We are pleased for these students and celebrate their success.

For the last 3 years, around 50% of our Y13 students have applied to university. Published figures show that this has increased from 35% in 2013 (13% below national) to 48% in 2015 (2% below national). Increasingly, students (particularly the more able and accountancy/finance/Engineering students) are applying for Higher/Degree Apprenticeships alongside. This year students were offered places at KPMG and Grant Thornton with many others through to final stages for other schemes.

Leadership Opportunities

We have an energetic, expansive Sixth Form Leadership team that formally applied by letter and were interviewed by the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and the Student Voice leader.

They arrange regular charity events (Cake sales, Whitby Christmas Market) and represent the school at key events in the calendar such as open evenings and presentation evening. They help to run the Houses and a number of Sixth formers help with Student Voice, Sixth Form Committees, Peer Mentoring as well as reading and literacy with Year 7. Students are all encouraged to commit to a 'community service' activity on a weekly basis, for most this is working within a lower school class supporting younger students in their favourite subject.

Student Voice

A student voice survey in January 2018 showed that all students surveyed (a sample of 10 students across the ability/subject/background range) enjoyed the Sixth Form and would recommend it to Year 11 students. Students were very complimentary about support from staff both in and out of lessons in terms of assessment and feedback on learning, ways to make further progress, approachability and support outside of timetabled lessons. Students feel that they are working very hard and that Sixth Form is a real challenge but that they know where to access support (curriculum or pastoral) if necessary. This is supported by a parent/carer survey in March 2018 in which 92% of parents/carers agreed that they were happy with the education provided in the Sixth Form.

Able students

The percentage of students entering the Sixth Form with A/A* at GCSE was much lower than the national average from the IDSR – 13% compared to 32% nationally. Progress was slightly lower for this group than other groups (-0.1 compared to 0 for all students) but demonstrated real improvement on the previous 2 years .at -0.5 in 2016 and -0.3 in 2015.

The Whitby+ programme has been running for the last three years and is open to the top performers in their cohort – this year there are 22 in Y12 and 24 in Y13. These students receive targeted information and guidance for our more able. They are all invited to attend our Oxbridge Information sessions; the Oxford and Cambridge Student Conference at Aintree; residentials at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge; local medicine and dentistry events etc. 10 students in each year have secured places on the Social Mobility Foundation's Aspiring Professionals Programmes which give them fantastic opportunities to make links with professionals in their ideal career sector, attend professional skills workshops, complete internships within high-profile businesses and e-mentoring with a professional in their area. Students have won places on the very competitive JP Morgan summer internship in London for the last 2 years, another a Whitehall internship the year before. These students are also identified and monitored as a 'group' in the same way as disadvantaged etc.

Disadvantaged students

There are 15 students (9 in Y12 and 6 in Y13) currently in receipt of the 16-19 Bursary and 26 students (17 in Y12 and 9 in Y13) students for whom the school received Pupil Premium funding in Year 11. The small cohorts make statistical analysis problematic but the IDSR last year shows that the progress of disadvantaged students was slightly below the 'all' figure (-0.1 compared to 0) for A level and far exceeded the 'all' figure (+1.5 compared to +0.6) for applied general qualifications. This year progress for this cohort has improved at 0 for Academic/A level measures. These students are identified and monitored as a group but have very individual needs and circumstances. 16-19 Bursary funding is used to cover expenses related to students' studies – for example to fund a Maths STEP programme for one of our high ability, disadvantaged students.