

Exmouth Community College

Academy Trust

Principal: A J Davis BSc(Hons), PGCPSE, NPQH



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Dear Parent/Carer

As my first term at the College draws to a close I thought it would be an appropriate moment to review the term and outline our plans for the future.

As I have explained previously, I was absolutely delighted and very proud to return to the College as Principal, having left as Deputy Principal eleven years ago. It is now clear that over this time some great developments have taken place, but, as Ofsted recognised, some areas need to be refreshed and developed further. I relish this challenge and can see the huge potential that the College has to be one of the leading schools in the South West.

Future aims

My plan to achieve the above is to:

1. Focus on the quality of teaching and learning so that all students are appropriately challenged, supported and guided to make good progress every day in every lesson from one week to the next. A key principle of this is our new marking and feedback policy which requires staff to mark work following a Praise Action and Student Response model to correct misunderstandings and using a pink highlighter to identify simple mistakes. You should now be able to look in your child's books and see this in action, however, if you have any concerns about marking please do not hesitate to get in touch. Underpinning this are our core principles for lessons which include: clear objectives for learning, matching the lesson to the needs of individual students and an emphasis in all lessons on the importance of literacy.
2. Make sure that our pastoral support systems work for all students and to review our personal development programme to ensure it is both appropriate for the current challenges youngsters face and delivered effectively. This will ensure that the College community is founded on respect, is well disciplined and people are treated with humanity.
3. Aim to maximise each student's capacity for learning throughout their life so that they can contribute positively to society.

Ofsted inspection

Against this background of significant changes in our practice in order to improve our GCSE outcomes, we were notified on the 6th November that Ofsted were inspecting the College on the 7th and 8th November. In their report, the inspection team recognised much strength. In particular they were very positive about outcomes and provision in Post 16 where they commented that, "**Sixth Form students are well taught, and so make strong academic progress**" and "**leaders of the sixth form demonstrate a genuine passion for the success of all students, no matter what their starting points**". In addition, it was pleasing to see that inspectors identified that behaviour across the College was good and that "**pupils conduct themselves well.**" They added that "**The school is calm and orderly even when large numbers of pupils are moving around both sites and across the bridge in between. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and provide good supervision at break, lunchtime and afterschool.**" Significantly the inspectors also found that our arrangements for safeguarding were effective and that students are kept safe. Other areas of practice that were highlighted included good progress in Mathematics, Art and Religious Education; the impact of the Discovery Stream, the REACH Centre, Careers Advice and Guidance; the improvements being made to SEND students; the motivation of teachers to embrace the new changes to practice that have been put in place since September and the choice of extra-curricular activities for students.

Finally, over 80% of parents/carers who responded to the Ofsted's 'Parentview' questionnaire indicated that they would recommend this College to others and so we thank you for your support.

However, as the newly appointed Principal, alongside the new Chair of Governors, we recognise that outcomes for some GCSE subjects, and in particular for disadvantaged students, have not been as good as we would wish. We accept that some of this underperformance has been down to inconsistent teaching and learning, which is why improving this area is our highest priority, alongside other factors such as ensuring our curriculum offers a broad and balanced range of choices for all students and improving levels of literacy across all subjects which is again why we have made this a priority in lessons.

The inspectors recognised that the College was in transition and that rapid action has been taken to address these weaknesses. They commented that, the Principal **"is raising teachers' expectations and challenging complacency wherever he finds it"** and has **"rapidly established a shared understanding among staff of what needs to be done to bring about improvement. He has a clear vision for the future of the school, which is shared by senior leaders."** To realise these improvements requires positive engagement with staff which Ofsted also recognised by stating, **"The Principal models good relationships and is developing a climate of trust. As a result, staff are increasingly well motivated."**

While very disappointingly they awarded the College a grade of "Requires Improvement" overall, we are delighted that the inspectors awarded a "Good" grade for the Post 16 and "Good" grade for Behaviour. The report also recognises that changes for the better are being made and highlights that **"Development plans are now clearly focussed on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment"** along with having a **"rigorous system for managing the performance of staff"** now in place. While the inspectors cannot yet see the impact of these changes we believe, and our forecast data for current Year 11 students show, that we are on track to see a significant improvement in GCSE results this year.

On this basis we therefore believe that the College is well placed to make some very rapid improvement specifically to the outcomes at Key Stage 4 for all students and make an immediate return to a "Good" grade for all areas. Needless to say, all staff at the College as well as the Governors will be working tirelessly over the coming months to ensure that we achieve the GCSE results that all students at the College deserve.

The full report can be found on our website at www.exmouthcollege.devon.sch.uk and if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

New College website and curriculum offer being developed

In other areas we are currently working on developing a new College website in order to improve communication as well as undertaking a review of our curriculum offer to ensure that all students have access to a broad curriculum that is appropriately challenging.

Developments for Gifted and Talented students

In addition, we have reviewed our provision for gifted and talented students. We are now implementing a new programme of activities beyond the personalisation within lessons for these students which we have called our Aspire programme. This is a slightly different approach and aims to give students who are identified as gifted and talented in Year 7 a programme which develops their skills and confidence over the next seven years through into Post-16 to ensure they are well prepared for perhaps an interview at Oxford, Cambridge or Bristol universities and so follow in the footsteps of other students from our College who have progressed to these prestigious institutions. Gifted and talented activities this term have included a Year 9 trip to see the engineering brilliance of the Bloodhound car being tested at Newquay airport. On the 29th November a group of Aspire students from year 7 gave a very good presentation to parents, carers and staff of their independent Research Project investigating Science and Technology ideas that are set to change the world. On Monday 20th November ten girls from Year 10 and 11 were invited to Maynard School in Exeter to participate in a Girls STEM workshop. Teams faced a number of challenges during the day and our team did extremely well and won one of the three main challenges of the day.

Sporting success

I am proud to tell you that two Year 13 students are doing brilliantly on the national sporting stage; Rugby player, Brooke Bradley, has won a place in the women's England International Rugby team and cyclist, Will Tidball, is a member of a GB cycle team and recently had a great race in Belgium. Closer to home our under 14 girls' and boys' football teams are doing very well in the National Cup. (As a side note it is wonderful to see more than sixty girls attending the weekly after school football club.) Other success includes a 60-0 victory over The Kings School by our Post 16 Rugby team. For more sporting news visit the PE Department's Twitter pages: <https://twitter.com/exmouthccsport>.

Amazing creative arts

It has been a busy term in the creative and performing arts. The Art Department brought in professional artists to work with Year 10 students on Enterprise Days. The Dance Department have had a successful day working with primary students and our students have had experience of working with professional dancers. We have enjoyed a major music concert in aid of Rotary Charities and to help support our dynamic music department. The concert was wonderful and featured the numerous talented young people here performing a wide range of musical genres. It was good to see staff and students playing together on stage and students leading musical groups. In the penultimate week of term, the Drama Department staged *The 39 Steps* by John Buchan. The small cast did a superb job of maintaining the characterisation, plot and humour throughout the show. My thanks to the Drama Department and all staff and students who helped to make this an engaging and entertaining show.

Even more author visits

This term we have had four visiting authors at College: Philip Ardagh is one Britain's top authors for children and sells thousands of books. It was, therefore, a real treat to welcome him to the College presenting a very informative and funny talk to Year 5 & 6 students from local primary schools. More recently students from Years 8 & 9 were able to meet three, very popular, authors; Teri Terry, Cat Clarke and Chris Russell. My thanks to the librarians who worked so hard on these events. As we are all aware reading is very important at all ages to enable students to be successful and as an example of our commitment to this a group of Key Stage 4 students recently were given the opportunity to work with Paul Young, Senior Lecturer and expert in Victorian Literature at the University of Exeter. During the workshop, students developed their contextual understanding of Victorian Britain whilst also analysing a range of Victorian texts, including the work of Dickens and an extract of 'The Mysteries of London,' a popular serialised novel of the time that is now not often studied. Our students also had the chance to speak to an English undergraduate student in the final year of her studies and were given a flavour of what life is like in higher education. What an incredible opportunity!

Further details of all these activities can be found in the Linx online magazine which will be emailed to you or can be viewed using the link on the College website homepage.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you and your children a very happy Christmas and a successful new year. I do hope that you are able to attend our community carol service at Withycombe Raleigh Church at 7pm on Wednesday December 13th. This is a delightful evening of carols, readings and music.

Yours sincerely



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Principal