



Howden
School



Howden School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Year 11 parents' evening was very busy and rightly so. What I always say is that the results students get in year 11 is like keys. If you get good grades and achieve your targets, then you have a master key which allows you to go through any door; your future career is your choice. If you underperform and don't achieve good grades – which quite frankly a good percentage of our students should do – then the number of doors you can unlock is limited. GCSE and other qualifications in year 11 are achievable through hard work; that is the secret. As the phrase goes "the harder I work, the luckier I get." As parents, regardless of the year group they are in, there is a lot you can do to help your child with their learning. Having a table to work at – but not in their bedroom unless you are totally sure they will work unsupervised – is ideal though I do realise that it is not always possible.

We continue to emphasise "Courtesy" as one of our three core values and, as I have mentioned previously, my strongly held view is that it applies to adults as much as children. We role model behaviour for our young people and should also be doing the same for excellence and aspirations. Whatever we aim to do we should be going for the very highest standard possible which will help us to achieve high aspirations. All this term in our ACE lessons, courtesy has been the underpinning theme. I am really pleased to see the difference it has already made, and visitors are noticing it too. It goes to show the improvements that we can make when working together.

On Tuesday Lizann Lowson (CEO), Jamie O'Brien (Director of Improvement and Standards) and David Waterson (Director of Improvement and Standards - Primary) were in school going through our Self Evaluation and School Development Plan. Both documents are crucial for the school as they drive improvement whilst ensuring we are focused on the right areas whilst avoiding initiative overload. We do make ongoing amendments to our plans however as evaluation is an important aspect of school improvement. As always, they had a look at the school in action, this time it was the lining up process first thing in the morning.

I am very pleased to say that the introduction of the new mobile phone policy has been a success. I was interested to see in the news that the Education Secretary (Gillian Keegan) was proposing such an approach nationwide and that others were saying it just would not work. Our students have been brilliant, still sitting chatting in the dining hall and getting on with life, so the number of phones confiscated continues to be exceptionally low so thank you again.

Our new librarian, Amanda Lewis, is doing a lot of good work to promote and develop reading with our students as are many other staff. Reading is at the very heart of a school and it is one

of our key priorities to develop; in all year groups not just key stage 3. Richard Hill from our central services team is an invaluable asset in this field and he is in school every Tuesday working with us to further strengthen our provision. On a personal note, I love reading, and have done so for as long as I can remember, so I always have a book nearby. If you can, please encourage your child to read.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Nixon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr J Nixon
Headteacher