

TRENT ACADEMIES GROUP

QUARTERLY



TRENT
ACADEMIES
GROUP

Issue 3

November 2016

A word from the CEO

I've spent more time at Arnold Hill this term. The new building is great but I am a little frustrated by being given an office at the far end of the 3rd floor! Nice to have Leon Jackson as a neighbour. Positive effect upon fitness levels if not use of time.

It's been good to see the Arnold Hill Academy begin the year in such a positive way. The old blocks still lurk on the horizon but they will soon be gone. A new era has begun.

It is always encouraging to see the improvements at Farnborough. Talking to the children about the changes they've seen is always uplifting even though they are now reaching the stage at which the old world is a distant memory. When the Regional Commissioner visited she was impressed by the views of the children. My favourite piece of conversation went like this :

RSC : How has it changed ?

Male Y11 student : In the past it was Farnborough School you know and now, and now, and now ... it's Farnborough Academy !

So there you are. Transformed !

Rushcliffe remains TAG base camp. It is business as usual there. Plans for the Arts and Languages building will hopefully be approved soon and the new tartan skirt is now just the tartan skirt. Time moves quickly.

The English education system remains in a state of flux. Steve Lewis and I met Ken Clarke the Rushcliffe MP last Friday. We followed up a few lines of enquiry and his views about the likelihood of Grammar Schools being introduced were heartening. We will remain opposed as a trust. Hopefully common sense will reign.

PHIL CROMPTON

Careers Across the Trust

I am just starting my second year as Head of Careers across the Trent Academies Group, although I have been Head of Careers at Rushcliffe School for a number of years. It has been a wonderful experience and I have loved working with the staff and students at Farnborough and Arnold Hill too.

At university I studied French and German and on graduating I went to teach English at a university in Switzerland. I came back to England and worked in London for a few years, firstly at a travel agent's and then for a software company. Only then did realise that teaching was the career for me, so I came up to Nottingham to train as a teacher and have loved working with young people at various schools in Derby and Nottingham ever since. Whilst working, I learnt Spanish at night school and then went to work in Mexico for a year in order to improve my language skills, although I learnt a lot about life there, as well as the language! I came to Rushcliffe School in 2007 and was soon given responsibility for careers education. I have really enjoyed working with a wide range of people in all departments of the school and my greatest joy is on results day when students get to follow their own dreams.

CAROLINE TOMLINSON



The Arnold Hill new building was officially opened on Wednesday 21st October. Old Arnold Hillian James Crisp returned to unveil the plaque in front of an audience of Year 7 pupils, Governors, Directors, builders, architects and government officials. The Paralympian swimmer who attended the school between 1994 and 2001 was delighted to be asked to do the honours. There is general agreement that the building is special.

Dave Salter—Head of English The Farnborough Academy



In many respects having more hair and a slightly more slender physique weren't the only reasons I had to be cheerful in 1999. The world didn't end and Scotland had actually won the Five Nations Championship (okay, not Wales, but Scott Gibbs had scored a last minute try to stop a certain other team picking up the silverware).

I'd also had the fortune to start a PGCE that would eventually lead to a Teaching Practice placement at Rushcliffe School. The environment was great for a young would-be teacher. It just seemed normal that colleagues would be there to share their expertise and knowledge, or the vast majority of pupils were willing and able to put the work in, their parents supportive and knowledgeable (not to mention ambitious). That's not changed. What has changed is potential, it seems no matter how much is realised even more is unearthed and the school keeps moving forward.

So why not stay? Aside from the small fortune, and huge elevation in status, that being Head of English at The Farnborough Academy offers, the answer is simple. Impact. I have no pretensions about being the most skilled English teacher to have worked in a school but I believe that I have been able to help make improvements in the lives of young people by taking what I've learned in one institution and applying it to another where it was needed. I quickly discovered that I didn't arrive with all the answers, but some of the questions that were asked of me have kept me here. For example, can you develop close personal relationships with pupils that may be challenging? How do you get pupils to take pride in their academic achievement? Does being one of the most dependable people in their lives make you feel a sense of pride? Can you give them a chance to leave the school on an even footing with other schools in the area?

The real bonus for me has been that The Farnborough Academy has taught me a lot more about myself and what I'm capable of as a teacher than I could have imagined when I decided to take a year's secondment in September 2014.

Dave Salter - Head of English at The Farnborough Academy
(former Head of Media Studies at Rushcliffe School)

Jennifer Bexon-Smith visits Farnborough Academy

On September 27th Jennifer Bexon Smith - the Regional Schools Commissioner spent the morning at Farnborough. She spent some time talking with Phil Crompton and Ben Chaloner but then went on a tour of the Academy. She spoke warmly about the atmosphere and the positive ethos which seemed to be running through the place. She also spent some time with Alison Hallam (Deputy Head) and Richard White (Assistant Head) - both formerly of Rushcliffe and found out about how they had found the challenge of moving across the A52. Clare Watson also got a word in! She rounded off her visit by having 20 minutes with 5 Year 11 pupils. It was a huge bonus to find out they used phrases such as "totally different place now", "we get the chance to learn things" and "I am so proud of this Academy". Jennifer seemed impressed. It is important to remember that the Regional Commissioners have been in place for the last 2 years and have been charged with moulding the emerging system. Quite a job.

Angela Brown - Finance Director

We are well into the new year now. As I'm sure you're hopefully all aware Budgets continue to be challenging due to unfunded payroll increases. A large proportion of our funding comes from the Education Funding Agency via a General Annual Grant. This amount is based on a complicated formula starting with a basic amount per pupil and then is adjusted for deprivation and multiplied by the number of pupils. All the information comes from the school census in October which forms the basis of our funding for the next academic year. Each pupil at 11-16 receives c.£4k to £5k, post 16 is less. This per pupil amount has remained static across the country over the last few years, whilst payroll costs have seen increases in Employer's contributions to Pension and NI (the bit the school pays on your behalf) as well as inflation. The Finance Team work alongside the Heads to prioritise spending across the Staffing Structure, Facilities & Resources and Development & Improvement spending. It's a tough balance and we are about to start planning now for the 2017/18 academic year.

Chamber of Commerce decides Trust is best in East Midlands for linking with Employers

Having won the Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce award for Skills and Partnership in September we now find that we have been awarded the Business Engagement Award for the region - and have been shortlisted for the national prize. The results will be announced at an event in London at the end of November.

A lot of energy has gone into engaging with the Employability Agenda and people are realising that we mean business. The links between curriculum areas and employers have really impressed judges. Hopefully after last February's INSET day at Farnborough everyone is aware of our expectation that each faculty in the 3 academies will have at least 1 project which involves linking an employer to a part of the curriculum. Last year MFL led the way with Rushcliffe linked with the Spanish restaurant Tapastry, Arnold Hill working with Nottingham Forest and Farnborough developing a relationship with the Strathdon Hotel. It's assumed that we all appreciate to bring the curriculum to life by showing how subjects interact with the world of work. Anyone wanting advice as to how to develop links should contact Caroline Tomlinson.

Marian Beaumont

HR Director

Staff Wellbeing

The SLTs of each of the three academies came together last week and spent a good amount of time discussing staff wellbeing.

It's a popular topic at the moment but there is no doubt that if people are feeling well and supported then they will be able to do their job better and get more satisfaction from it. This has a huge knock on effect for our pupils. As an employer we want to ensure that we are aware of what stops people feeling well and supported and of what we do and can do to alleviate any stresses in the workplace.

In thinking about what helps to support colleagues we came up with a whole range of things that we already do to a greater or lesser extent. Some are organisational and some are practical. So for instance we do offer opportunities for professional development and opportunities across the group. We sense that there is a feeling of community in the academies and increasingly between them, a shared ethos and set of values which pave the way for co-operation and cross working. This brings the benefit of sharing ideas, practice and resources. If this comes naturally and helps colleagues to develop and learn it can only be for the good.

On a practical level we are offering free flu jabs and all staff have access to a range of benefits such as physio, medical screening, money off specs, legal/financial advice and counselling through SchoolsUK. You should have received or will do soon the latest brochure setting out the benefits available. The system for referral and claiming has been made simpler. By logging onto the SchoolsUK website you can also access shopping vouchers and reduced gym membership.

We know that there are other things that might help people, such as greater flexibility and cutting down on 'red tape'. Whilst our key purpose is to provide the very best opportunities for our pupils we are also committed to ensuring that staff are also getting a good deal.

Next half term we are introducing some workshops which will run across the three academies on the themes of mindfulness and creative thinking. The aim is to introduce or reinforce some techniques that will support wellbeing. The workshops will be run by Rachel O'Connor, of WiseSelf, who delivered a taster session at Arnold Hill before the summer holidays. This was well received and the feedback was that people would appreciate more. You can find out about Rachel at <http://wiseseif.co.uk/> and watch out for the invitations to join the sessions.

We know that everyone works really hard, but please get in touch if you have any views on what we are doing or could do to help support you to get the most out of doing your job well.

Marian Beaumont

Employability Skills in TAG schools

One of our main areas of focus this year is the embedding of employability skills into lessons across the TAG schools. We began this process last year with successful projects run in all three schools. This is from the Rushcliffe School French Department; the sixth formers found out about working with students and La Jolie Ronde.



This year we are aiming for at least one project in each faculty area in each school!

The latest updates on some of these new projects are:

Arnold Hill Academy

The Maths Department is going to be doing a "credit score" project in conjunction with Experian.

The Art Department is going to be working with the Focus Gallery.

The PE Department is going to be running an apprentice-style "You're Hired" project.

Farnborough Academy

The Technology Department has got a fabulous new link with the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The ICT Department will continue to work with MultiPie on an apps projects.

The Art Department is planning a 3D ceramics project.

Rushcliffe School

The Computing Department will be working on a games and marketing project for Planet Bounce.



The Science Department is going to work with E.ON on a Creative Conductors workshop for Year 8.

In the Music Department Year 8 students are learning about an orchestra and hopefully will get a chance to meet a conductor.

Saeed Latif – Director of ICT, says

It's been a busy summer and an even busier start to the year here at the TAG. September saw the number of helpdesk tickets logged increase by 109% across the trust. You've certainly been keeping us busy, we hope that this improved service is having a positive impact in the classroom.

Welcome Charlie Sanderson and Andrew Rudge to the IT Team:

Having a black belt in karate wasn't a prerequisite for the job, but Charlie Sanderson, previously of Ellis Guilford School where he completed his apprenticeship, became a full-time member of the IT team. Charlie will be based at Arnold Hill Academy. Andrew doesn't have a black belt and will be based at Rushcliffe.

Summer projects:

Launch of the Arnold Hill Academy building

It's been challenging and at times a little stressful, but the new building at Arnold Hill has been well worth the wait. Although the true extent of the project is far too complex to fit into a newsletter, the main highlights from IT's point of view have been: the installation and configuration of the existing servers in a purpose built room, the introduction of four new ICT classrooms and ten new mobile laptop trolleys containing 150 laptops.

SIMS and Data migration at Rushcliffe School

Now pay attention, here comes the science...The SIMS server and Data Migration was the final stage in migrating core services to the new virtual platform. The migration has allowed SIMS updates to automatically roll out. Shared drives have been overhauled and are accessible remotely via Moodle.

Laptop docking station rollout

At last, all classrooms have been fitted with laptop docking stations allowing staff to easily connect to screens/projectors and speakers when docked. This should allow teaching and learning to become a true multi-media experience.

New SWIVL camera at Farnborough Academy

Go SWIVL. The new SWIVL camera has arrived and is ready to go! Richard White will be arranging staff training over the coming months, so get in there first.

Remember, September is always a busy month for the IT team and this year was no exception. I'd like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding during this busy period. This pupil e-mail hopefully sums up why all the hard work goes in!

"Hello Miss,

Can you please send a email to the technicians on my behalf and state: 'I, Ali, praise the technicians on their hard work and the amazing work they've done - by fixing the network in the sixth form centre in a quick period of time. This school wouldn't be functioning well without them as both teachers and students rely on I.T services to carry out tasks'. Thank you".

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