

Friends of Askes College Society PTA (Years 7 to 13)
Minutes of Friends meeting
Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 7pm

Online Forum – via Microsoft Teams

Present (virtually)

Liz Dekker (Co-chair), Naomi Davis (minutes), Mr Gardner (Vice Principal Curriculum & Assessment), Mr Deane (Assistant Principal Key Stage 4 Raising Standards & Achievement), 67 parents logged on

Welcome

Short welcome from Liz Dekker – big welcome to the first forum of new academic year and especially to all the new year 7 parents.

Role of Friends of Askes College Society PTA:

- Hold regular forums
- Fundraise for equipment/outings/projects for benefit of the students
- Social function – parents to meet together

In these unprecedented times PTA trying to find creative ways to still fundraise/network.

Important to expand the current committee – AGM will be in November

Current ideas: New PTA website, bake sale, skills auction, promoting Amazon Smile/Easy Fundraising (schemes that donate to school every time parents use websites via their portal)

Please find details on the school website

<https://www.habshatcham.org.uk/Parents/Parents-Association/> or join the WhatsApp Group – email friends.asks@gmail.com to be linked up.

Action: Parents to contact PTA if they want to be more involved with the committee and with any virtual fundraising ideas

Presentation – GCSE and A-Level exams results

Mr Deane – Assistant Principal Key Stage 4 led a PowerPoint presentation about the GCSE/A-Level exam results (see attached PowerPoint).

This has been a very unusual year for exams due to the pandemic.

2020 – A Level results:

There were some really big achievements (Head boy and girl both got into Oxbridge), but results day was a very strange day. Standardized grades from government (via the algorithm) meant that lots of students were downgraded. Students were dismayed eg two students in Further Maths were given B by their centre assessment but the government allocated one a D and the other an E. Much of the day was spent supporting/managing

emotions of students on the day. Then two days later a government U-turn and students were given the centre-assessed grades.

2020 - GCSE results:

There were high grades within the year group with 30 students achieving grade 9 in 2 or more subjects. The two highest achieving students have been retained and an increasing number of our internal students from Year 11 have chosen to study A Levels at the school.

Value added results:

A Level – this has improved dramatically especially for disadvantaged students. From C to C+/B-. The target for an excellent state school is to get to average B. In most A Level subjects the value added is positive (Subjects with smaller numbers of students it is less easy to attain greater increases in value added e.g. Spanish)

GCSE – the value-added jump is not as large as with A Levels. However, the Progress 8 has gone from negative to positive, a particular increase for disadvantaged students. Average grade (Attainment 8) is 5.24, therefore strong pass, with the grade for disadvantaged students moving up to pass level.

Student progress:

Slide broken down into different categories and student progress eg attendance of less than 90% has poor progress, demonstrating importance of tackling student absence (although pupils with 100% attainment didn't make as much progress as those with 95-100% attendance, unsure why). School is looking at each area and working out how to help students attain progress. Teachers continue to reflect on and are seeking to adapt and change lessons to suit the needs of the students.

GCSE results:

2019-2020 each area has improved. There is a gap opening between male/female – wasn't there two years ago. Disadvantaged students are making more progress. SEN/EAL (students with Special education needs and English as an additional language) have made huge leaps in progress since 2019.

GCSE comparison:

DD means Data Drop – it is a formal assessment of students at two points in the year, by which school tracks progress and allocates predicted grades.

DD1 is in November (for predicted grades), DD2 is in March (Formal Mock Exams called Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs)).

In 2019/2020 – DD1 was 4.01, then went higher to 4.7 at DD2 – students were on course to improve from the previous cohort; therefore, the interventions school was making were showing positive steps. It is a shame that the school wasn't able to find out how well those students would have achieved at GCSE in a public examination.

Results – subject progress:

Grades for Music and Photography in particular were very high. 60 students took separate Sciences – really high progress made in these.

Post results destinations:

100 (so up more than 10% on last year) GCSE students have stayed on to study at the school's 6th form.

75% of the A-Level students have gone on to university (21% to Russell Group universities), 22% taken Gap year

This is the latest date that the school can now share with us.

Status	2020 (Current)
University / Russell	121/33
Oxbridge	2
Medicine	1
GAP	34
Apprenticeship / Employment	3
NEET	0
Total	158

Forum: Open questions about the presentation

Answered by Mr Gardner and Mr Deane

My son in year 10 – doing OK going back into school system – but I am finding it difficult to contact teachers to ask questions about what equipment is needed for certain courses

Contact Head of department – the emails are available in the new handbook on the website – this lists all teachers/departments and who to contact when - <https://www.habshatcham.org.uk/Parents/Handbook/>

We didn't understand much of the presentation just now. Could you give a plain English summary of why black Caribbean students progressed less well?

Are we able to see simple representation of the percentage pass rates for the core subjects rather than the added value scores? Also what interventions are you putting in place for those cohorts that are not performing well, particularly Black/Caribbean cohort?

We can look into providing a plain English summary about why black Caribbean students progressed less well. There is a big push this year to support those students not progressing well – national tutoring funding from government will be used – targeting resources to the

specific students. We will be checking that the curriculum is fit for purpose. Targeting intervention for specific students is the best approach.

How can someone move from combined science to individual subjects?

Speak to Ms Vilas Director of Science. Depends on student performance in Science assessment.

How often are year 8 kids going to be assessed throughout the year and how often might they move sets?

They will be formally assessed twice – we have removed one formal assessment this year due to the impact of school closure and an ambition that students enjoy learning before moving quickly to an assessment (except for Year 11), but there is also constant informal assessment in class. Sets are reviewed after each formal assessment and some students may move. Families will be contacted by heads of subject if this happens.

Do we already have a plan for DD1 and DD2 inputs from GCSE students – for example will they come in and sit exams if we are in lockdown in November?

Currently, the plan is still for assessments in November 2020, so we are still preparing students for the formal exams, given that we don't know what the government is going to do. Year 11 have had Initial Progress Checks (IPCs) which has given Mr Deane and staff a huge amount of information to work with.

Have interventions started already?

Specific Interventions will start happening after October half term.

There has been mention of residential weekends – what is this, how do you select students?

These are residential revision weekends in March for Year 11 students who are deemed to be 'High Five' – students who are targeting achieving grade 5s and are at risk of not achieving the grades to attend sixth form and further education. It will be an intensive weekend of Mathematics/English for selected students who are struggling to achieve in school so need extra support.

Are you able to clarify what aspects of the GCSE curriculum have been dropped as a result of the pandemic – can this be posted on the school website and an explanation of how this impacts on the 2021 exams? Eg if you have dropped cold war in history how will the exam board know?

Some subjects/topics/assessments may be dropped due to pandemic, for example the government has released changes to Art which will now be assessed by coursework only. We are still receiving updates from exam boards. Ofqual will agree changes nationally, then individual exam boards will apply these to their own exams. Once these have all been agreed we will publish on school website.

Can you provide an analysis of the increasing differential between boys' and girls' results (why?), and what is being done to address this?

In 2019/20 there was a Boys/Girls differential. However, this has differed over previous years, sometimes with boys achieving better. We will look at the change from single sex to mixed sex groups. Not yet sure if result was an anomaly.

What year group is the PTA meeting for?

Friends of Aske's PTA meetings are for all year groups. The talk this time was about latest GCSE/A-Level results, but other topics have come up too. The school will hold parent evenings for each year group where parents can talk to each of their children's subject teachers.

Pre-submitted questions (answered by Mr Gardner)

Around 1/3 of secondary schools moved some of the CAGs (centre assessed grades) suggested by the subject teachers to fit with previous years' GCSE and A level data. Was Aske's one of these?

No we were not. The senior team asked teachers for predicted grades and to place students in rank order (before Ofqual asked us to do the same). Heads of Department and Curriculum Directors compared these against results from previous years to consider accurate predictions. The senior team looked at results and compared them. Any we questioned we asked staff to submit reliable evidence such as coursework/mock exams results etc to be reassured that we had the most accurate record. We used information from previous years as appropriately to provide challenge to the results submitted by heads of dept. which is why we are confident the final CAGs were accurate.

We have experienced a puritanical and antiquated form of discipline at the school. Relatively minor behavioural infractions can result in being forced to sit in the hall and miss lessons. Teachers giving detentions to children who fail to complete tasks. Etc. We can only speculate about the extent of these punishments, and understand that circumstances are very difficult for teachers. We are so very grateful for your care and effort. That said, even the most inexperienced of teachers surely would agree that learning does not occur under threat. Children understand fairness and proportionality, and when it doesn't occur their respect for the institution and its role suffers. My question is this: wouldn't it be easier on the staff as well as children, and wouldn't it be more effective if the school relaxed a little?

This might be based on an individual example as this is not the behaviour policy of school. There is a scale of discipline in schools - some schools have zero policy and others that are very relaxed. My opinion is that Hatcham is in middle leaning towards stricter. Children can only learn when behaviour is managed well. It is important to ensure learning is not disrupted by a particular child inside and outside lesson. A year ago we introduced line-up around break – this is now stricter due to bubbles – this has shown a good effect on how students are composed as they enter their class. The number of fixed term exclusions was 53 before line-ups was implemented and reduced to 31 after.

Where you think we haven't got balance right please do point out to the school. Remember that we are operating school in difficult circumstances keeping year groups separate.

The year 9 pupils have not been put into "real" sets, as per headmistress' letter. The pupils seem to only have been divided into two pools. A lower pool (doing combined science) and an upper pool (doing individual science subjects - biology, chemistry and physics). Will there be further streaming as the year progresses? If so when?

National guidance is for year group bubbles and where possible same lesson groups (if there is a positive COVID-19 case it is easier to trace contacts if with same group for all lessons, therefore avoid sending whole year group home). We will rely on advice from local health body. Therefore, we have had to put children into English/Mathematics/Science Group (which makes up 1/2 of lessons) and one class where possible for all other subjects. Following the national guidance, we ensure all classrooms are set up with desks set forward and teaching from the front. It is difficult to implement mixed ability teaching (which often requires students working in groups). Some parents will have a concern. We have made sure we review groupings eg SENDCO advises on the placement of all pupils with SEND (special education needs and disabilities), balance boys/girls. Some research shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds perform less well in sets so we have made sure we have spread students out proportionally across sets.

In terms of classroom management, it is a generalisation lower set are less well behaved. I (Mr Gardner) teach 'a lower ability group' and I believe they are getting a good deal in terms of management and quality first teaching. It is a fair question, but we need to look at experience of individual child as not true across all classes – do contact the class teachers about specific issues.

Regarding “setting of students – Year 9 not put into real sets but divided into lower pool (combined science) and upper (single sciences)”. We think the questioner is referring to the new Year 10. Year 9 into Year 10 have been regrouped - regrouping based on scores against range of subjects – better way to prepare students for GCSE. Across core and EBacc (English Baccalaureate) subjects we have seen variation across the groups (partially due to lockdown as some students haven't made as much progress as others) and will review this across the year. Top groups are entered for separate sciences. Students are also set for Mathematics and English.

Looking at Haberdasher Aske's as a Federation there seems to be an endemic problem with none of its schools currently ranked as outstanding (one currently requiring improvement) and all having well below average Progress 8 with particular failure to improve attainment for children starting with a low or middle grade and a significant difference in Progress 8 between boys and girls. What reasons are the Federation giving for this and how are they proposing to support Hatcham College as it strives to even up opportunities for success for its pupils? Also, could you give details of what Hatcham College is doing itself to address its failure to offer significant or positive Progress 8 for all of its pupils (regardless of attainment at point of entry) - particularly boys? How can we as a parent body help you?

This is the most significant challenge to the school. Results in 2018/2019 did go down which is a matter of great concern.

- 3 Principals at the school in 3 years (Mr Jones, Mr Williamson, Ms Solani) – huge impact on strategic direction, disruption to continuity. Beginning to get traction with Ms Solani – lot more continuity of strategy – what to do with Year 11 and longer-term curriculum.
- Year 11: Concern about Mathematics – now have strong team. Ms Solani has put in huge effort to make it a strong subject, new experienced Director of Mathematics and Mr Deane leads Key Stage 4 as well as being a Mathematics teacher himself.

- English has had more continuity, new Curriculum Director for English has come from an outstanding school with a progress score of +1.
- Looking at appropriate curriculum, not simplifying or reducing the opportunity/offer. For example, we have more students than ever choosing Modern Foreign Languages, seen as academically very challenging.
- In 2017 negligible gap between disadvantaged and other students and Progress 8 was positive overall. For the past two years, about 2/3 of students have continued to make positive progress but progress for disadvantaged pupils (just over 1/3 of cohort has dropped pulling down the school's overall progress 8 score) – clear message to all is the need to target those students (revision, study skills, deliver curriculum lower down school: knowledge organisers so students learn/retain core knowledge)

Please let us know exactly what is happening to the Modern Languages Provision for Yr 9. The chance to study a 2nd MFL was taken away from them last year and now, it appears that they can only study a 2nd MFL out of school hours, and only in 2 languages. Is Hatcham downgrading the importance of languages just at a time when the country will need them the most?

We are providing a second foreign language in Key Stage 3 Period 7 (after school) in Year 8 (Latin or German) and year 9 (Latin or French). It was offered to 60 students who had performed well in languages in Year 7 and about 25 students have taken up offer. Not appropriate for all students to have 2 languages. Very few if any continue with 2 languages at GCSE. However, we offer a wider range of languages at KS3 than other schools - with French, German and Spanish in the timetable and Latin offered as a Period 7. We do not believe it is downgrading languages. Uptake of languages at GCSE historically over the past 6 years at least has been 50-55%, it had gone down to 23% last year so we changed staffing, supported stronger teaching/learning, changed guidance for making GCSE choices, now 63% chosen to study at GCSE. We are aiming for at least 75% uptake next year. We believe it is best to focus on one language for a deeper understanding, giving more time to learning languages in year 9 than other schools as well as motivating students to take language at GCSE.

Whilst we appreciate the current pandemic has made all elements of ordinary school life complicated, what will the enrichment provision going forward, especially for sports, look like? Outside school, children's sports clubs (football, cricket, hockey) have been continuing - is there a reason why these cannot be done by year group (ie bubbles) after school? Going forward, what is the vision/strategy for sports at school given that the school has been blessed with playing fields etc but has poor sports output? Is there a way that parents can be involved to help support provision?

I'm a current Year 7 parent: I'd like to know more about the current plans and thoughts around sports outside the PE lessons (eg after school)

Enrichment will be on offer online and some in school from 16th October 2020. There will be a gradual process as we need to manage our bubbles and ensure safety online. Parents will receive communication about this. It is however limited as we cannot mix year groups. We know that sports provision is a concern for some parents. We have big playing fields but running afterschool depends on staffing and we have an appropriate sized PE Department. Due to the pandemic, staff have increased duties and supervision (much more than usual) at the start of school, during break, at lunchtime and after school. Therefore, clubs after school

only have 4 PE teachers who can run clubs each. Also need to bear in mind 2 PE teachers are Heads of Years, therefore have significant other responsibilities. Teams have been paused due to pandemic but should be starting again soon.

Parents are welcome to get involved – contact Mr Gardner who line manages the Head of PE.

2020	2019	2018	
Number of Male Students	100	101	116
Male students achieving 7+ in English & Mathematics	17	13	23
Male students with 7+ in Mathematics	29	30	39
5 strong passes including English & Mathematics	43	42	60
Male Students studying Separate Sciences	32	29	32
Male students with an Average Grade of 7+	14	11	11

These are the figures I got from the school. Just 42% of boys got 5 good GCSEs in 2020 and in 2021 (only just above the government floor standard). To me that says that the school is letting down the majority of boys. What is going on?

Results for boys – 42% achieved 5 good GCSE in 2020. Girls nationally do better than boys, so figures will be skewed as girls performance lift this. Three years ago boys did better than girls. There has been variation over years. Boys could do better but we are certainly not letting down the majority of boys. 2019 boys closer to boys' performance nationally than girls to national girls' performance. It is hard to generalise. We do target specific students. Not true every single year that girls do better. Most significant change move from single to mixed gender teaching. Observations are that classes are getting better teaching as teaching style was not being adapted to gender (it was a big ask to require teachers to adapt style of teaching from one gender to another from lesson to lesson in a co-educational school where Key Stage 4 and 5 are taught in mixed gender). We expect to see progress over time and improvements in outcomes for all.

What are the plans to rebuild the fantastic music department and restart music enrichment after all the previous team left? Why did the music department leave?

Three members of staff moved for professional career development (and to other schools in the Federation), one moved to be at a school closer to where they live.

We have a full new team of staff – it is taking them longer to settle in as they are all new. We recognise the importance of music as part of the school's DNA. There is continuity with previous staff member working in conjunction with new head for joint events with Borough Academy. Enrichment is starting from 9th October 2020. This academic year 12-13 students in Year 12 will be studying music (in the past has been 3-4 – it is now a popular option).

Are there any more opportunities for online placements in Year 11, as those on offer focus on IT, law and medicine, none of which my son is interested in?

Online placements in Year 11. Will speak to Careers advisor as this questioner is probably referring to post-16 A-level courses rather than GCSE.

Is there a specific homework timetable so that my child can properly plan their time?

Homework in KS3 – generally ½ hour per subject, up to 1½ hours per day in total - increases up the school. School have guidance on school website -

<https://www.habshatcham.org.uk/Curriculum/Homework/>

Children expected to look at what lessons coming up and prioritise when they complete. We have Show My Homework (Satchel) app so pupils and parents can see all homework set. SMHW/Satchel has a submission deadline. Parents have access to check deadline and organise timetable of completion around that.

Can we get more details about what the contingency plans are when/if bubbles need to be shut due to a case of Covid-19. Will it be full years, specific classes and what will happen with regards to teaching? What happens. For students who have to stay at home if a family member is tested positive? Will they be taught virtually?

We have contingency plans. We may have to close the school partially if there is a local lockdown. In this case we have been told that we should do three things:

- Operate a Rota System in which we alternate year groups being in school (weekly or fortnightly)
- Provide Remote Teaching when year groups are not in school
- Ensure full-time in-school provision for priority groups (vulnerable children and children of key workers).

Our plan is for a weekly rota and for all remote teaching to follow the current timetable with teachers teaching via Teams from classrooms as per the normal school timetable. If there is full closure, we will follow the guidance that operates at that time though we can plan for full remote teaching. This will build on what we learnt during the last lockdown.

If some students are required to self-isolate, we are preparing online lessons that are available now in the core subjects.

If there is a positive case, we have to take advice from the Department for Education. It seems that it is likely we will have to identify quickly potential contacts of a student in school and ensure they self-isolate. This might be a small group of students and staff but potentially could be up to a whole year group. Anecdotally, in other schools where this has happened it has been a smaller group.

Liz Dekker – offered a huge thank you to everyone for attending the meeting.