

Netherwood Academy Newsletter

16/06/2017



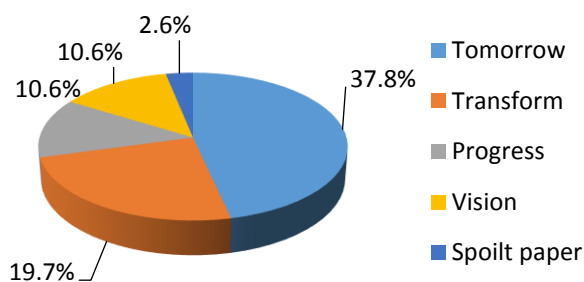
Dear Parent

I am pleased to be sending you this first newsletter as Principal of Netherwood Academy. My plans are to regularly communicate the changes that are happening in our school and the achievements of our pupils. These first seven days have been very interesting and it has been a pleasure getting to

know staff and pupils. I join Netherwood at a very exciting time. As you will be aware, the school joined Astrea Academy Trust on 1st May 2017 and everyone who works across the Trust is excited to be driving the school forward so that we are delivering an education that 'inspires beyond measure'.

We have a lot to do. This week our Senior Leadership Team sat down and identified over 70 priorities that will drive our improvements plan over the coming year. Our immediate focus is to develop the school curriculum and set an agenda to raise the standards of teaching and learning across the school. We will achieve this by setting high expectations in all areas, investing in the development of all teachers and supporting one another on this journey. We will also be changing our assessment systems to ensure this supports the learning of every pupil and from September the content of the reports you receive on the progress of your child will be changing. I will write to you in due course to explain these changes and other developments at the school.

It has been an eventful two weeks. On 8th June our pupils had their own taste of democracy with the Netherwood elections. The Tomorrow Party came out top with their impressive manifesto and campaign securing 38% of the votes. Unfortunately, we did have a hung parliament which gave students the opportunity to learn about current affairs and politics in modern day Britain. The Tomorrow Party will now be seeking negotiations with another party to form a school government!



This week the year 8 Ethics trip went to London. Starting off with a tour of parliament and a workshop on how new laws are created. They then went on a walking tour of London taking in Buckingham Palace, No. 10, Big Ben and Westminster Bridge. The day was topped off with a stroll along the Thames. Pupils were really engaged with the Q&A session at the Houses of Parliament and were a credit to the school throughout.



Many of you will have read the press coverage in the Barnsley Chronicle last Friday and I would like to clarify a few issues that were raised. The statement about the school being in the bottom 3% of schools nationally (the bottom 197 schools) refers to a specific measure - Progress 8. Progress 8 is a value added measure that considers the progress pupils make from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school. This measure relies on students completing the right combination of subjects to maximise the school's performance. Previously the school's curriculum was not designed to fit Progress 8 and this is the first thing we have adjusted to provide the best fit for our pupils.

The 'bottom 3%' does not reflect the quality of teaching at this school, it does not reflect the safety and well-being of our pupils and it does not reflect the ambitions and commitment of our staff or the close community that is Netherwood Academy.

As our Year 11 pupils arrived this morning, I was heartened to see many of them holding cards and gifts for their teachers and staff who have worked closely with them over the past five years. I wish our Year 11's every success as they go forward on whatever path they take. I hope they enjoy their leavers' assembly on Friday and the prom on Thursday 13th July. We are always here for them to support in any way we can.

I, the team at Netherwood and everyone within Astrea have extremely high aspirations for all our pupils and we will be working tirelessly to improve every aspect of the education children receive at this school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redfern