

## Review of the School Development Plan 2016- 2019

### ***Inspiring the young women of the future and supporting them to fulfil their potential***

#### **Introduction**

Education in its broadest sense is our focus, and all staff take pleasure in seeing pupils acquire new knowledge, develop skills, think creatively, grow in confidence and flourish. Our current Development Plan, which you can find in Appendix 1, reflects what we see as our core purpose: to create a positive environment for learning, enabling all girls to fulfil their potential.

#### **Teaching and Learning**

The major focus for staff this academic year has been the launch of new examination specifications at both GCSE and A Level, introduced simultaneously in many subjects. As a consequence, staff have had to revise Schemes of Work and approaches to assessment. In some subjects, the changes have been minimal, but others have seen significant shifts in emphasis and expectations. A number of A Level subjects this year were new, linear A Levels<sup>1</sup>, with terminal examinations being taken for the first time.

New-style GCSE examinations are being phased in over a period of years, so girls in last year's Lower Fifth have experienced a mixed economy and will receive A\*- C grades in certain subjects, and 9 -1 in others. The rationale for Michael Gove's decision to demand a new suite of qualifications with a 9 -1 marking scheme, was to improve standards and offer greater differentiation at the top end, making a grade 9 effectively an A\*+, reserved for a very small minority. As this is new territory for everyone, inevitably, like-for-like comparisons with previous years will be impossible. Happily for us, this summer, we were exempt from the initial mixed economy of grading introduced for students in English and Mathematics in the maintained sector, as our girls sat IGCSE examinations. No doubt, lessons will be learnt, and results will be scrutinised carefully by the Department for Education, ahead of next year's more widespread introduction of new qualifications.

In terms of internal curriculum changes, following our curriculum review, Latin was introduced in the Thirds this year, and a second Modern Foreign Language (*either* German *or* Spanish) for all in the Lower Fourth.

A new Enrichment course was launched for all Lower Fifth girls with a choice between Digital Learning, Engineering, the Extended Project, Food and the Sports Leaders award. Taking place on Wednesday afternoon, this has proved to be a welcome break from GCSE courses.

In the Upper Sixth, girls were able to choose between General Studies and an EPQ. In the Lower Sixth, a new course was piloted in the place of General Studies, aiming to broaden girls' perspectives, whilst the popular Friday afternoon 'blocks' have been retained, offering a range of opportunities from Community Service to photography.

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<sup>1</sup> Art, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English Literature, History, Physics and Psychology,

## **Encouraging independent learning and a love of learning**

Staff have continued to offer a wide range of independent learning opportunities. The GCSE Astronomy course requires girls to carry out independent study, and they are rewarded with outstanding results. In the Lower Fifth and the Sixth Form, girls have the opportunity to complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) either as part of the Enrichment Programme or independently, with the support of teaching staff. The students who completed the Level 3 EPQ this summer achieved remarkable success with 73% attaining A\*. The Sixth Form Seminar Lunch programme continues to offer girls a platform to present their research findings to an audience of parents, governors and university academics.

Our focus on academic scholarship has seen girls participating in an eclectic mix of online courses from world class universities, including Calculus, Roman Art and Archaeology, Linguistics, Ancient Philosophy, black holes and the recent discovery of gravitational waves, Python, cancer medicines and the economics of crime, to name but a few. Girls have continued to attend Chemistry lectures at Birmingham University and we have established a new academic lecture programme, sponsored by the Parents' Association. The inaugural event, in June 2017, was a captivating lecture delivered by Professor Alice Roberts, attended by girls, parents, Old Edwardians and staff.

Taking part in competitions encourages girls to develop an independent approach to learning and helps to build confidence and promote resilience. Girls, from all age groups, have been successful in so many areas this year that it is impossible to list them all. By way of example, in 2016, the Classics Department entered girls for the Linguistics Olympiad for the first time, with one girl achieving a silver award and six girls obtaining bronze awards. In Physics, girls have experienced considerable success, with one team winning the Extreme Physics Competition. Two students have been shortlisted for the Foyle Young Poet of the Year Award, a highly prestigious national poetry competition, in the last two years.

Across all Key Stages, girls have access to extended reading materials and enrichment activities. In the Upper Fourth, girls are provided with our Widening Horizons booklet, which continues to be a good starting point for encouraging a love of learning beyond examination specifications.

## **Offering Challenge and Support**

We aim to support and challenge each girl to fulfil her potential. As a school, we pride ourselves on knowing each girl as an individual, so that we can intervene to offer more challenging material, or one to one support. Subject staff continue to use open ended questions in lessons and problem-solving activities in order to offer challenge. Beyond the curriculum, there are many opportunities to explore individual interests and passions.

An external provider, Elevate Education, delivered separate study skills sessions this year to girls in the Thirds, Lower Fourth, Upper Fifth and Lower Sixth; the workshops explored strategies for working efficiently and effectively, taking notes, memorising facts and improving examination technique. The sessions were well received by the girls.

In addition to the targeted support offered by subject teachers, many curriculum areas offer mentors for younger pupils; this is an opportunity for the older girls to give something back to their community and to develop leadership skills which will serve them well in the future. They are wonderful role models for the younger girls, who, in turn, often enjoy the time spent with their mentor.

Software has been used to screen a number of girls for dyslexia and, where appropriate, school has recommended a referral to our link Educational Psychologist. Mr MacKinnon, working as a Learning Mentor, has spent time with girls with Special Educational Needs, discussing their learning and liaising with staff to explore how they can help to accommodate girls' specific, individual needs.

## **Wellbeing and Pastoral Care: promoting positive mental health**

Staff are becoming increasingly aware of common mental health issues and their signs and symptoms, as well as strategies they can use to promote positive mental health on a day to day basis, and the procedures to follow when they have concerns. Training on positive mental health has been provided for all staff at full staff meetings, and through external courses attended by individuals and cascaded to the pastoral team in school.

One hundred parents attended our Pastoral Evening in the Autumn Term: 'Nurturing your teenager's emotional and mental wellbeing'. The school website also hosts articles from Parent Info, a collaboration between CEOP and Parent Zone which provides high quality information to parents about their children's wellbeing and resilience, some of which links to mental health.

Girls' awareness of positive mental health has been raised in a variety of ways: work in PDM (Personal Decision Making); form times and assemblies; a mindfulness day for pupils in the Upper Fourth; visiting speakers and discussion of some simple strategies which girls can use to look after their mental health, with an aide-memoire in student planners.

A wide-ranging pupil survey undertaken in the Spring Term 2017, highlighted various areas for us to address. Having explored these with students in the summer term in more detail, the following changes are being implemented from September 2017:

- Homework allocations in Key Stage 3 are being reduced to enable girls to find a better work/life balance
- Internal examinations will start from the Lower Fourth next summer. The progress of girls in the Thirds will be monitored by regular mini assessments or tests, enabling them to adjust to a new school and a range of different subjects
- We are trialling three separate School Councils, for different parts of the school, to ensure a less formal environment with discussion focussed on areas of interest to girls in specific year groups.

## **Offering quality enrichment**

The Enrichment Programme is an integral part of every girl's education at KEHS, and an extraordinary array of activities and opportunities are on offer. Assemblies have taken place throughout the year highlighting the numerous enrichment opportunities, some of which can be seen in our new enrichment film, which will be available on our new website.

Our programme offers opportunities to show initiative and to develop leadership skills. A number of extra-curricular activities are proposed and run by girls themselves for their peers; our new, highly popular Fashion Club, for example, was introduced this year by a Sixth Former.

The Enrichment Programme was very highly rated in this year's pupil and parent surveys. The clubs, lectures and trips are under constant review to ensure that forward thinking and high quality enrichment continues to be enjoyed by girls.

The creation of a new Outdoor Pursuits role has led to the organisation of cycling trips and a residential trip for Upper Fourth girls, whilst a new, weekly Cross Country Club, and a Physics and Dance Workshop Day have been introduced for pupils.

## **Offering support and guidance**

Responses from the pupil survey confirmed that there are staff in school for pupils to consult if they have any concerns or worries. Whilst Form Tutors, Heads of Year, the Head of Lower School, Director of Sixth Form, Vice Principal (Pastoral), Matron, PDM teachers, school based counsellors and the school based doctor are key players in the provision of pastoral care, all staff offer support and guidance whenever necessary, and are confident about this important, integral part of their roles. Girls know that they can approach any member of staff at any time.

The PDM curriculum is comprehensive and evaluated and adapted for each new academic year. It aims to provide girls with the knowledge they need to make their own informed decisions. Problems associated with burgeoning new technologies including sexting and online safety are discussed, and relationships education is a key topic within PDM.

Our Careers provision has expanded this year and its profile has been raised; introductory lessons have been provided for the first time in Key Stage 3, the Careers Adviser has delivered whole school assemblies, introduced new software for Lower Fifth profiling and a new Careers and University Information Evening for Lower Sixth has been staged.

## **Promoting positive behaviour through a clear approach to Rewards and Sanctions**

After consultation with staff and students, we have reviewed our procedures for issuing Rewards and Sanctions. The mechanisms used for rewarding and recognising effort, progress and outstanding achievement have been clarified. Procedures for dealing with missed deadlines and misbehaviour have been made as fair and consistent as possible across departments, with emphases on discussion with the student and checking for any underlying problems which may require support, rather than sanction. The changes have been communicated to girls at the start of this term, when they come into effect.

## **Developing Social, Spiritual, Moral and Cultural (SMSC) awareness**

We have continued to nurture SMSC across and beyond the curriculum. PDM, charity events, Community Service and the Assembly Programme have played particularly prominent roles in this respect. The annual Foundation Service for all new Year 7s joining the schools of the King Edward's Foundation, provides a platform for KEHS pupils to embrace the exciting, dynamic and diverse backdrop to learning in our city. The Religious Studies curriculum provides a forum for lively discussion in our multi-faith community, and the department organises numerous educational visits during the year to places of worship such as Coventry Cathedral, Shri Venkateswara Mandir, Ramgarhia Gurdwara and the Damma Talaka Pagoda, all in the West Midlands. Beth Shalom and the National Memorial Arboretum were also visited with the aim of providing opportunities for education and remembrance.

## **Leadership and Management:**

### **Staff Development and Quality Assurance**

We are fortunate to have a talented, dedicated, professional body of staff who often exceed expectations in terms of the quality of teaching and pastoral care they offer to our pupils. Staff engage readily with Continuing Professional Development, attending courses offered by external bodies such as Examination Boards, but also taking part in training offered in school by their peers. Departmental teams have timetabled meetings and work together to share good practice.

Newly qualified teachers are allocated a subject mentor to guide them, and have regular meetings with the Vice Principal (Curriculum), who monitors their progress against the Department for Education's Teacher Standards.

We have a programme of lesson observations; each member of staff is observed annually by their line manager, but we also encourage peer observation, sometimes across different departments, and joint planning. Marking is reviewed at regular intervals throughout the academic year, sometimes by members of the Leadership Team, sometimes during departmental meetings and on other occasions by the Head of Department. A working party has reviewed best practice in terms of marking this year, drawing on published academic research, but undertaking school-based research also. The working party reported back to staff during the INSET days in September, and departments will look to implement its recommendations during the academic year 2017/18.

Teaching staff have had a particularly challenging year with new specifications and forms of assessment introduced in most subjects at GCSE and A Level. Publications such as text books and specimen papers have been produced late with a significant impact on teacher workload and wellbeing.

### **External Relations**

We have sought to maintain excellent relationships with the local community. Girls are able to take advantage of lectures at the University of Birmingham in Physics and Chemistry. We host events for the University's Education Department, welcoming students to shadow teachers and discuss their findings.

We have continued to organise Outreach events for local primary schools: over thirty primary schools have attended our Gifted and Talented Masterclasses with 1000 pupils participating in our workshops. We have also continued to deliver 36 Maths Masterclass sessions for talented A level mathematicians, and hosted our first Oxford University Modern Languages conference, which was attended by KS4 and 5 students from ten Birmingham schools.

Our weekly newsletters ensure parents and other bodies are aware of the many different aspects of school life, the opportunities on offer and the successes enjoyed by girls. We have commissioned a new website and worked on this over the summer. We hope that this will be attractive, informative and easy to navigate.

Our Development Office continues to work with alumnae, some of whom generously support our Assisted Places scheme, making it possible for able girls to attend KEHS irrespective of their parents' ability to pay fees. Former pupils are also involved in our Career network, and are happy to support students by offering guidance, helping to find work experience and mentoring students, as well as offering Careers talks.

## **Site**

Improvements have been made to the site at different junctures during the academic year. The Mathematics classrooms were all refurbished over the Easter holidays and the exhibition space in the Art Block was opened up and redecorated. The creation of a new Chemistry laboratory will ensure that all science lessons can take place in a laboratory, offering greater flexibility to staff and ensuring girls can enhance their practical skills. The teaching spaces for Economics, Psychology and Italian have been moved as a result, and their new teaching spaces refurbished.

All the Locker Rooms have been redecorated this summer; the creation of a new Locker Room for Upper Fifth girls has enabled us to refurbish and extend one of the social spaces so that girls who do not have school lunches have a space to meet, socialise and eat lunch.

The final phase of corridor refurbishment has taken place over the summer to replace the carpet and restore the parquet floor, and we have continued our programme of external decoration with the Art Block and the Sports' Centre being the focus this summer. Improvements to the IT infrastructure take place during every holiday to meet new demands on the network. Finally, the staff workroom has been refurbished to create a more modern working environment.

## **Concluding Comments**

The current three year plan is perhaps deceptively simple. It encapsulates our aims and ethos, focussing on our dual objectives for the girls: providing an outstanding climate for learning, in which girls can develop and hone a wide range of skills in a supportive environment, and promoting their wellbeing, so that they are ready to embrace the next stage in their education, as confident, resilient young women.

Ann Clark, September 2017



## KING EDWARD VI HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

### **School Development Plan 2016-2019**

#### ***Inspiring the young women of the future and supporting them to fulfil their potential***

As we look to the next three years, we want to make our aims explicit, aspirational but realistic. We will organise them under THREE key headings:

#### **1. Teaching and Learning:**

*Teachers have consistently high expectations in terms of attainment and attitudes to learning. At the same time, we seek to develop curious, interested and engaged learners who enjoy lessons, are willing to take risks and are resilient in the face of failure, viewing it as a springboard to learning.*

*We recognise that even in a highly selective school, there is a range of ability and we aim to ensure that the level of challenge and support correlates with individual girls' starting points. Careful questioning and differentiated tasks enable all girls to make good progress commensurate with their ability and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.*

*We aim to inspire the young women of the future by:*

- (i) Encouraging independent learning and a love of learning
- (ii) Providing a broad and balanced curriculum
- (iii) Offering challenge and support
- (iv) Using formative assessment to ensure all girls make good progress

#### **2. Well-being and Pastoral Care:**

*We seek to focus on the 'whole girl', so that she makes the most of her time at school, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, learning key skills, building confidence and resilience, preparing for the next stage (whether in Further Education or employment) and preparing for adult life.*

*We also aim to intervene pro-actively for those with persistent problems, which often reflect the pressures on high performing girls in today's society.*

*We aim to support the young women of the future by:*

- (i) Promoting positive mental health
- (ii) Offering quality enrichment<sup>2</sup>
- (iii) Offering support and guidance<sup>3</sup>
- (iv) Promoting positive behaviour through a clear approach to Rewards and Sanctions
- (v) Developing social, spiritual, moral and cultural awareness

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<sup>2</sup> Includes extra-curricular activities, educational visits, lectures, opportunities for leadership, charitable work and community projects

<sup>3</sup> Including Careers guidance and a comprehensive PDM programme

### **3. Leadership and Management:**

*The role of leaders in all contexts and at all levels is to create a positive culture with high expectations in terms of academic attainment, behaviour and attitudes. We expect all interactions in school to be underpinned by respect for others.*

*We expect staff to adopt a scholarly approach towards their work, to take pride in all that they undertake and to reflect on their practice, being open to new ideas and keen to innovate, to ensure that teaching remains highly effective. We expect them to take responsibility for their own professional development, to collaborate with others and to share good practice.*

*We are committed to promoting consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across different Key Stages and different groups of pupils by evaluating the impact of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure excellent outcomes for all pupils.*

*Through a rigorous analysis of provision in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, we seek to provide an engaging and varied learning experience for the girls, and endeavour to extend and broaden it by offering a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.*

#### **Managing Staff**

- (i) Developing clear roles and responsibilities, ensuring accountability through line management
- (ii) Developing clear Quality Assurance processes (Performance Management / appraisal, lesson observation, work scrutiny)
- (iii) Offering excellent training across school (INSET, CPD, courses, mentoring)
- (iv) Promoting staff well-being; offering support, nurturing talent, providing opportunities

#### **External relations**

- (i) Maintaining and developing links with the local community: universities, schools, business
- (ii) Ensuring excellent communication with parents, other stakeholders and the outside world: for example through reports, the website, newsletters, advertising, other forms of PR
- (iii) Ensuring we meet our charitable objectives through accessibility and Outreach initiatives

#### **Securing the future**

- (i) Ensuring excellent financial planning with a 5 year budget plan
- (ii) Reviewing our marketing strategy
- (iii) Reviewing our Admissions strategy
- (iv) Reviewing the role of the Development Office

#### **Compliance, Premises and Resources**

- (i) Ensuring robust systems are in place for safeguarding and Health and Safety
- (ii) Ensuring key policies are up to date
- (iii) Producing a 3 year site development plan (including accessibility)
- (iv) Ensuring the school's IT provision is future-proofed and supports all members of the school community