

25th November 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

Ofsted

Our recent Ofsted report has now been published and you can find this on our website here:
<https://www.teignmouthsecondary.co.uk/general-information/ofsted-report-parent-view/>

The overall verdict will be disappointing for you as parents, as it is for staff. This judgement does tally with what we as staff have recognised since last summer and it is, I believe, fair. I was pleased that the inspection team trusted my judgement and leadership, and the plans for how we are already improving. The team did highlight some useful points for us and recognised many strengths within our school. What I was most proud of was how well students supported staff and behaved during the inspection visit. They spoke overwhelmingly in favour of our school in terms of feeling well treated, listened to, respected and safe in school. This was recognised, as well as the good support students have available to them. They also have a broad offer of enriching opportunities, both within and outside the curriculum. They are well advised and supported in terms of careers and life after school, and the inspection team saw that staff are committed, caring and capable. They recognised that safeguarding is effective and that the Sixth Form is very successful and provides a strong provision and opportunities for post-16 students. The key areas we need to improve in are our curriculum strategy in terms of planning the learning for students from Year 7 all the way through to when they leave us. We are already working hard on this and we are looking carefully at whether students should be making their options choices in Year 8. We need to work on how we cater for the wide range of needs and abilities of students, particularly those with SEND, and we need to continue to develop and improve some of our systems and structures. None of these points were a surprise. They match what we said about our school and our improvement priorities are already working directly to improve on these aspects.

Reports

This year we have moved away from Academic Review Days and replaced them with subject specific parents' evenings for all year groups. These evenings are still evolving but feedback from parents and staff has been very positive so far. As part of these changes in how we communicate with you, we have also revamped our student progress reports so that the information you receive is clearer and easier to interpret. You will note that the old effort, behaviour and homework grades no longer appear in your child's report and that we now comment on 'Attitude to Learning' and 'Independent Learning'. We feel these categories help to provide a better overview of how your child is approaching their studies and the commitment they are demonstrating to improving their learning. We have also developed a series of criteria to define what each of these grades mean. Grades will be awarded from Exceptional (1) to Good (2) to Inconsistent (3) to Needs Improvement (4) to Poor (5). You will notice that the standards we have set are intentionally high as we want all of our students to aspire to be the best learner they can be. Green colour coding will be used to show any student demonstrating exceptional effort.

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Students' academic performance continues to be reported as STEP levels at Key Stage 3 and 1-9 for GCSEs at Key Stage 4. However, based on parent feedback, we have introduced a current grade, alongside our normal predicted grade. This will enable you to see exactly how your child is currently performing and the progress they still need to make. If you would like to know more about our assessment and reporting systems, we have a new section on the school website which contains all the important information, key dates and contacts and example reports:

<https://www.teignmouthsecondary.co.uk/parents/assessment-and-reporting/>

Student Success

This term has already seen many students excelling. Congratulations to film makers Levi German (10IHS) and Jess White (10GDM) whose short films 'Animatic' and 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' were premiered in the Rotary Film Club festival at the Riviera Cinema last week. Well done to Sam Bradford (9JP) for his success in the Charles Causley Poetry Festival. He achieved third place out of 500 students in his age category. Well done to rising rugby stars Jack Parr (11RHP) and Jude Baker-Hands (11DC) who have been selected to play for the prestigious U16's Exeter Chiefs Academy. Congratulations to Ellie Clarke in Year 9 who has got through to the Grand Final of the Teenstar UK singing competition, taking place in the London O2 arena in February. All at TCS wish her the best of success in the final. She is already a star having got through to the final from over 10,000 applicants!

Congratulations to the following who have completed (or are about to complete) their Bronze or Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award:

Bronze		Silver
Charlotte Britton	George Moran	Daniel Bryne
Ned Carswell	Ashley Morris	Hollie Coombs
Lucy Cunningham-Richards	Matthew Pollitt	Jessie Cowell
Ella Davies-Cox	Edward Scott	Sebastian Curle
Charlotte Frewin	Toby Sealey-Bowers	Blossom Evans
Levi German	Nicholas Sexton	Faith Johnson
Rebecca Goodall	Billy Shimell	
Dennis Hill	Madeline Smith	
Charlotte Hutchins	Eini Thomas	
Victoria Jeffs	Niamh Towers	
Jennifer Jury	Holly Turner	

And congratulations to all of the students who have won the Humanities' Student of the Month so far this term:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Tia Whittle	Tyler Wilkinson	Rhea Crocker	Saffy Walker	Ozzy Hayward
Amber Rodrigues-Peplow	Isobel Wain	Lily Watts	Abbie Boon	Holly Booker
Stanley Knill	Sophie Reeve	Ruby Lynch	Rebecca Goodall	Lily Watkins
			Emma Wertheim	Lauren Huggonson
				Spike Liddington

We need to do more to recognise and celebrate our many students' successes and achievements. We are working on this and will be launching our re-vitalised celebration and rewards strategy for the new year.

General Points

Some important reminders. Please continue to remind your children of the importance of having road sense and being attentive in crossing roads in their journey to and from school. For those dropping off children in the morning or picking up in the afternoons, please can I ask that you obey the traffic laws and regulations and are mindful of other residents with where you park and wait. We have had several complaints from local residents, particularly around First Avenue, about roads being blocked by waiting parents.

Another key point that I'd like to remind all parents and carers of is the very clear link between students' attendance and success in school. The Ofsted report does point out that our overall attendance has declined and having had some of the best attendance figures for secondary schools in the county three years ago, we are now average for Devon, and this is too low! The statistical data is compelling: 90% attendance might sound reasonable but this equates to over three weeks of school missed in a year; that adds up to over a term of education missed for a young person with 90% attendance rates through years 7 to 11. Pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve five good GCSEs including English and Mathematics than pupils with 90% or less attendance! This is not about blame, and of course young people get ill, but please do everything you can to help them attend and talk to us if there are problems or concerns. Thank you.

Key events coming up for us over the rest of this term include the Sixth Form Open Evening this Wednesday. I would strongly encourage all Year 11s and a parent/guardian to attend. Even if your son/daughter is planning another option post-16, please come and find out about our offer. We will be providing generic advice about post-16 education as well as our own Sixth Form offer. The Year 10 Parents' Evening on Monday 16th December means that we will be collapsing period 6, so students will be released from school slightly earlier, at 2:25pm on this day. Again we look forward to the Christmas Concert. This year's concert is on Wednesday 11th December from 7:00pm. We have a real variety of performers with many younger students on the stage for the first time. We will also be previewing part of our up and coming show 'Oliver!' It will be a real treat for all music lovers. Finally, we will be finishing school at 12:30pm on the final day of this term, Friday 20th December.

Some key dates for the near future:

Wednesday 27 th November	Sixth Form Open Evening (for Year 11)
Wednesday 4 th December	Sixth Form Parents' Evening
Monday 16 th December	Year 10 Parents' Evening
Friday 20 th December	Break up for Christmas holidays
Monday 6 th January	Training day for staff (holiday for students)
Tuesday 7 th January	First day of term for students

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,



James O'Connell
Principal