

## **Headteacher's Report – January 2021**

Welcome back to the new term following the Christmas break and may I wish all trustees a Happy New Year.

### **Remote Learning**

Following the Government's decision to close all schools on the 5<sup>th</sup> January we have been able to move smoothly in the virtual world of Microsoft Teams. Students are able to follow their normal curriculum in full. Teachers are delivering 'live' lessons to ensure face to face contact. We felt live teaching was more likely to encourage positive engagement. Attendance to online lessons has been very good and so has student engagement. Teaching staff in the main are teaching from home (to keep the number of adults in school down). We have received dozens of positive comments from parents regarding the success of our virtual teaching programme and have just recently surveyed the parental body to get a more complete picture.

### **In School Learning**

We are supervising approximately 70-80 students each day in school. This is up significantly from the first lockdown back in March 2020. The students are following exactly the same online curriculum as their peers who are working from home (with the addition of some core PE lessons). The students are based in year group bubble classrooms and each bubble is supervised by our team of Teaching Assistants. We are currently operating a system that allows the Teaching Assistants some time working from home as they are clearly on the 'frontline'.

### **Testing**

Hilbre is up and running with its own Lateral Flow Testing facility. Staff are able to be tested twice a week and students in school have also been tested. The guidance has changed around the testing but we continue to operate our facility. Our School Nurse and Deputy Head of PE operate the facility supported by a number of Teaching Assistants and Administrators. It has worked extremely effectively throughout this term.

### **Assessment**

With the abandonment of Exams for this academic year we all await details of the new system that will come into operation. Centre Assessed Grades are the most likely outcome but there is a consultation document that OFQUAL have circulated. At Hilbre we are pressing on with regular assessments for Year 11 and Year 13, slightly less regular assessments for Year 10 and Year 12. We are also holding an assessment week for students in Year 7 to Year 10. These assessments will provide regular insights to how students are progressing with their learning. Clearly the assessment process is difficult to administer securely whilst the students are working from home.

### **Virtual Parents Meetings**

Many aspects of school life still need to continue. The company that host our Parents Evening system had major technical problems (nationally) and so we have been required to reschedule our Year 8 Parents evening. The system did however work seamlessly for the Year 10 Parents evening last week. We have plans in place to operate our Year 9 curriculum options evening using the same system and also to Year 11 Sixth Form interviews.

## **Vulnerable Students**

We have seen great strides forward this term with our work with vulnerable students. I signed the school up to take part in a 'Social Workers In School (SWIS)' programme. We were successful in our application and just before Christmas Stephen Turton joined our team. He is already making a noticeable impact with some of our more difficult to reach families and our vulnerable students.

## **Behaviour & Attendance**

Attendance remains positive and work is being carried out encourage our poor attendees to engage with the work set online. The pastoral team are making regular contact with the students and their families. Behaviour in school has bubbled a little over the last few weeks. We are obviously operating on a skeleton staff in school (for safety reasons) but one or two students have been taking advantage of this situation. A postcard home system has also been established to praise students for good work and good engagement in their online lessons.

## **Staffing**

This term will again be another busy one in terms of staffing and recruitment. There were many temporary appointments made last year during lockdown which need to be reviewed. Colleagues in school are in the process of completing an integrated curriculum and financial planning exercise to ensure efficient use of staff. We have already identified a shortfall in Maths teaching which will need to be addressed.

## **Finance**

In recent weeks Andy Evans, Jane Doyle and myself have been continuing to meet with the LA regarding SEN funding. We are pleased that we have now had clarification that the LA have agreed to provide us the 26k of funding owed to us. The school continues to look for savings on all aspects of the life of the academy.

## **Governance**

It has been excellent that trustees have made contact with members of the Senior Leadership Team to hear first-hand what is going on in school. I look forward to hearing feedback on what they have learned or to answer any questions that may have arisen.

## **Students**

I have asked Dave White to establish the School Council again this term so we can seek their views on how things are progressing from their perspective. I am delighted that Adam Karkar will be joining the Governors meeting. I am sure he will be pleased to answer any questions you may have and outline his thoughts on the current situation.

**Mark Bellamy**

**Headteacher**