



The
CHATHAM & CLARENDON
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Federation

FEDERATION NEWSLETTER
2011-2012 – Term 1

****Exam Results & University destinations***

Congratulations to students, and thanks to the staff for all their hard work: this summer saw another bumper crop of good public exam results at the Federation. At **GCSE** the combined overall pass rate of students getting 5+ A*-C was 96% (98% for Clarendon & 94% for Chatham), the proportion who achieved 5+ A*=C including Maths & English was 94%. There was a very heartening increase in the proportion of top grades, A*-A's, up to 35%.

At **A-Level** this was the first cohort of students to work their way through as members of the combined federal Sixth, CCVI, so it is gratifying that the results were an improvement on 2010. The overall pass rate was 98.6%, and the percentage of higher grades A*-A-B, was 47%, also up on last year. Although it was the most competitive, difficult year to secure university places, almost all of the CCVI students applying to university got the grades they needed for their first or second choice offer, very few went through clearing. We also noticed a significant drop in the number of students choosing to take a gap year, and an increase in the number choosing to go to the local universities in Canterbury - almost certainly attributable to concern about the increase in tuition fees due in 2012.

The complete tables of GCSE and A Level results, and lists of university destinations are published on the Federation website.

**** Start of Urban Campus ~ settling in, new students etc***



A warm welcome to new Year 7 students, and students who have joined older year groups from other schools, and yet another bumper intake joining Year 12 in the Sixth Form. After all the concern and indeed some trepidation about the switch to the new co-ed Urban Campus era, the initial transition has gone remarkably well. Many thanks to colleagues for their hard work: during 'The Big Move' last term

getting the right resources on each of the Lower & Upper School sites, in adapting their schemes of work for the new 3 Sessional/6 Period Day, and in some cases

making the adjustment to teaching unfamiliar groups. The new twinned House pastoral teams, and indeed all staff, are also working hard to ensure that co-ed integration on each site is going smoothly. To assist them we have increased the number of midday supervisors, and organised staff duty teams to ensure that there are plenty of adults around and about the sites, keeping a watchful eye, upholding the ethos we value and want to maintain. Inevitably it is going to take time for a change on this scale to fully settle in, and for all the boys and girls in Years 8-11 to feel equal allegiance to one shared school, but we have made good progress in short time. Of course for the new Year 7s and for the mixed Sixth Form it is not an issue at all, and they seem very happy with their new secondary school. I'm aware that some parents who originally chose Chatham House or Clarendon House as single-sex institutions were very anxious about going co-ed and I am happy to host visits/tours by anyone who would find it reassuring to see for themselves how it is going. An interesting outsider's perspective came from Tony Smith, KCC Adviser & ex- Head of Dartford Grammar School, who has worked with our governing body over the last 2 years and knows the Federation well. He spent a couple of days here over the last fortnight and remarked on the relaxed yet orderly atmosphere "... calm, friendly, very positive, respectful of each other, look very smart, a good feeling about the place"

So praise must go to the students for *their* response to the co-ed urban campus - with few exceptions they have settled in well, adapted to their new surroundings, finding their way around and getting used to how it all works. For the most part they have been sensible and mature about the change, getting on with school life with minimum fuss and bother, the novelty of the presence of the opposite sex is starting to wear off. Now a month into the new school year, previously unfamiliar buildings are becoming less strange, and the girls are learning to negotiate the multi-level labyrinth which is Hogwarts (aka Chatham House main building). As the Clarendon building is more compact at least that has been easier for the older boys to find their way around – their main complaint has been a perception amongst some Year 10s that there isn't enough to occupy them during the lunch break, a concern that the Upper School pastoral leadership group will try to address.



So is behaviour perfect? Not yet, but we're working on it. Perhaps inevitably after the 6 week break a few students had to be reminded of what is expected, what our ethos & standards are all about, and a few test the boundaries. We are very pleased that so many students are wearing the new uniform well, and present a positive, well-turned out appearance. However as usual the image-conscious adolescent will still strive to challenge "the system"! As ever there is the occasional issue with length of hair (boys – tie it back please!), the colour of hair and the hemlines of skirts (girls – sort it out please!). I trust that the majority of parents will understand and support the strong line we are taking: giving and repeating the obvious collective reminders about our expectations, health and safety, and where warranted imposing firm sanctions to impress those points upon the tiny minority of individuals who overstep the mark.

We make no apology for our determination to maintain a positive, disciplined orderly ethos here, for the benefit of all. Since we all want a good school, we all have to work at it - a good reputation is hard-won and can too easily be lost.



****Traffic Problems***

Another health and safety issue arising from adjustment to the new arrangements is potentially dangerous parking in vicinity of the Chatham House (Lower School) site where parents are trying to pick up their children at the end of the day. Cars stopping & waiting on the zig-zag No Parking lines, cars double-parking opposite Farleys which obstructs an already busy and narrow junction. This has been exacerbated because all the new Year 7s are concentrated on one site, and unfortunately the Netto car park has been closed while work goes on to replace it with a branch of a rival supermarket. We have put a staff presence in place and continue to remind students about the importance of crossing safely, and behaving appropriately (not just outside the schools but also at gathering points such as the railways station, the sweet shop at the bottom of Chatham Street, the central bus stops, etc.) We ask parents, please, not to park right outside the school on Chatham Street and to underline the message the traffic section of TDC have arranged random visits from one of their wardens who will impose fixed penalty tickets as/when necessary.

Road closure A265 (Cliffsend) – regular drivers on this route into Ramsgate will already know that there will be major disruption in the vicinity of the Lord of the Manor roundabout as the next phase of major roadworks is carried out, starting from Thursday 29th September. KCC Highways department have advised that this closure and the consequent diversions will be in place until 16th December. Full details and a FAQ section can be found on their website www.kent.gov.uk/eastkentaccess

**** Staffing News:-***

A warm welcome all staff who have joined the Federation this September (full list in the July newsletter, on the website); the new colleagues are settling in and working hard - we hope that they are enjoying their new working environment.

I am sorry to relay some less happy news so early in the school year. Dr P Birchley, Vice Principal i/c the Chatham House site, was taken ill in school on Wednesday 21st September and admitted to the cardiac unit in the William Harvey Hospital, Ashford for emergency treatment. I am grateful that Mr C MacFarlane, Assistant Principal, has agreed to take over Dr Birchley's duties for the duration. Lower School students were advised of the situation via assemblies but that does not seem to have stopped some exaggerated versions of events appearing on social network sites ("Dr Birchley was taken away in an air ambulance helicopter!" Dr Birchley has been shot!"). Ignoring the fanciful cyber-nonsense, I am delighted to report that in fact Dr Birchley has now been allowed home from hospital and is making a good recovery – he has asked me to pass on his thanks for the many goodwill messages he has received from colleagues and students, and is already looking forward to returning after half-term.

*** Buildings Update #1 - Summer works to improve the learning environment are now complete =**

** The new Food Technology Room at Chatham House site, which matches the standard of the best to be found in any school in the country, is now fully operational and I hope some parents are already tasting the results! We are delighted that a local celebrity chef, Dev Biswal of Michelin-rated “The Ambrette” in Margate Old Town, has agreed to perform the official opening on Friday 7th October, and then work with our Food Tech students to share some of his culinary skills and the secret of his success.



** Refurbished changing rooms and toilets have improved the facilities for boys and girls on both sites.

** The next phase of a 3 year rolling programme to refurbish the interior of Chatham House, has provided extra teaching spaces for RE, Music and Sixth Form subjects, plus improved specialist accommodation for the Learning Support Team.

** Two newly-equipped computer rooms in the ‘Redman Wing’ at Chatham House

** Two newly equipped Lecture Theatre conversions at Clarendon House to support A Level and GCSE teaching

** The mobile classrooms in poor condition have been removed from the Clarendon playground, freeing the space for recreational & PE use

** Significantly improved ICT facilities for Graphics in the Technology area at Clarendon

A special vote of thanks for the teams of support staff who worked so hard through the summer to ensure all was ready for September, to the various contractors who have provided us with some excellent new facilities, and to Project Manager, Steve Rose, for bringing it all in on time and within budget.

*** Building Projects #2:- Projects still to be completed....**

** Levelling and resurfacing the Clarendon playground to create a fully enclosed MUGA (Multi- Use Games Area): work will start just before half-term and be completed by the time school resumes for Term 2.

** Although the idea of putting £100,000 into a hole in the ground may not strike everyone as a vital spending priority, this autumn we are also going to install a new fibre-optic ICT services landline between the three elements of the Urban Campus. At the moment a laser-link solution is the main means of e-communication across the Federation and has occasionally, frustratingly, proved vulnerable to the vagaries of Thanet weather. The fibre optic cable, though hardly a cheap solution, is a future-

proof means of getting a reliable and fast computer link, boosting the effectiveness of our e-admin and curriculum networks. Other schools, modernised through the BSF Wave 3 programme, have acquired this sort of capability through an expensive managed service. Forced into using our own limited resources, we are investing some of the Academy income in the unseen but vital infrastructure, and it will benefit staff, students, and parents who want to access the Fronter virtual learning environment to support their child's learning.

** More picnic benches for both Lower and Upper school sites to make the most of our grounds, improving outdoor facilities which support a positive co-ed ethos: we hope work can commence before half-term.

** Additional individual computers (e-Notebooks/Kindles) for the Learning Support Team, and for the main school Library at Chatham House. An agreement with the KCC Library Service to formalise the links with Ramsgate Library so that it also serves, in effect, as the Upper School Library for GCSE and A Level students.

** Student News:-*

	<p>Along with the usual and notable success in GCSEs and A Levels, I'm also delighted to report a less conventional success story. During the previous academic year as part of the enrichment programme ten students from various year groups (and one member of staff!) followed the British Sign Language BSL Level 1 course and were awarded certificates equivalent to GCSE grade C passes. Congratulations go to Abi Attwell, Rosie Evans, Cari-Ann Hood, Brogan Hood, Shannon Keating, Nicola Keefe, Katie Khamsoda, Maddy Kinloch, Aimee Martin, Darrell Turner, and not forgetting Rick Guarnieri (ICT Technician). Such is the popularity of the course that this year a further twelve students have already enrolled on the round of BSL tuition.</p>
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Senior Prize Giving (15th September). Once again the stage at the Winter Gardens, Margate was the platform for our annual celebration of GCSE and A Level success and special prizes, for the Year 11-12-13 cohorts who took their exams in the summer. An electronic version of the programme, listing all the prize winners, can be located on the website. Our Guest of Honour this year was Dr David Starkey, celebrated academic & TV historian, and political commentator. Dr Starkey not only engaged in conversation with each of the many prize winners as they collected their certificates and awards, but also proved to be a compelling, passionate speaker who held his audience with a strong message about change. Taking an historical perspective, Dr Starkey's theme was that for the UK to compete with the new rising economies of China and India, schools like ours must encourage innovation and invention; that in future Britain's income will come not so much from the export of valuable raw materials, manufactured products or service industries, but instead from our capacity to develop ideas and be enterprising. Drawing on his own formative experiences as a schoolboy at Kendal Grammar School in Cumbria, Dr Starkey also made a powerful case for developing the skills of public speaking as part of the school

curriculum. His speech was very well-received, and colleagues in the History department are looking forward to working with him again later in the school year.

Recent Sporting Successes. Yet again Federation teams are enjoying success in the local competitive games circuit, with the rugby teams having a great start to their season - pick of the results: thumping Manwoods 50-nil, King's Rochester 62-5, and Dane Court 67-12. It is also good to report that with full access to the outdoor sporting facilities, the girls are embracing the established Chatham House approach (i.e. it's not just about the taking part, its also about the winning!) and the Under-16 Netball team recently enjoyed their 17-3 win over Dane Court. Lunchtime and after school clubs in hockey and netball are flourishing, and we recently had a request from senior students to set up a girls rugby team. Many thanks to Mr Hill for starting up a regular rugby skills practice session for the girls, adding to the range of sports we can offer our students. We have also received a request from Year 10 students to start a Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme programme at the Federation. The school is very happy to support this and already four colleagues have indicated their willingness to get involved and undertake some of the training. Similarly Mr Lewis and Mr Hill are also sounding out other local schools with established cadet forces, to seek a partnership and to establish a CCF group at the Federation. If there is any parent who can assist, or offer useful contacts which would help to extend our enrichment programme in these or other directions please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Moving from sport to the Arts there has been great interest in the 2012 school production of "Guys & Dolls", scheduled for Term 4, and large numbers of students attended several rounds of auditions hoping to secure a part in the show. An early plug, too, for a special Comic Relief charity show set for Red Nose Day in March, which is being organised by Dhesh Padiachey (Y13) - when the best of our musical and dance talent will take to the stage at the Winter Gardens, Margate.

*** Raising Standards: Curriculum Changes #1. A shorter Key Stage 3 (two years: Years 7 – 8), a longer Key Stage 4 GCSE phase (three years: Years 9-10-11).**

As part of our strategy to raise achievement still further, from 2012 we are going to shorten the time devoted to Key Stage 3 in order to put more curriculum time into the Key Stage 4 GCSE phase. For many students taking three years over the pre-GCSE KS3 foundation phase is simply too long, and it can feel like marking time, risking boredom and a sense of drift. With bright, capable students such as ours the essential subject content in KS3 can be covered perfectly well in two years. For KS4 option subjects, the present two year cycle to cover GCSE course content is too short, pressurising staff and students to gallop through the syllabus, with little time for in-depth study, extended learning and the development of high-end thinking skills which will ultimately contribute to higher final grades. In the core subjects which encourage students to begin their GCSE work during their Year 9 (notably Maths and Science), the benefits can be seen in their eventual GCSE grades. So, beginning with the Year 7 intake of September 2012, the KS3 curriculum will be covered in two years rather than three. A three year KS4 will help option subjects to do as well as the core subjects, and it will help all subjects to inject some of the fun and intellectual

challenge back into students' learning. It will also allow able students to pick up further subjects more easily such as those GCSEs we are now offering in after-school "twilights" (e.g. Astronomy, Statistics, Psychology, Photography, Latin) and others we would like to add to extend our offer: Economics, Geology, Italian, Chinese, etc. The fundamental objective however is not so much that some students accumulate a larger number of GCSEs, but that all students achieve a solid core of good grades: quality rather than quantity.

Raising Standards, Curriculum Changes #2. 'Vocational Pathways'

Whilst the Federation is and will remain a selective grammar school, it is also the case that we cater for a wider spread of ability and aptitude than the grammar schools in West and Mid Kent. Our evidence from baseline ability tests in Year 7, and external exam results year after year, shows that not every student is best suited to a full and traditional academic curriculum of GCSEs and A Levels. The spread of ability is most noticeable in some of the older cohorts, year groups who were enrolled before the Federation was formed (2009). To help ensure that every student here can experience success, progress to Sixth Form and beyond, we are going to expand the vocational pathways which attracted such positive comments from Ofsted when they inspected Chatham House ("...*excellent - unusual breadth for a grammar school ... vocational & business-related subjects offered in Years 10-11 as well as the Sixth Form...*"). We will only introduce credible, established courses (such as OCR/Edexcel Level 3 qualifications) which have a recognised progression route through Sixth Form and beyond into university or college.



It is important to emphasize that this development is not a question of "dumbing down", but rather to provide an inclusive, flexible curriculum which fits the needs of all the students we have here. The International Baccalaureate MYP curriculum, now moving up from Year 7 to Year 8, will be phased-in up through KS3 to KS4 as far as GCSE, developing those higher order thinking skills and independent learning. The International Baccalaureate IBCC programme will provide a high-quality, high status framework for the vocational pathway in the Sixth Form. Students who choose to include History or Geography as one of their GCSE option choices will meet the requirements of the English Baccalaureate as it is currently defined – but the English Bacc is more a performance measure for schools than an alternate or additional qualification for students! We are committed to curriculum breadth and student choice at KS4, and have no plans to force everyone into the English Bacc at the expense of other humanities/social sciences or the creative subjects. Over and above the mainstream curriculum, our Gifted & Talented Programme will ensure that the most able students are identified and stretched. On Friday 30th September, we are holding a G&T Conference & Workshop Day based at the Chatham site, led by Professor David George, a national authority in this field, concluding with a briefing session for parents of students on the G&T register after school.

**** Improving Assessment & Reporting arrangements.**

It would be fair to acknowledge that the traditional end of year reports were issued too late to have any direct impact on students learning and progress, literally at the very end of the summer term and preceding the six week summer break. The sheer volume

of report writing - to be completed in the brief 'window' after end-of-year exams - was a major logistical challenge for staff, especially for colleagues who teach several Key Stage 3 classes. It took a quite disproportionate effort by pastoral leaders and key support staff in order that the reports went out at all. The parents who contacted me in July to complain about the timing accepted the explanation but they still had a valid point. Which has prompted a review of when & how we report to parents, aimed at improving the links between recording progress, setting targets and having a direct impact on the ways students then respond. We want to base our system of reporting on a process of formative assessment and reporting, which will be more effective for students and more useful for parents, reporting earlier and several times during in the school year. This would involve (i) adding more detail from subject teachers to the present system of Interim Report Progress Checks, and (ii) slimming down the final summative report to consist of a summary of end-of-year subject exam marks together with a holistic overview of each students progress and development as an individual, written by their Form Tutor and Head of House. The same amount of subject teacher comment but spread throughout the year, alerting parents earlier to issues and improvement needed/reinforcing the praise for good work, in time for students to act on the advice.

We are also looking at how to improve the organisation of Parents Consultation Evenings. All the possible systems have both advantages and disadvantages, for example the tension between arranging reasonably private discussion, and concentrating the talks in conveniently accessible areas. Our quirky buildings present additional challenges – we don't have enough big spaces, so some sort of dispersal is unavoidable, which unfortunately can have the effect of increasing waiting times. We will be investigating how other schools deal with the problems; if any parent has a suggestion which they think might improve our approach please do not hesitate to let us know.

A summary overview of all the strategic changes which we believe will improve what the Federation can offer your children, and our priorities for the year ahead, are set out in the **2011-12 Federation Development Plan**, which can be accessed on the website.

**** Some Dates for the Diary**



Wednesday 12th October. The new Year 7s "How Is It Going?" Evening – for parents to meet with the Form Tutors and Heads of House, from 4.30pm at Chatham House School Hall

Open Evenings: Tuesday 18th & Thursday 20th October: early closures.

These recruitment evenings are vitally important for the future of the Federation. Last year's events were a great success and resulted in a significant increase in Year 7 recruitment (particularly girls) this September. Current Year 7 figures = 95 boys, 79 girls; new Year 12 intake = 238 students. To protect student numbers, budgets and

the curriculum we need to maintain that momentum for the 2012 intake, aiming at a balanced fully selective intake of at least 180 boys and girls in Year 7. Key elements of the success of our Open Evenings are the range of activities we put on, the warmth of the welcome from staff, and the evident pride in their school from the students who talk to visiting parents. As was the case last year literally hundreds of students will take part as guides and as helpers with a range of subject/department displays and activities on the night. It is a long working day for the staff, and a late evening for student helpers. Consequently Tuesday and Thursday will end for students at 2.35pm **after** lesson 5; staff will set work for lesson 6 which would have taken place on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

End of Term 1: Friday 21st October (n.b. normal finishing time, 3.25pm!)

The Extended Half-Term. Last year's experiment of aggregating the five Inset Days to create an extra week in the autumn half-term was well-received by parents and is happening again this year. Thus the school will be closed from Monday 24th October to Friday 4th November. Looking further ahead it may assist families who are already thinking about booking holidays next year to know we intend to repeat the extended autumn mid-term break in 2012, when our half-term fortnight will run from 29th October to 9th November.

- Wednesday 16th November: Year 12 Parents Evening
- Thursday 17th November: Focus Day #1
- Friday 18th November: BBC "Children In Need" Non-Uniform Day
- Thursday 1st December: CCVI Sixth Form Open Evening (recruiting for 2012 intake)
- Wednesday 7th December: Year 13 Parents Evening
- Tuesday 13th December: Christmas Concert #1
- Wednesday 14th December: Christmas Concert #2
- Friday 16th December: End of Term 2

Don't forget – all the newsletters and the 2011-12 school calendar are on our website and the calendar will be updated as/when events are added or details are changed.
