



Newsletter: October 2009

Post-16 Matters ~ Chatham & Clarendon Sixth Forms merge!

In coming together on the Chatham Street site as the Federation of Chatham House (CHS) and Clarendon House (CLS), the plan was always that the main schools, Year 7 to Year 11, will retain their separate identities as boys and girls schools, whilst their separate Sixth Forms would be merged into one new entity. We have been extending the existing links between the two Sixth Forms and planning for the post-16 merger and are now confident that we are ready for the next logical step. The new joint Federal Sixth form will take effect from September 2010, and our publicity and recruiting programme which runs from December, will make the change clear for all new prospective Year 12 students. Whether potential recruits are already in the Federation schools or presently in schools elsewhere in our locality, if they choose us, students are choosing the new merged Sixth Form, not making a choice between “Chatham” *or* “Clarendon”.

As names go, although technically and legally correct “The Federal Sixth” is perhaps not the most exciting name ever devised! In its shortened form it also doesn't have any clear reference to the familiar names and established reputations of the contributing schools CHS & CLS. The governors and leadership team are clear that we do not see this change as a take-over of one school by the other, but a genuine amalgamation of equals. So picking up on a suggestion from one of our new Student Governors, we are inviting sixth form students to suggest a suitable name for the new merged Sixth Form. We are already designing the new prospectus so any ideas for the new name will be needed by the half-term break.

At present we have a total of 649 students in the combined sixth forms, but the merged Sixth Form of the future will be smaller. Under the BSF (Building Schools for the Future) arrangements to co-locate both schools on the Chatham Street site, the local authority planners have calculated the effects of falling rolls in secondary schools over the next decade and the Federation will be expected to operate with a joint sixth form of approximately 500 students by 2015-16. To alleviate the pressure on space, the Federation schools will be retaining the present Clarendon Arts Centre building, and in due course this will be adapted to serve as the base for the new merged Sixth Form IB (International Baccalaureate) Centre and Social Studies Faculty, although of course most subject lessons and all the PE/Sport facilities will be located at Chatham House. The BSF Design workshops resume in mid-October and I have also invited sixth form students to contribute their ideas and suggestions for how that Sixth Form Centre should be developed. A BSF Student Engagement meeting has been arranged for Monday 30th November ~ let's make sure that the architects and construction team take on board the views of the consumers!

The Federal Sixth, now and into the future, will still constitute the largest school Sixth Form in East Kent, enabling us to offer a wide curriculum which maximises subject choice, and an exciting programme of enrichment & extra-curricular opportunities. Working together as one, talented and committed staff from both partner schools will teach in the Federal Sixth, enabling us to share best practice and ensure that the very best of that expertise is equally accessible to all our post-16 learners. Over the next two years, as we develop our plans for a baccalaureate sixth form, students can expect to see more ‘team-teaching’ and innovative approaches. Until BSF co-location is achieved in 2013, sixth form lessons will be scheduled across both Chatham House and Clarendon House sites, and we will adjust the pattern of the school day to create ‘movement time’. Whilst we appreciate the potential difficulties, we will find workable solutions and see distinct advantages in remaining in the heart of the local community. The Federal Sixth will also encourage more shared enrichment & extra-curricular activities, with one federal sixth student leadership team, to help organise the joint social, cultural and community linked activities such as trips, lectures and outreach/voluntary work.

The new Head of Federal Sixth, with immediate effect, will be Mr Moody who has been the Head of the CHS Sixth Form since 2005. The outstanding reputation of the sixth form owes a great deal to his drive, organisational ability and concern for students as individuals. During the period leading up to co-location Mr Moody will probably have a base in both schools, but eventually a main office base in the new Sixth Form Centre. Mr Fenner, previously Director of Languages and since 2007 Head of the Clarendon Sixth Form, approached me last term to request a change of role with a wider whole school remit. Students who know Mr Fenner and who appreciate his approachability and commitment to their welfare, can be reassured that in his new role - as Assistant Head i/c IAG-Careers & Community Links, he will still have a great deal to do with the Federal Sixth. He will take a lead on HE/university guidance, and on helping to organise & accredit students’ community/outreach work for the IB. Mr Fenner will also strengthen how the Federation provides careers advice for younger students: we need to start that earlier.

We will be sorting out the changes to the roles of other members of the Sixth Form leadership team in due course – curriculum changes arising from the baccalaureate approach will mean some reorganisation between now and Sept 2010, however in the meantime students and parents can be assured that all the colleagues in the post-16 team will continue to do everything to support and guide students through their A Level & Advanced Vocational studies, and the university applications process.

Curriculum Change: The Federation as a Baccalaureate School.



At their meeting on 5 October, the Federation Board of Governors agreed unanimously to support the Federation Leadership Group’s plan for the Federation to develop as a “Baccalaureate School”. The changes won’t impact on anyone in the present sixth form or Years 10 and 11 - the first students to be *directly* affected are currently in Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9).

We are intending to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, moving forward in two phases: (i) introducing the IB Middle Years Programme

(MYP) with new Year 7s from September 2010, and (ii) introducing the full International Baccalaureate Diploma programme aka “The IB”, to *replace* A Levels in the sixth form from Sept 2012. There is much uncertainty over the future of what might be termed the non-academic post-16 qualifications: Applied/Vocational A-Levels, BTEC and City & Guilds courses, and even the new national 14-19 Diplomas – it seems likely that some will disappear in the next few years. So we are very interested in the new “IBCC” (IB Careers-related Certificate), which we think would fit well beside the full academic IB Diploma in our Sixth Form.

The IB MYP is an extra, adding to and not replacing, the familiar national curriculum subjects which operate from Year 7 to Year 11. It fits in with our plans to cover National Curriculum KS3 in two years and puts far more emphasis on study skills, learning to learn, extended individual study, and accredited community involvement in Years 7-11. Whilst it is possible to take the MYP Dip instead of GCSEs, we will continue to offer full GCSE certification as well as the MYP until the new baccalaureate curriculum is well-established. Starting the MYP approach with the new Year 7 intake in Sept 2010, the first time any Federation student would take the additional MYP final exams, alongside their GCSEs, would be summer 2015.

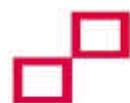
The Baccalaureate School concept is an exciting change for the Federation and we want to ensure it is a great success, so we will be working with colleagues from KCC and the growing network of IB schools in the authority. (*Dartford GS, Barton Court GS, Dover GS, Dane Court GS, Norton Knatchbull GS, Maidstone GS, Weald of Kent GS*) - learning what we can from their experience whilst fine-tuning the baccalaureate programmes to fit our particular circumstances and needs.

There are a few popular misconceptions about the IB – not least the old chestnuts that IB offers students no subject choice and has insufficient academic depth ~ when in fact the opposite is true! Within the IB framework there *are* a multitude of subject choices for students to make: however in schools where only a small number of students follow IB it is that much harder to timetable any combination of subject preference. In the Federal Sixth all students will be on the IB programme, all 500+ of them by 2013, thus making the various permutations of subject choice affordable – a positive lesson learned from the highly successful Barton Court experience. As for the academic rigour of the IB, the Russell group of universities rate IB more highly than A Levels as a way of allocating university places and as preparation for degree level study. We appreciate that parents and students will have many questions and it is not practical to try to answer them all in a newsletter now. We are putting some more in-house information & a FAQ sheet in a “Baccalaureate Briefing” section of our website, and encourage anyone who wants to find out more about the IB, IBCC and the MYP to check the IB’s own highly informative website (www.ibo.org). We are also planning a series of information events for students and parents from next half-term, inviting staff and students from other grammar schools in the south-east who have secured IBO World School status and run successful IB programmes, to come along and explain the benefits and share their experience. Meantime here are some key bullet points which underscore why we have decided to develop the merged Chatham & Clarendon Sixth Form as our “Baccalaureate Sixth”:-

- ** IB advantages students as learners
- ** IB is respected by universities and employers
- ** IB is enjoyed by students

- ** IB invests in developing the staff, improves teaching & learning, and raises standards
- ** IB adds to the enrichment/extra-curricular life of the schools, and gives accreditation to students for their activities
- ** IB is proven and has run free of political interference for over 40 years
- ** IB is marketable and understood world-wide
- ** IB has fewer examinations and more teaching time over the two year course.
- ** IB results are published in the first week of July, advantaging those securing university places.

Two Into One Does Go! ~ Latest update on BSF



Building schools for the future

Consultation on a new approach to capital investment

The “Building Schools for the Future” (BSF) design workshops for Kent schools in ‘Wave 4’ – which includes the Federation – have now resumed. The property development construction company Kier are now in charge of both ‘Wave 3’ and ‘Wave 4’ school rebuild projects, and after months of limbo and uncertainty, there is a real sense of purpose and urgency. Senior staff and governors are involved in a series of design workshops between now and January, working with the architects (ACP) and the Kent planners (LEP) to finalise what is planned for us. There will also be a “Student Engagement” BSF workshop on Monday 30th November that representatives of Chatham & Clarendon students can contribute their ideas. Assuming the design and planning phase runs smoothly and is concluded promptly in the New Year, the timeframe is that construction work on site is likely to commence around December 2010/January 2011, with final completion around mid 2013. Thus we are planning for complete co-location of both boys and girls on the Chatham House site by the start of the academic year 2013-14. A significant issue will be what happens to the boys during the construction phase – the main Chatham House building will be completely refurbished, and a new build will replace everything else. We are insisting on the need to preserve the existing footprint of outdoor PE/Sport and recreational space, so fitting buildings for approximately 1450 students on the site will be what is euphemistically termed “a major challenge”.

The planners seem to anticipate ‘de-canting’ on site during the construction phase, tackling a section of the project at a time and making use of temporary accommodation, rather than evacuating all the boys to some other school buildings elsewhere. If that does turn out to be the de-canting solution, there will be significant logistical problems for the school to manage. We have emphasised the paramount importance of safety and keeping disruption of educational activity to an absolute minimum. As soon as we are able to give more information to parents, we will let you all know exactly what is going to happen. Meantime we are focusing on the overarching positives ~ in a few years the boys and girls will be enjoying their education in much improved facilities.

The school vision for our BSF project is set out in an 18 page document “Strategy for Change” which can be accessed via the Federation website. For now here are the headlines in summary. Both CHS & CLS on one site but not physically divided into two separate gender-segregated school buildings: the site clearly isn’t big enough, it would waste public money, and in educational terms that would merely give us more of the same but in half the amount of space. BSF is supposed to be about transformational education – i.e. the outcome is supposed to be better, not worse! We

are confident that the way the Federation partners operate will be truly innovative and “transformational”, adapting our existing strengths to fit within a 21st Century curriculum framework.

So the new campus will have a common front entrance, the boys and girls (and their teachers) will share the facilities equally. We already have one governing body and one senior leadership team. Even before co-location happens we will be operating as one team of teachers & support staff, developing one set of policies and procedures, rules and rewards. The curriculum, through the baccalaureate framework, will be equally accessible to boys and girls. There will be single-sex teaching groups throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 except where there is an obvious curriculum-led reason for them to be mixed (e.g. GCSE Drama, GCSE Music, GCSE Food Tech), and then totally integrated mixed teaching groups in the Sixth Form – an approach we call “the best of both worlds”.

There will be a common approach to pastoral organisation based on the House system, however retaining single sex tutor groups in Years 7-11. The CHS & CLS uniforms are sufficiently similar to visibly underpin this shared ethos, although the new merged Sixth Form will have one identical ‘business dress’ uniform code. To maximise PE & Sport within a confined site we will have a new school-community use Sports Hall which is big enough to offer several adaptable indoor spaces. We will retain the Cavendish Centre which will be adapted to serve as the base for the new merged Sixth Form and the Social Studies Faculty. We are in negotiations with St George’s Church to invest BSF funds in improving that fine building to support even more school use ~ for example as a performance space. The refurbishment of the main Chatham House building and the look of the new build around it will be designed to harmonise 21st Century function with more traditional form and style. It will have ‘the wow factor’ and be worthy of the phrase suggested by Hamish Simpson, a CHS student, in our recent prospectus soundbite competition: “an oasis of education in the heart of Ramsgate”.

Hopefully we will be in a position to share the details of what is planned with parents, students, colleagues and members of the community at the conclusion of the BSF Workshop process, early in the New Year. We will ask the architects for plans, drawings, computerised ‘walk-throughs’ and if possible 3-D models, which can be used for exhibition and within a “Question Time” style briefing and discussion evening event.

The customers are always right ~ results of the ‘Federation Slogan’ competition



When schools produce their prospectus, they usually commission a professional marketing expert, fill it with worthy teacher-speak and sprinkle it with (positive) Ofsted quotes. It is a tried and tested formula, however to add a little variety we thought we would ask our students to help out and give some customer insight. At the end of the summer term I invited students from Chatham House and Clarendon House to suggest a memorable phrase or slogan we could use when re-writing and updating the schools’ prospectuses. There was a good response, with almost 100 entries – generating many ‘soundbite’ phrases we can and will use – in the prospectus and other recruitment documentation, on the school websites, in adverts, in display boards, presentations and so on. Reading all the contributions, it is obvious that the students are aware of

the strength of their schools, proud of their schools and happy at school – exactly what prospective parents want to know. The ‘judging panel’ consisting of Mr Panteli (Chair of Governors), Mr Troke (Vice Chair of Governors), Mrs Coldwell (Head of School, Clarendon), Mr Williamson (Head of School, Chatham), and myself as Executive Head – were certainly spoiled for choice, and had a very difficult task to identify those slogans which we thought best express the values, strengths and direction of the Federation partnership. The six winning entries receive a Moto Q “Smartfone”/PDA, and 25 runners-up each receive a 4Gb USB data stick.

The 6 winning entries are:-

Jo Arnold & Heather MacPhee, Year 9 at Clarendon:- *“Chatham + Clarendon = a window full of opportunities”*

Callum Daley, Year 9 at Chatham House:- *“Through Caring We Achieve”*

Matilda Hartwell, Year 8 at Clarendon House:- *“Schools Combined, Excellence Defined”*

Tallulah Medhurst, Year 8 at Clarendon House:- *“Exciting teaching, exciting learning – switching on the light above every student’s head.. New site, new buildings, new friends – opening the doors to a brighter future.”*

Patrick Mulvihill, Year 11 at Chatham House:- *“Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow”*

Austen Wood, Year 8 at Chatham House:- *“It’s not revolution, it’s evolution. 1500 students, 120 staff, 2 schools, 1 vision. Chatham House & Clarendon House – establishing greatness together”*

The 25 runners-up are:-

Leena Abdelmagid (Year 9, CLS), Georgina Afuape (Year 9 CLS), Ammad Ahmed (Year 10 CHS), Sean Cullen (Year 10 CHS), Alex Eager (Year 11 CHS), Megan Edmunds (Year 9 CLS), Becca Gonzales-Bello (Year 8 CLS), Joseph Holness (Year 11 CHS), Danielle Juden (Year 9 CLS), Natasha Karczewski (Year 9 CLS), Andrew Moore (Year 8 CHS), Sean Moore (Y9 CHS), Tom M Mount (Year 9 CHS), Megan Newton (Year 8 CLS), Isaac O’Connor (Year 9 CHS), Thierry Preston (Year 8 CHS), Hanna Prior (Year 9 CLS), Hugh Goggin (Year 9 CHS), Bobby Sebolao (Year 11 CHS), Hamish Simpson (Year 10 CHS), Phoebe Soia (Year 9 CLS), Sinead Stoddart (Year 10 CLS), Liam Taylor (Year 11 CHS), Matthew Underwood (Year 8,CHS), Abigail Webster (Year 9 CLS).



Congratulations to all and many thanks to everyone who took the time to participate