



# The Federation of Ramsgate Grammar Schools



## Newsletter: July 2010

### *Academy Status*

At their meeting on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June, the Full Board of Governors voted to apply for the new grant-maintained Academy Status for the Federation partner schools. The process of application will start this month, aiming for an official start date of Term 2 (November 2010), with a 3 month period to complete the formal consultation, planning, & the necessary legal arrangements. As an Ofsted-rated “Outstanding” hard Federation, the application is ‘pre-approved’ by the Secretary of State for both Chatham & Clarendon. At their meeting in September, before finally signing-up to the Academy funding agreement Governors will want to be satisfied that all the financial advantages as described by the DfE (Department for Education), will benefit the Federation as we anticipate. The DfE academies support teams are working with all those schools who are applying, and we will be using a DfE Academy conversion transition grant to hire legal specialists to guide us through the process. More information about the rationale for and implications of ‘going Academy’ can be found on the Federation website, where students, parents and members of the community can register their views. [www.federationramsgategrammars.kent.sch.uk](http://www.federationramsgategrammars.kent.sch.uk)

Funding & priorities. The DfE Academies Q&A website includes a “Ready Reckoner” which any schools interested in becoming academies can use to calculate the financial implications of switching to GM Academy status. The Federation finance team have worked on this and calculate that for our schools the Academy funding arrangement would equate an additional £550,000 per year. Even after buying-in services previously delivered by the local authority this represents a significant increase and would bring direct benefits to our students. Top of the priority list: the funding helps to safeguard single-sex teaching at Key Stage 3 and in the core subjects at Key Stage 4. In light of recent gloomy news on BSF, clearly a programme of refurbishment now has a higher priority. We also intend to invest more in our Gifted & Talented programme.

Even more important than the additional funding, Academy status would allow us to frame our admissions arrangements to benefit to the Federation schools i.e.:- we must start to operate a mixed Federal PAN (Planned Admission Number) with no dilution of the intake. As a GM Academy, the Federation will remain a selective 11-18 grammar school. Operating a PAN of 180 boys & girls i.e. 6 forms of entry, with single-sex tutor groups, single-sex teaching throughout KS3 and the core subjects at KS4, with a fully-integrated mixed Sixth Form. Taking control of our PAN is essential to achieve a financially-viable, balanced, genuinely selective intake, and thus secure the annual budget needed to fund single-sex teaching. This collective federal mixed PAN of 6 forms of entry is smaller than the previous 8 form entry PAN (4 forms of boys, 4 forms of girls) which is simply not sustainable in the context of falling rolls, and the pressure on physical capacity in the Federation campus. Thus ‘going Academy’ is not about expanding the grammar schools at the expense of local High Schools. The national code on admissions would still apply to the Federal Academy, with all the necessary anti-discriminatory safeguards: over-subscription criteria prioritising Looked After Children (LAC) & AEN/SEN students, sibling links & distance, and an independent Appeals Panel.

Looking outwards. Reflecting on memories of how things were back in the old days of Grant Maintained schools in the 90’s, some are anxious that the new Academies might not play a full part in local collaborative arrangements. The educational world has moved on since then,

and we are part of a strong network of local headteachers committed to working together. As a new Academy we will continue to assist partner institutions in the East Kent/Thanet area – through our existing specialisms and by forging new partnership arrangements: there will be no withdrawal to “splendid isolation”.

***BSF: It's all over .....***

So now at least we know where we stand. On Monday 5/7/10 the Secretary of State announced that the BSF programme was to be cancelled and the DfE published the long list of projects which were stopped and the much smaller number which would still go ahead. Sadly the (£30 million) BSF Wave 4 scheme for co-locating the Federation on the Chatham House site has been axed, along with the schemes for other schools in Thanet which have not received their fair share of the rebuilding programme. KCC are pressing the case that the Wave 4 schools deserve special consideration but in the circumstances that seems rather hopeful. It's particularly ironic as in the last week we had some very positive meetings with a new team of architects and had renewed optimism that their ingenious ideas offered imaginative solutions to the problems of space.

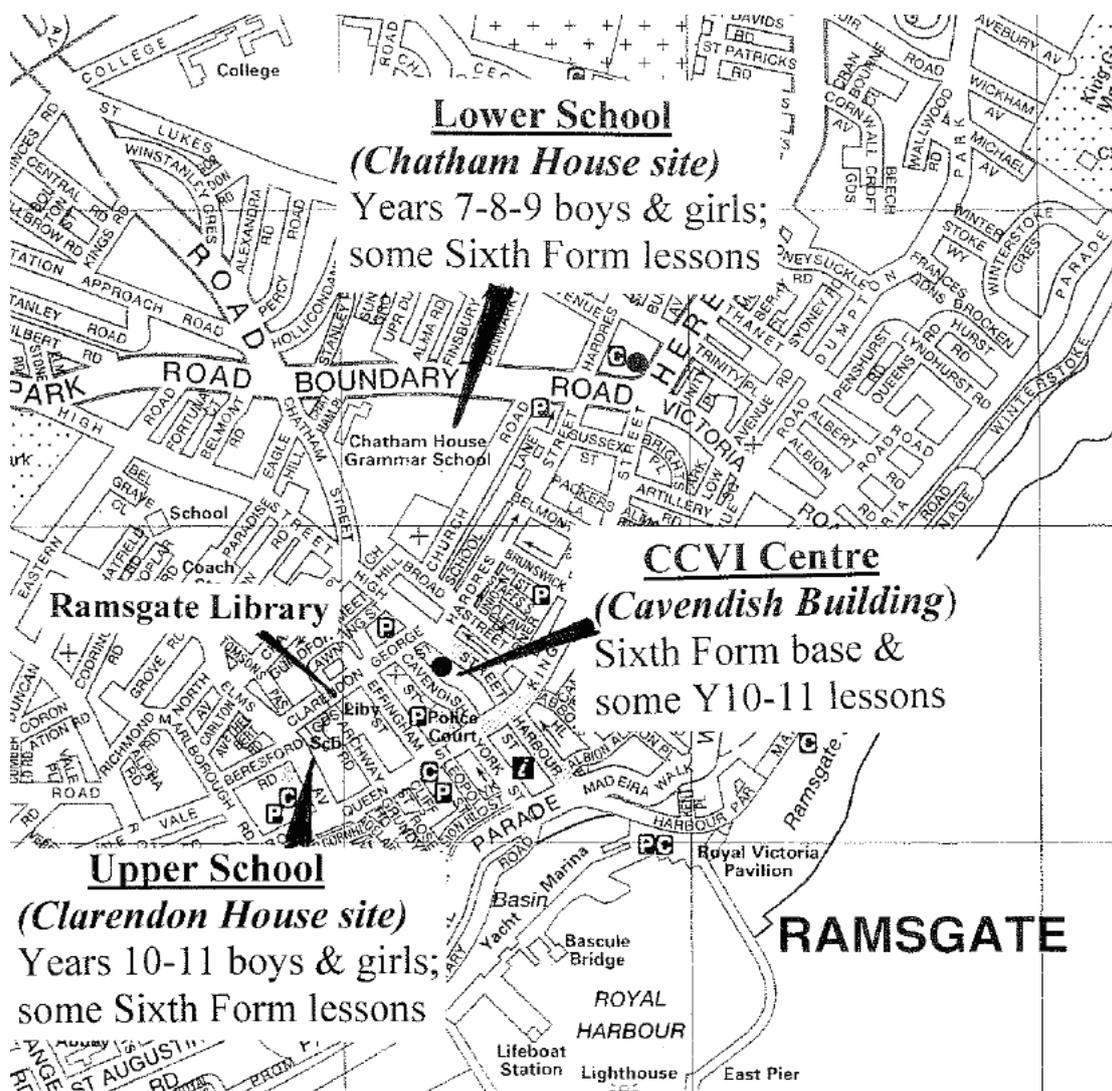
This is very disappointing news for all the staff & governors who have been working on the scheme for the last 18 months or so, and especially for our students and the wider community we serve – the BSF scheme would have been an important part of the regeneration of central Ramsgate. As an Academy in the future we will be in a position to make an individual bid to the DfE for (more modest) capital funding for smaller-scale building projects. Meantime we must bounce back and make the best of the situation and what we already have.

***“The Urban Campus”***

We now have to maximise the potential of the existing Federation buildings, and we are fortunate in that have some unique & historic buildings full of character, which for the most part have been maintained in good condition. In places they are definitely showing their age and would benefit from a make-over but they are still fit for purpose. Furthermore switching to new Academy status, bringing in additional income and greater freedom over how those funds are used, will assist a rolling programme of upgrade, refurbishment and refreshment of the interior. We also remain hopeful that when some new non-BSF version of capital funding for school building improvements is available from central government, we will have a strong case to bid for our share of that investment.

So we are pressing on with the plan for a functional merger based on the concept of “the urban campus”, set in the heart of Ramsgate, operating as a co-ed institution which offers single-sex teaching: the best of both worlds.

From September 2011 the Federation schools will be reorganised into co-ed sections. The Lower School, for boys and girls in Years 7-8-9, will be based on the Chatham House site. The Upper School, for boys and girls in Years 10-11, will be based on the Clarendon House site. The joint Sixth Form – CCVI – will be based ‘in the middle’, at the Cavendish Centre, with many of their lessons on both Chatham & Clarendon sites. The balance of specialist teaching facilities on the Chatham & Clarendon sites will support this arrangement, so that there will be no need for younger students to move between sites at all, and very little movement for Key Stage 4 students (i.e. just for some PE/Games lessons). The pattern of the school day for 2011-12 will be adjusted to give Sixth Form & staff movement time.



***Functional Merger: The Best of Both Worlds***

The academic year ahead is the last for the familiar gender-segregated organisation of the partner schools. From September 2011, as describe above, we will be operating the multi-site” urban campus”. The new Year 7 intake for that year, boys and girls, will be joining the Lower School based at Chatham House, so the recruitment/information arrangements in Term 1 will be adjusted to reflect that change. The Open Days & Open Evenings for prospective Year 7 students and parents – boys and girls - will be held at the Chatham House site on Monday 20th and Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> of September. \_

Whilst the two schools can theoretically continue as separate legal entities (rather than ‘lose’ a grammar school), in practice the Federation Academy will *have* to operate as one co-educational institution with single-sex teaching throughout Key Stage 3 (Years 7-8-9) and in the core subjects: English, Maths & Science at Key Stage 4 (Year 10-11). From September 2011, for boys and girls who will then be starting their Year 10 (i.e. the present Year 8’s) , a significant number of GCSE option groups will be mixed - again *phasing-in* the change & not disturbing established GCSE classes. The separate Chatham & Clarendon Sixth Forms operated mixed-teaching for years; now as the new joint Sixth Form, CCVI, this will be fully integrated with far more team-teaching by staff from both Federation partner schools starting this September.

The existing separate pastoral system will remain unchanged for 2010-11, and from September 2011 there will be a new federal House system, with Lower School & Upper School sections: still maintaining single-sex tutor groups, but ‘twinning’ the boys & the girls

tutor groups in shared Houses. The students themselves will be closely involved in decisions about how the new Houses are constituted & organised.

We think this will offer students & parents the best of both worlds: the advantages of single-sex teaching combined with the advantages of a co-educational learning environment, and smaller site-based age-referenced 'small schools within a school'.

What will we call it? ~ 'F.R.G.S. Academy' is hardly inspiring or easily recognisable! Technically the headed note paper & the signs will have to say somewhere, in the small print, 'A Selective 11-18 Academy Federation', but the headline name, the name commonly used, needs to be something snappy and distinctive. It should be a name which makes clear the equal partnership, historic roots and shared future:- The Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School (CCGS).

### ***Curriculum Development***

The drivers for changing to the Baccalaureate curriculum are simple, and fundamental to our central role and purpose as a high-achieving grammar school: to make learning more enjoyable and to stretch our students, raising standards of achievement.

The Baccalaureate curriculum begins from this coming September for the new Year 7 intake, with the first year of the Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP); this will be phased-in for the whole of Key Stage 3 & 4 within five years. The subjects will be the same as those in the National Curriculum – but with much greater emphasis on the links between them, on learning to learn & to apply knowledge, and on independent thinking. Under the new curriculum freedoms and as a logical element of the Baccalaureate approach, Subject Leaders are also investigating the advantages of switching from existing GCSE syllabi to the International GCSE (IGCSE), and where it meets the needs of subjects and individual learners this change will also be phased-in gradually.

In the Sixth Form we welcome approximately 300 new students in September, which will bring the CCVI up to a total of over 600 students on roll. The present package of A Levels and vocational qualifications will continue to be offered until September 2012, from which date they are being phased-out and replaced with a full Baccalaureate curriculum – the IB Diploma (academic pathway) and the IBCC ('vocational' pathway), which share a common core: research project, thinking skills, community service.

### ***Staffing news***

The complete restructure of teaching staff has now been completed & a "Who's Who in the Federation" attached diagrams with this newsletter. I am very grateful for my colleagues' patience and professionalism throughout what has been a challenging process. Unifying two sets of staff and developing one cohesive team is not something which can be accomplished easily and is, inevitably, a work in progress. Yet in a relatively short time, the foundations have been laid and joint planning is already producing a genuinely federal approach. Incoming Sixth Form students have already benefited from a greater range & choice of subjects we can offer through collaborative timetabling, and will notice the increased proportion of shared/team teaching. Throughout the Federation as a whole we will be opening up more extra-curricular & enrichment opportunities to both boys and girls, the girls will have more access to sport facilities at Chatham, and there will be even greater emphasis on a mixed approach to the Arts: not just concerts & shows, but also joint exhibitions.

### ***Thank you & best wishes for the future***

The June newsletter issue listed those colleagues who are moving on to promotion or retirement. All have given generously of their time and commitment to the partner schools, we hope they have enjoyed their time here as much as we have valued their contribution, and wish them well in the future wherever it takes them. It may seem invidious to single out some for special mention, however I hope readers will understand why I want to pay a brief tribute to our three longest serving colleagues, individuals who personify traditional values and professionalism representing the best of the Chatham & Clarendon ethos.

**Mr Andy Williamson** (Chatham House). Mr Williamson has been an outstanding, loyal servant of the school for 36 years. A stalwart of the Geography department and a devoted rugby man who coached the 1<sup>st</sup> XV team for many years, Mr Williamson is steeped in the traditions and spirit of Chatham House, and has had a positive influence on the lives of thousands of Chatham boys. During those 36 years he has served as a classroom teacher and Form Tutor, a Head of Department, a Head of House, a Head of Year, Head of Junior School, Head of Sixth Form and Deputy Head. Most recently since the Federation was formed he stepped up to become Head of School for Chatham House: the fitting culmination of a career devoted to the school. An unassuming and thoroughly decent man who has earned the respect of all who know him, staff and students alike, I have personally appreciated his quiet, calm support and wise counsel during my first year as Executive Head. Mr Williamson acknowledges that leaving will be a wrench but also that there is life beyond school, and he has decided that the time is right to enjoy his retirement. We all wish him good health and every happiness, he will always be welcome here - it is hard to imagine the place without him.

**Mr Colin Harvey** (Chatham House) After beginning his time at Chatham House as a pupil way back in the middle of the last century, Mr Harvey jokes that he managed to escape from Chatham House three times – to university, briefly to work in another school, and a stint as a pub landlord, but he was repeatedly recaptured and persuaded to work here for two periods, totalling over 22 years. As a teacher of English, and later as Head of Department and an Assistant Headteacher, he has served with distinction, a well-respected colleague whose knowledge and passion for his subject has inspired many a student to study English at university. I am very grateful that at short notice Mr Harvey agreed to delay his retirement for a further year, and continue as Head of English at Chatham House for 2009-10 whilst we put in place arrangements for a Federal Head of Faculty for the new academic year. It is typical of the man that he would put the interests of his students and colleagues ahead of his personal well-being. Mr Harvey is a fiercely dedicated Arsenal fan who rarely misses a home game; like his support for the Gunners, his faith in his students' potential to succeed has never wavered. Now Mr Harvey has decided that it is time to escape for a fourth and final time, but he will continue his association with the school by editing the Ruym magazine for the Old Boys Association. We hope he will drop in from time to time to endure some good-natured ribbing about football and catch up on the progress of his former students.

**Dr Rob Hume** (Clarendon House). As Head of History at Clarendon since 1988, Dr Hume comes from the classic narrative story-teller tradition of history teachers, someone who is able to convey his fascination for the past – the lives of the famous and the ordinary people, in a way which brings the subject to life and motivates his students. Large numbers of Clarendon girls have gone on to study at university thanks to Dr Hume's influence, and he will be a very hard act to follow. Dr Hume is also a notable author of several history books and his most recent work, about the life & times of Thomas Crapper, inventor of the toilet (along the lines of the "Horrible Histories" series), attracted considerable media attention; the replica Victorian WC, constructed by students is still on display at Clarendon, and may prove invaluable now that BSF has been cancelled. Dr Hume is retiring to concentrate on his parallel second career as a professional historian and writer, still very much to do with education, and so Clarendon students will continue to be inspired by his idiosyncratic view of social history. We wish him every success with this venture, and a long and happy retirement.

*And finally .....*

Key Dates:-

### ***Exam Results Days***

Results will be available **FROM** 11.00am on the following days:

- **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> for AS and A2**

Mr Moody will be in school between 9.00-11.00am on Friday 20 and Monday 23 August to see any students needing advice.

- **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August for GCSEs**

Year 11s obtain their results FROM 11.00am.

***Term Dates – Important Information***

**\*Summer Term finishes** – Thursday, July 22 at 1.40pm

**\*New school year begins** – Wednesday, September 1, for Year 7 and Year 13

From Thursday, September 2 – Years 7 to 11 should attend.

Friday, September 3 – Year 13 return to school for a full timetable

Monday, September 6 – the whole school is in attendance.

**\*Autumn Half Term** - Staff development days have been switched to twilight sessions. This means that the break from the end of Term 1 will run from **October 18 to October 29 inclusive**.

It has been a busy year and we are all looking forward to something of a break and a rest! Good luck to Year 11, 12 & 13 students who waiting on exam results, many of whom will be off to university in the autumn. Best wishes to everyone associated with Chatham & Clarendon - staff, students and their families, have a happy and relaxing summer holiday.

David Smart  
Executive Headteacher