

HEYFORD PARK FREE SCHOOL

"Unlocking their future today..."



HEYFORD PARK
FREE SCHOOL

BONUM COMMUNE COMMUNITATIS

The Heyfordian School Trust
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Dear Parents and Carers

Progress at Heyford Park Free School – Academic Year 2016/17

This is a very exciting time for all those involved in the school. We have now been open for 4 years and have made substantial progress to delivering a unique education in Oxfordshire. Our focus is on delivering a personalised education that takes children from the age of 3 all the way through to 18. We still remain one of the smallest state secondary schools in the UK, and whilst education in the Heyford Park area will have to adapt to meet the growing population, we are committed to staying inclusive and family friendly so that our children remain treated as individuals.

In our opening years, our focus has been on setting the vision, assembling talented people in leadership roles, delivery of our first class premises, implementing the right operational systems and succeeding in our first OFSTED inspection. As the school continues to grow, our focus is now on obtaining the best outcomes for our children in regards to their educational progress, exam results and softer skills, as these will enable them to fulfill their aspirations. We think it is useful for the community to understand the work that the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team is undertaking so you can all understand the strategic direction that is being followed.

Setting the Vision

Heyford Park is a unique place but largely stood still from the period of 1994 to 2010 after the Americans vacated, while local people debated at length what the future held. Once the decision on the future had been made, the existing community was presented with a unique opportunity to mold the regeneration of the site so that this matched the aspirations of local people.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time a developer has worked in partnership with local people for the establishment of a new school, which hopefully provides a best practice model for how these types of projects could operate in areas of new-home growth. The vision for the school was genuinely established through a parental steering group, alongside Sarah McCready who is one of our current Governors, and ended up detailing the operational plan that was submitted to the Department for Education. This process saw the best possible utilisation of public and private funding and went through a rigorous examination by the Department of Education. Our vision for Heyford Park Free School was commended as one of the strongest that has ever been presented to central Government, and this is something to which we are still proudly committed.

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The aspirations of the school are documented in our charter and include the following themes:

- **Ensuring our educational outcomes guarantee we perform within the top 20% of comparable schools**
- **Making sure we can offer a first class, all-ability education that is personalised for every child**
- **Being truly community orientated and that we share all of our successes with our local stakeholders**

Governing Body

At the outset, we wanted to create a Governing Body that was representative of the wider community at Heyford Park. Our founding Governing Body included:

- Paul Silver (Chair and Member) - a self-made business person with a financial background. Having qualified as a Chartered Accountant, Paul worked in large city organisations that largely covered the construction sector. Paul specialises in large scale regeneration projects and his innovative community led approach has been hailed by both the industry and by Government ministers. The approach to community building at Heyford Park has become an exemplar for the cross-party Garden Villages Programme for new communities in the UK.
- Adrian Lockwood (Vice-Chair) – Adrian is Managing Director of Integration Technology, a business which won the Queens Award for Innovation. Adrian also chairs the Oxford Skills Board, which is focused on ensuring the employment pool in Oxfordshire suits the needs of local businesses, and this body sits within the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Steve Maltby – Steve recently retired from Paragon Automotive, where he was Managing Director. Paragon is a business employing 600 people and 400 engineers at Heyford Park. Steve has also previously been a Governor of a Private Special Education School.
- Michael Loveland (Member) – Michael has been General Manager at Heyford Park for over 20 years, ensuring he has a first class understanding of the community that is here.
- Elaine Robinson - a resident of Heyford Park for over 20 years and who has worked tirelessly in the community by running the local Scout group.
- Sarah McCready (Member and Governor) – Sarah is an Oxford graduate and has previously worked in access to higher education where she encouraged more Oxbridge applications from the state sector. Sarah works as Head of Social Infrastructure for Dorchester Group and is heavily involved with the delivery of key projects for the developer, including the capital construction of Heyford Park Free School.

Subsequently we have been joined by:

- Gale Law – Gale has been involved in Heyford Park Free School since the first parental engagement sessions before the school was consented, and her daughter is part of the school's founding cohort. Having previously worked in HR for central Government, Gale now helps to coordinate and deliver Wrap-around care at Heyford Park Free School.
- Steve Gee – Steve's professional background is one predominantly led through Human Resources. Steve is the Managing Director and owner of an employment business that operates both locally and nationally. The business ensures Steve is continuously up to date with all current Employment Law. It has also given him a strong knowledge of business financial planning, budgets and forecasts. Steve is an elected Parent Governor, with the intended purpose of acting as a liaison between the Governing Body and secondary parents.
- Charlie Morgan-Harris – Charlie is a father of two, with both children currently in the primary phase of Heyford Park Free School. Charlie lives within Upper Heyford and has been committed to the vision of Heyford Park since the school's inception. Charlie is a Parent Governor, with the intended purpose of acting as a liaison between the Governing Body and primary parents.

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- Emily Boswell – Emily has been teaching in secondary schools for 20 years, after taking a Theology degree at Oxford University. She is currently Deputy Head (Academic) at Wycombe Abbey School, a top performing girls' school in Buckinghamshire. She has particular experience in running a Sixth Form, in monitoring pupil progress and in supporting pupils in university applications.
- Jan Maulden – Jan lives within the Cherwell District and has previously been a Governor at a local primary school. Now retired, Jan was a founding director of the Multimedia Corporation and had an esteemed career in publishing.

As such, we have an excellent mix between people with business and public sector background, as well as those living within the community. We aim to keep the Governing Body small so it can be agile and make good decisions, but we constantly review our skill base to ensure we have the prerequisite skills to best manage the school. We would be interested in further persons joining the Governing Body who either have experience of teaching or educational data analysis. If this is something you think you can contribute, please email kakkerman@heyfordparkfreeschool.org

Senior Consultants

The Governing Body brings in senior educationalists to ensure the school's work has been independently verified, but also to share best practice across the educational sector. The consultants review the performance of the Governing Body, Senior Leadership Team and the quality of teaching and learning across the School. Those we use include:

- Dame Erica Pienaar – Erica was one of Michael Gove's top seven Heads in the UK with over thirty years of headship experience, and is also a National Leader in Education. She has both primary and secondary experience and was an Executive Head at a chain of all-through schools in South East London.
- Carolyn Unsted – Carolyn is an Education Adviser at the Department for Education with a speciality in School Improvement. Carolyn was also an Ofsted inspector for 6 years and has over 30 years of experience in teaching.

Senior Leadership Team

It is the role of the Governing Body to provide stewardship and challenge to the Senior Leadership Team in the aim of enhancing performance. Our first head was David Castles who, having helped establish the ethos of the school, decided to relocate back to his native Northern Ireland and has now been succeeded by Karen Healey. Karen is an experienced Head and School Improvement Partner with over 20 years of experience. She has been chosen because of her commitment and dedication to educational excellence in an environment of change. She is supported by Rebecca Hughes as Head of Primary and Vicky Wallington as Assistant Principal for Student Welfare and Curriculum. We have recently expanded the Senior Leadership Team so we welcome Cat Marin as Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning and Ash Rugoobur as Assistant Principal for Outcomes.

Challenges undertaken in 2016/17

2016/17 has really been a significant year for the school. Using our Senior Consultants, we undertook a full review of the entire school and staff in the autumn term. We were also able to effectively recruit a new Head at this time, and readjust the staff structure by recruiting a new Head of Primary and boosting the leadership with more Assistant Principals. The early signs are encouraging with positive feedback from the community and teaching staff.

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Attendance is an important factor that contributes to success at school. Research shows that children who have 95% attendance are 2.8 times more likely to achieve the higher GCSE grades in their subjects. Persistent absence, which is where attendance is below 90% is detrimental to achievement. At Heyford Park Free School we have been working with our children alongside their families to promote good attendance. We have improved our persistent absence this year from 8.8% in January to 4.9% at the end of June. This is significantly below the national average (10.5%).

This year we have published results for Key Stage 1, Foundation Stage and Phonics. Early Years was identified as a key action following the Ofsted Report in 2015. With the appointment of Mrs Hughes and Mrs Walker working alongside their team, we are pleased that 74% of children have achieved a good level of development in all of the early learning goals. The national average in 2016 was 69%. Primary staff have been working hard with children in Key Stage 1 on their phonics. This summer 97% of our Year 1s passed the phonics test. The national average being 81%.

This year also signified the start of GCSE courses in the school. We recognise the challenge that is faced by our first cohort of Year 10 students and so we have been closely monitoring their progress to ensure our first set of results are a true representation of what these pupils can achieve. One of the benefits of our unique school is that we can work in partnership with parents and students to identify areas of improvement to help maximise results and prospects for our students. We do hope you feel this is happening effectively and if you do have concerns please contact Karen Healey in the first instance and the Clerk to Governors thereafter.

We have also spent a lot of time on the new Nursery by both improving the premises and marketing the new offer to the community. The new Nursery is situated in the Specialisms' Campus and will open in September 2017 under the leadership of Jen Walker.

We have created various groups to deal with new challenges the school will be facing over the coming years. This includes a working group to focus on the three to five-year strategy for the school, that will also consider strategic growth, as well as a group to focus on our Sixth Form offer. There is a real opportunity to create a very special Sixth Form at Heyford Park Free School and we look forward to revealing our dynamic offer very soon.

There will undoubtedly be more challenges and opportunities in the year 2017/18, and we will continue to keep all our stakeholders engaged in our process throughout the course of the next academic year.

We trust this letter has conveyed to you a bit more insight into the workings of the Governing Body and we welcome any feedback you have. Kate Akkerman, the Clerk to the Governing Body can be contacted by email at kakkerman@heyfordparkfreeschool.org.

I hope you all enjoy a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you in the new academic year.

Best wishes

Paul Silver
Chair of Governors