



Dear parents and carers,

it is almost the end of spring term and an opportunity to share with you headlines from our recent Challenge Partner review as well as some staffing news.

Challenge Partner Review

Last week we welcomed a review team to school to look at our provision. Challenge Partners has been running school reviews for the past decade and is nationally recognised as a programme schools can be part of to support school improvement. 4 members of the leadership team completed the reviewer training and have reviewed 4 other schools in England this academic year. We welcomed a team of 6 reviewers with the lead reviewer being a former Ofsted inspector. Nearly 50% of all teaching staff were seen over 3 school days, student panels from several year groups were spoken to and we have already booked in another review for this time next year.

The reviewers reported that Colton Hills Community School is a vibrant, inclusive school with outcomes improving over time. They noted that although we are proud of our achievements that we recognise that the school is continuing on our journey of continual improvement. They noted that students speak with confidence and pride about the school's values, instilling positive attitudes for all. They reported that there is a culture of belonging and genuine trust that students' concerns will be addressed, accompanied by confidence in the established decision-making processes.

Lesson highlights included recognition of teachers' subject knowledge, assessment of students' knowledge and extending students' vocabulary. The reviewers recognised our varied approaches to improving students' reading abilities. Students said they appreciated the support provided by staff and felt at ease asking for help from their teachers. Reviewers noted that students, including those in the sixth form are well prepared for their next study steps.

The report acknowledged that we are busy implementing initiatives to enhance provision and support for students with SEND with significant investments in fostering inclusive teaching. They noted that the ZEN, HILLS and BRIDGE nurture and reset models offer safe, structured environments where students' learning needs can be assessed and supported. EAL students strong academic performance exceeds that of their peers.

Many students reported that the Brilliant Club has motivated them to pursue higher education. Students valued the extensive enrichment activities available to them.

Reviewers suggested that we could improve learning further by providing more challenge in lessons for all learners. We will be discussing this with our school improvement advisor this week about how we build this into our daily pedagogical practice.

They asked senior leaders to work with parents, carers and students to improve attendance, truancy and behaviour in social times. We are reviewing our behaviour policy and attendance systems for 2026/27 and will update you in the summer term of any changes.



As a result of this report the senior leadership team have decided that if a student is placed in the respect room for a full day the day will now end at 3:30pm. This extended day is to ensure that students understand that this is a significant sanction and that they have chances to deescalate behaviours before we reach this sanction. This change will begin from the start of summer term to ensure that students, staff, parents and carers are all aware of the change.

Staffing update

Mrs Baker will be moving to pastoral administration next term, and we wish Miss Nicholls well on her maternity leave. Ms Cooper and Mrs Hipgrave have been confirmed in post as SEND administration with Mrs Hipgrave and Mrs Darrell confirmed in post as Office Manager and Headteacher's PA.

Mrs Stanton has been appointed as an Assistant Year Leader from September. It is great to see so many internal members of staff moving into new positions to support career development. Mrs Dhanda has also been appointed as an Assistant Year Leader for September meaning that Year 7 – Year 11 will each have a Head of Year and 2 Assistant Year Leaders for pastoral care.

Mr Oxenham has been appointed to the role of Assistant Headteacher: Personal Development and Wellbeing and will start in September. Part of his remit is improving our parental engagement offer and he will be looking at our enrichment offer also. Mrs Ireland remains in post as Acting Assistant Headteacher: Personal Development and KS3 lead for the remainder of the year, and we would like to thank her for her work with the senior leadership team this academic year.

Mr Hayward leaves us at the end of this term. We would like to thank him for his work with PE and Maths, including his support of trips during his time with us. We wish him well in his new post.

We wish all of our families a restful spring break and look forward to seeing everyone for summer term on Monday 13th April at 08:20 for form time.

Yours sincerely,
Ms Hunter