

Principal's Message – week ending 10 01 20

Dear Families

This is my first communication to you as the new Principal at Hinchingbrooke School. I really am delighted to have joined the school from the 1st of January 2020!

I will be introducing myself formally to students next week in assemblies and I thought I would share with you the key messages that I will be giving to them. I will be telling the students about my first impressions of our school, what I see as the two main parts of the job of Principal, what they can expect from me, and what I would like to expect from them. All of these fit with the school's strap-line 'Inspiring Excellence, Fulfilling Potential, Developing Character'.

My first impressions of the school

When I came for interview at the school I was struck by its friendly atmosphere - people say hello, they smile, they ask how you are (those might seem very basic but believe me when I say that not all schools are as friendly as this one); and this is true, too, between students and staff. There is a productive feel around the school, too: in their lessons, students generally behave very well and they try hard. Students look smart – I am very impressed with how the vast majority of students wear their uniform, and I want to thank you as parents for the efforts you no doubt make, as well as the money you spend, to make that happen.

So much happens here! I think that is partly because of the size of the school – lots and lots of people doing lots of things – and partly it's because the staff are determined to offer the students as many opportunities as they can. Finally, I am hugely impressed by the dedication of this staff group; they really care about our students, your children, and I can already see their willingness to go the extra mile every day. My first impressions of the school are very positive indeed!

What I see as the two main jobs of the Principal

The Principal's key job, shared with other school leaders, is to create the conditions in which all young people at the school have the opportunity to be the best they can be. I am in no doubt that this should be my on-going priority. I cannot say that my main job is to teach English, Maths, Science and so on, because I'm not in the classroom teaching – so I have to prioritise **creating the conditions** in which all of those who do teach can do so really well. Having sensible school systems, clear rules and procedures, recruiting good staff when vacancies arise, supporting and encouraging staff as they go about their job on a daily basis and having a well-focused school improvement plan, are all part of creating those conditions for great learning and achievement.

My second key job is to improve the school. This involves taking stock of where the school is and making plans to move it on; all Heads and school leaders do this.

What the students can expect from me

I will tell the students next week that they can expect me to be visible, approachable and fair. I will let them know that **THEY** are my priority, their wellbeing, their learning, their progress and their achievement. I will tell them that my standards are high, so they can expect me to have high standards for them – for how they behave, how they look, their attendance, their effort and so

on. The students can also expect clarity from me; I want everything that we do here to be clear – our rules, our systems, how we teach, our expectations etc... - and to be communicated very clearly to the students and their families. Finally, students can expect me to smile and be friendly and caring; this is what I always wanted from the Principal of the secondary school that I attended all those years ago (but sadly didn't get!).

What I would like to expect from the students

I would like great behaviour, because that is the surest foundation for great learning. I would like students to be focussed on their learning: *'I am HERE TO LEARN.'* I would like to see real endeavour from the students – not everyone can be top of the class, but everyone can try really hard; endeavour matters more to me than almost anything else. I would like to see good manners - positive and friendly, polite and cheerful and helpful. And I would like to see all students continuing to follow the school's RESPECT agenda – Respect for yourself, Respect for others and Respect for the school. Students who do all of those things are a fantastic asset to the school and a credit to themselves and their families.

I am well aware that families have an important part to play in young people being the best they can be and very much I look forward to working with all Hinchingsbrooke School families in the years ahead.

Kind regards

Mark Patterson
Principal