

Principal's Message – week ending 24 01 20

Dear Families

In my first weekly message I talked about my impressions of the school (this is a good school!) and I told you what I intended to say to the students in assemblies. Last week, I shared with you a summary of the school's priorities for improvement for this year (these were agreed by Hinchingbrooke governors last summer to start in September 2019). This week I thought I would say something about what I think the essence of good schooling is.

For me, for a school to be at least good, you have to have

1. A strong curriculum: not just the obviously-important subjects such as English, Maths, Science, a Language, History and Geography etc... but also strong Sports, strong Arts (Art, Music Drama etc...); and a good range of other subjects that young people can do, and other experiences (clubs, trips, teams etc...) that give them the opportunity to broaden their horizons. Within each subject, we need to give our students access to the content that is most important for them to learn, and that content needs to be carefully-sequenced so the students can make good progress over time;
2. Students that behave well so that they can learn well; and
3. Teaching that helps young people to learn well, so that they make good progress and do well.

Schooling is not much more complicated than that. Of course, that does not mean it is necessarily easy to have all 3 of those key ingredients in place, all of the time! I believe that Hinchingbrooke does have all of those three things but, for sure, all of them can still improve. As the new Principal, I am asking the following questions of myself and my colleagues:

- How good is the school?
- What are the key things that we still need to improve?
- What action do we need to take to bring about the improvements we want/need?

The voices of students, staff and parents are very important in helping us decide together on the answers to those 3 questions. We always ask parents for their views when they come to Parents Evening (we surveyed Year 11 students' parents at the recent Year 11 Parents Evening); we are just about to ask all students and staff for their views, too, through a survey for each group and we will use the answers to help us with our plans to be better.

All of us in the Hinchingbrooke School community – students, staff and parents – want the same thing: the best school we can be, so that our students fulfil their enormous potential. My colleagues and I are committed to ensuring that happens.

Kind regards

Mark Patterson
Principal