

# Hayesfield Sixth Form Post 16 Review Report

## Focus

- The Quality of the Student Experience in the Sixth Form with an emphasis on independent learning
- Developing best practice for learning for all students attending Hayesfield from all 3 institutions in the Bath Educational Trust

## Methods used:

- Lesson Observations
- Student interviews
- Work sampling
- Parent questionnaires

## LESSON OBSERVATIONS

A total of 20 different lessons have been observed by members of Hayesfield School staff and Rob Sidaway B&NES Post 16 Adviser

Subjects observed:

- Law; Maths; Geography; History; Resistant Materials; Graphics; Electronics; Physics; Music; Health & Social Care; French; Media Studies; Sociology; English Literature; English Language; ICT; Textiles; Spanish; German; Psychology; Business Studies (Y13)
- Business Studies (Y12) has still to be observed, this is in hand.

## Results

The focus of the lesson observations was Resilience and Resourcefulness, although staff also commented on the strengths and areas for development.

### Resilience

- All lessons allowed some opportunities for students to review their difficulties, though this varied
- Students use the teacher to solve problems but don't always think before asking
- MFL lessons entirely in the language, students showed confidence to keep going
- Students carrying out their own research and then presenting to rest of the class
- Some students not engaging in some lessons
- Students make excellent use of strict time limits

### Resourcefulness

- Evident especially in practical based lessons, where project work was building on prior skills
- Students using their notes to question each other
- Students working together and supporting each other
- Students sharing their prior knowledge to help advance their learning
- Students relating discussions to previous experiences
- In some lessons few pupils asked questions of either the teacher or each other, when they did it was being used very effectively
- In other lessons students asked searching questions

### Strengths:

- Teacher subject knowledge and enthusiasm
- Teachers building upon student responses
- Teachers drawing on pupils' knowledge and building on this to develop their knowledge, skills and techniques
- Ideas for engaging activities
- Supporting structuring ideas / literacy with summary grids

- When students are directed to work in 2s / 3s and share ideas
- Students being encouraged to question each other / the teacher
- Genuine praise given to specific students for specific achievements
- The willingness of some students to take risks
- Students being encouraged to be supportive of each other and share ideas and knowledge
- Students enjoying / engaged in their work
- Appropriate humour
- Potential for collaboration and support between teachers within lessons
- Well structured and planned lessons

These were commented on by more than one observer

### **Areas for development**

- Encourage / set up opportunities for :-
  - students to ask own questions
  - students to work independently, yet collaboratively
  - students to question and support each others' ideas / work / projects
- Students asking questions that the teacher answers, rather than helping them work out / find the answer
- Lesson objectives explicit / visible and referred to
- Ensuring all students are engaged and joining in, challenging students who don't contribute

These areas were commented on by more than one observer.

### **STUDENT INTERVIEWS**

These were carried out either in small groups or in pairs using a set of pre-arranged questions; the interviewers were Rob Sidaway, Catherine Trueman and a small group of Y10 students. 19 x Y12 students and 15 x Y13 students were interviewed, a mixture of boys and girls, mostly Hayesfield students, with a small number of students from City of Bath College.

Because of the open nature of the questions it is difficult to quantify students' answers. I have attached a detailed review of students' comments to this report, however the key issues can be summarised as:

- Deadlines and workload
- Quantity and quality of formative feedback
- Space to work during study periods
- Access to IT facilities

### **WORK SAMPLING**

The students interviewed by Rob Sidaway were asked to bring one file with them. Rob was looking for evidence of marked work and formative feedback. He saw 11 files in all, 7xY12 and 5xY13, from a variety of subjects. He felt that the key issues are:

- Variation in formative feedback
- Variation in amount of work in students files (for example he saw two Psychology files, both Y12 students, one with a large amount of work with a variety of feedback, the other containing very little work)

He highlighted a variety of good practice:

Biology

- student-completed evaluation sheet – evidence of lots work given some form of feedback – table with “piece of work + date + mark + how I could improve it” columns
- expectations / support / key skills booklet

- practical skills guidance booklet

#### Geography

- given past paper question model answer + mark scheme to analyse
- use of recent (2008) news resources
- highlighting given texts

#### Psychology

- numerous mind-mapping exercises
- regular HW tasks, eg suggesting specific key text pages to prepare revision cards / answer Qs inc suggested minimum length of time to take

#### Chemistry

- key word glossaries

#### English Literature

- rapid turn-around of marking
- use of mind maps
- teacher writes essays to illustrate points such as spelling, punctuation, other deliberate errors that students use to practice proof-reading their own essays
- essay marking including Assessment Objective analysis

#### French

- booklet with Assessment Objectives, grammar, syntax, etc

### **PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES**

Y13 parents were asked to complete questionnaires at parents' evening in January, 21 parents responded from a possible 80, although the answers were fairly brief.

Questionnaires were sent home to Y12 parents (with another mailing) in February, 10 parents responded from a possible 108; these answers were much more detailed.

Again because of the open nature of the questions it is difficult to quantify the responses but I have attached a detailed review of parents' views.

## NEXT STEPS

We extracted examples of good practice from all the sources and have identified the source

| Examples   | Where seen                                       |
|--|--|
| Encouraging students to interact and share answers   | Spanish EH                                       |
| Researching, extracting and summarising key points to create a visual presentation   | Psychology IM                                    |
| Pairing to check each others work followed by group feedback   | Eng Lit LD<br>H&SC JG                            |
| Structuring opportunity for pupils to discuss problems   | Business Studies SIP<br>German CS                |
| Encouraging students to be supportive of each other  | Business Studies SIP<br>German CS<br>Eng Lang DP |
| Attention grabbing starters  | Eng Lang DP<br>Maths RWH<br>Spanish EH           |
| Use of exemplar material   | H&SC JG<br>Student feedback                      |
| Evaluating own work with the teacher   | Music GH   |
| Students given own topic, preparing presentations for rest of group and answering questions  | History SS                                       |
| Independent project work   | DT NTI etc.<br>Physics AF                        |
| Supporting structuring ideas / literacy with summary grids   | History SS                                       |
| Building on students' responses to questions (exploring)   | Law JJ   |
| Structuring the interactive use of a video   | Student feedback                                 |
| Discussing specification and mark schemes  | Student feedback                                 |
| Providing checklists of what is required particularly for coursework   | Student feedback                                 |
| One to one oral formative feedback, not whole group discussions  | Student feedback                                 |
| Giving effective written formative feedback  | Eng Lit FB/LMB                                   |
| Teacher writing model answers with faults to illustrate a point, tool to develop students assessment skills and appreciation of what is required | Eng Lang DJP                                     |
| Structure students recording of the (various forms of) feedback they have been given in order to help them improve their work                    | Work sampling, Biology                           |
| Support literacy and revision through compiling mind maps and key word glossaries  | Work sampling, Chemistry,<br>Psychology          |
| Anecdotes teachers use to illustrate topics  | Student feedback<br>Parent feedback              |

## We identified areas for development, but without naming specifics

- Encouraging all students to participate in lessons – appropriate questioning or a supportive atmosphere
- Giving guidance to students about breaking large tasks down into smaller tasks with interim deadlines and interim feedback
- Coursework deadlines all come together – use option blocks to standardise deadlines?
- Returning work within a set time which the students know

## MOVING FORWARD

### Improving practice

We decided to target improvements in three different areas:

#### 1. For teaching staff

We will ask teachers to pick two of the good practice ideas and aim to include them somewhere in their 6<sup>th</sup> form teaching twice each during terms 5 & 6, after each occasion write a sentence about what they used and how it went (AKB to provide a proforma) – include students comments  
Proformas to AKB by 9<sup>th</sup> July

#### 2. For Faculty discussion

- Pacing work appropriately – teachers planning ahead; Sixth form schemes of work should be divided into short topics to ensure both teachers and students are aware of the pace needed to avoid extra pressure as deadlines close in. (student feedback)
- Work sampling showed very few examples of written formative comments, what there was wasn't consistent (lovely, great etc. don't count)
- Staff need to be fully conversant with coursework / exam requirements for their subjects (student feedback)
- Work must be set when staff are absent, if the absence is known in advance then staff must inform students. Staff should avoid school meetings which take place during Sixth Form lessons (student and parent feedback)

#### 3. For students

Pick two of the following to work on during terms 5 & 6

- Log feedback given by teachers (see Biology example)
- Make yourself ask a question at least once a week
- Be prepared to discuss your work with your friends
- Make yourself a timeline checklist for coursework (life skill – planning)
- Meet deadlines

We shall ask Y12 for evidence by 9<sup>th</sup> July

We shall also provide feedback to parents via parents' bulletin

| Things you've raised we aim to do something about  | Things you raised which you may not be aware that we already address  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time management / coursework deadlines – we will investigate ways of managing this so deadlines don't all come together</li><li>• Sixth Form study space – this will improve when the new building is complete</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggestions for termly tutorials – this is already in place, please encourage your son / daughter to attend the appointments with their tutors</li><li>• Study skills training – this is already part of the PSHE curriculum</li><li>• Careers advice - this is already part of the PSHE curriculum and the Connexions adviser is in school every Thursday &amp; Friday</li></ul> |

Anne Banks  
Head of Sixth Form  
Hayesfield School  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Rob Sidaway  
B&NES Post 16 Adviser

## **Appendix 1**

### **Summary of Student interviews**

#### **1. What makes a good lesson where you enjoy and achieve?**

- an interactive lesson, eg discussion, interacting with a video not just watching it, not having to copy from books, not sitting and listening all lesson
  - if you feel you've achieved something in the lesson
  - in double / triple lessons, a variety of activities
  - knowing if what you are doing is the right way / correct, eg taking notes
  - student / teacher equality when you are treated with respect
  - teachers who :-
    - are not patronising
    - make it easy to approach with problems
    - are as prepared for their lessons as they expect students to be
    - are enthusiastic about their subject / put it into context / use anecdotes / keep your interest
- (most teachers are very good)
- group sizes that are neither too big (criticism of CoBC) nor too small
  - a range of activities with a structured plan and everyone is involved
  - humour

#### **2. What support and preparation do you get for coursework to enable you to work independently?**

- varies between subjects / teachers – very little > a lot
- students find it helpful when teachers
  - share and discuss the specification / mark schemes
  - provide checklists of what is required for coursework
  - discuss examples of good work
  - provide 1-2-1 formative feedback / personalised support that shows how to move on to the next step
  - make time for individuals, not just for whole-group work
  - pace work appropriately to avoid extra pressure as deadlines close in
  - give guidance on breaking down large tasks into smaller chunks with interim deadlines and interim feedback to help students keep on track
  - are fully conversant with coursework / exam requirements for their subjects
- students would find it helpful if coursework deadlines could be timetabled / spaced apart between subjects to allow them to plan the use of their time more easily – some teachers appreciate these issues and students are grateful when they are flexible with deadlines
- due to lack of school resources, some coursework is realistically only possible if you have access to your own equipment, eg cameras, software
- issues with support from teachers who don't have a good, personal working knowledge of certain areas of IT

#### **3. How easy is it to carry out independent work and research?**

- there is a real pressure felt for access to computers, which can also be very slow – this is particularly noticeable for students entering the SF from other schools
- printing issues for students requiring A3 work – only one printer available to non-technology students, often without ink
- difficult when the library is already full – could a timetable be displayed for when SF rooms are not being used so students could overspill into them?

- Y11s using the library as a common room during break distracts
- there are plenty of textbook resources supplied by subject areas
- there are insufficient AS / A2 textbooks in the library for some subjects, but students appreciate it :-
  - when teachers reserve books for certain teaching groups
  - when certain copies are for reference only so you know they will be there
  - when the librarian will order one-off copies of books at a student's request
- common room / library provides good working environment
- students appreciate being given specific structured references to read after specific lessons, eg book X chapter 3&4, rather than being given a general reading book-list for the course which feels too open-ended and consequently might never get done
- students welcome guidance on how to make best use of internet resources
- certain websites that students need access to for their studies, eg sex related / STIs for biology, health & social care, psychology, are blocked in school and can only be accessed from home
- CofBC students find it difficult to communicate with teachers outside of lesson time and don't have access to the same resources, particularly in the Library

#### 4. How do you know how well you are doing?

- varies between subjects / teachers – not at all > considerable feedback
- students want :-
  - marking to be related to AS / A2 exam grades
  - work to be assessed in some way with formative feedback on how to improve / move to the next step
  - a combination of feedback inc. self assessment through lesson discussion & teacher assessment
  - a quick turn-around with marking
  - specific feedback related to subject, rather than generalised feedback
  - teachers to discuss issues with them first before telephoning parents
  - regular folder checks (end of every topic?) to know if they are complete, although some like to organise their folders *their* way rather than being directed by the teacher
  - advice before a task to minimise feedback afterwards when the work has to be re-done
- students dislike completing work, eg writing essays, handing them in and they are never returned
- students receive less written feedback and more verbal feedback and are happy with this
- teachers are very approachable

#### 5. What causes you stress and why?

- managing workload
- x-subject coursework deadlines all coming together
- when coursework and ongoing subject work leads to excessive workload
- when teachers set coursework / ongoing work at the same time students are revising for exams
- when teachers don't turn up for lessons :-
  - with no warning and so no work set
  - with warning, but work lacks teacher interaction and students feel 'cheated'
  - when students know it isn't an illness, just to attend a meeting
- when teachers tell students their subject is most important and needs priority
- the IB course involves more subjects than AS / A2 and this may either lead to more work being set or it seeming that way
- if a teacher leaves mid-year
- when the pace of work slips and then teachers make up time by setting extra work

- when students are involved in worthwhile non-academic activities either to support the school (eg organising SF events) or beyond school (eg musical / dance events) and still have to meet the same academic deadlines as everyone else
- trips / events organised just before exams
- having to attend sessions that are not relevant to the individual, eg preparation for university if no intention of going ... and subsequent loss of EMA if don't attend
- CofBC students find the lack of access to the teacher out of timetabled class time a drawback

**6. Y12: How have you coped with the transition from GCSE to Y12 work?**

- variable – some students have found it easier / harder than expected
- challenges :-
  - organising independent study
  - managing school activities vs increased non-school activities such as a job

**7. Y13: How have you coped with transition from AS level to A2 level work?**

- students would appreciate more preparation / guidance in completion of previously unencountered A2 synoptic questions
- students appreciate support offered by subject areas preparing for AS re-takes
- 'I didn't realize how hard it was until I started'
- 'AS-A2 is worse than from GCSE to Y12'
- 'A2 work is harder, but we are more used to the layout and routine'

## **Appendix 2**

### **Summary of Parents' questionnaires**

#### **1. What do you discuss with your daughter/son about school?**

- Grades
- Homework
- Coursework
- Relationships with staff
- Relationships with other students
- Quality and consistency of lessons
- Revision activities and timetable
- University applications
- Lessons
- Gossip!
- School duties (prefects, mentoring, deputy head girl duties)
- Extra-curricular activities (choir, MUN, Interact)
- Happiness
- Anything and everything
- Digressions a teacher goes off on which often add interest to the overall picture

#### **2. What does your daughter/son do at home associated with their school activities?**

- Class homework
- Research
- Wider reading
- Research for higher education or career
- Revision
- Planning for extra curricular activities
- Duke of Edinburgh Award research, voluntary activities
- Photography, her camera goes everywhere
- Speaking French with me
- Music practice

#### **Please estimate time spent per week**

- 20 hours
- 15-20 hours
- 2-3 hours week days only
- Half an hour
- 4-5 hours a night
- 12-15 hours
- 6 hours
- Not enough
- Don't know
- Most of her free time
- 30-35 hours a week, we hardly ever see her without her computer
- My daughter would say 6, I say 4 (I have deducted hours spent messing around at the computer, this can't be sufficient, but she does use her free time at school wisely)

#### **3. What does your daughter/son enjoy at school?**

- Her friends, socialising, chatting

- The relationships with the staff
- Everything
- Psychology lessons
- HOGS
- Learning (some of it she talks about with enthusiasm)
- More independence
- Practical lessons
- Maths & English
- The company of the other students and teachers
- Science
- Deputy Head girl duties
- The responsibilities given and the ability to be able to express herself
- Learning atmosphere
- Biology and English in particular
- Community work
- The subjects he is interested in
- History
- Challenges
- Interesting work
- Freedom to come home in study periods
- Playing table football
- Photography, Mr. Lee's relaxed and friendly approach
- Being treated as an adult
- The variety in the subjects that she/he has chosen
- The change from previous school

#### **4. What does your daughter/son find difficult or frustrating about school and school work?**

- Lack of time
- Stress
- How to improve marks
- Finding out information
- Volume and pressure of work, harder level from GCSE
- Having to be in at 8.30am on a Monday
- PSHE
- Coursework
- Cancelled lessons
- Still not treated like an adult
- Sometimes too much unnecessary homework when trying to get on with coursework
- Deadlines all occurring at once
- Conveying the thoughts in her head onto paper to the standard required
- Organisation
- Doing things he doesn't like
- The sausage factory approach to learning (a criticism of the National Curriculum not Hayesfield)
- Can't get work done
- Poor communication between some teachers who are both teaching a subject, especially in relation to coursework
- Small crowded library
- Finding it difficult to feel as though she 'belongs'
- No actual 6<sup>th</sup> form study space apart from Library
- She's pretty angry about some students not obeying the rules
- Time management for deadlines

- Lack of central heating in the Sixth Form House
- Needs specific study skills training
- Lack of eating facilities, common room is too crowded

#### **5. Do you have any suggestions for how we can do things even better?**

- A more structured day for Y12s, ie all in school for 9 o'clock even if they have no lessons.
- More time-tabled extra subjects, eg: study skills, chance to learn a new subject, obligatory physical activity
- A section of Open Evening that informs parents of the set up as well as subject info for the students
- Better computer room for the Sixth Form
- Students who don't obey the rules should be punished accordingly
- A Levels appear to be allocated 8 hours a fortnight rather than 10 hours with the result that courses appear rushed and seem unlikely to meet the guided learning hours advised by the exam boards
- A dedicated library for Sixth Form use
- More team building
- Closer links with tutors, tutorials termly
- More involvement between the two year groups
- Career's advice
- Y13 parents evening should be before Christmas
- Don't let your pupils down
- After school revision
- Maybe two parent/teacher evenings a year to have more feedback
- 1:1 between students and subject teachers to discuss concern (not with tutor)
- Some of the students are 18 treat them like adults, whether they pass their exams or not is their look out!
- Giving more notice of deadlines, such as when coursework is due in
- No overall very happy with Hayesfield