

Spalding High School

Vision and Direction Summary

A 2020 Vision.

MKA January 2015



NB: this is a summary document of the vision speech shared with staff on 05.02.15 and by no means an exhaustive list.

1. Learning for all.

If I were to make comments based on what I have seen in my informal lesson observations over the course of the year, I would say that teaching is in the main outstanding or at least good with outstanding features.

Where teaching is outstanding:

- Lessons are **well paced** and **challenging**.
- The planned tasks are **developmental** and allow students to take **risks** in order to take their understanding and knowledge forward.
- Our **four R's** are embedded within the planned tasks – the teacher understands the importance of the four R's and allows time within the lesson to develop these opportunities and experiences.
- Teacher's **subject knowledge** is accurate and delivered with **enthusiasm** and passion.
- Behaviour management and classroom management are subtle, **consistent** and delivered with an expert hand.
- Relationships are positive and **purposeful**.
- Teachers **know their pupils** and use their data – both global and internal – to **progress** an individual.

Where learning is outstanding:

- Progress has **clearly and explicitly** been made in the short time I have been in the lesson – this can be demonstrated in a number of ways such as progressive and effective questioning.
- The students are given the **opportunity** and **time** to think, reflect and do the work.
- The **students do more work** than the teacher in the lesson. This is not to say that the teacher has not put the time in beforehand – of course they have.
- In the lesson the children have **time** to work; it is not a performance based teacher led lesson.
- Time is given to **explore** topics and **apply** learning.
- Learning is applied **to assessment objectives** – this does not mean teaching to the exam
- “An intelligent person knows what to do – when they do not know what to do.” Children make progress because they are **challenged** and have to think for themselves. They can **problem solve**. This can be achieved at all ages. If we complain that Year 11 and the Sixth Form are not as good with these skills of application then we need to train them earlier.
- Where learning is outstanding the students are **taking risks** and **pushing themselves** – knowing that the teacher will be there to support and guide them.

Staff are also learners and we will continue with our peer observation scheme. Our CPD programme and the work of the Active Learning Group will continue to develop and underpin the refinements in our whole school and consistent approach to teaching and learning. It is important for us to provide opportunities for all staff to develop and grow in their role and support them to make the next step in their career path. We must invest in our staff training to ensure that we grow leaders and managers of the future and provide a range of progression routes for staff either here at the High School or for promotion elsewhere.

Meetings are already further developing staff participation, sharing of good practice and inter-departmental collaboration and cross curricular learning discussions. This too will continue to develop and grow. We have already worked on our core values, ethos and what we would like to maintain, improve and change. We are currently working on our new assessment framework for Key Stage 3 and 4 and in addition to this our agreed marking and feedback statement.

2. The use of data to promote best possible progress for all.

Data is king but context is queen. Knowledge and understanding of both the data and the context is the key to ensuring that the best possible progress is made. It needs to be reliable and robust data and we need to be able to trust that it is accurate and meaningful.

At the moment we have very effective systems for both internal and global data in school. We feel that our grading and assessment systems work and there is effective follow up after each assessment period. We need to ensure that this robust approach is applied consistently and effectively across each department and year group.

How well do you know this data set?

- Where are there slower rates of progress – why is this – what interventions and supports need to be put into place to address these issues.
- Where are there better or faster rates of progress being made – why is this? What good practice can be shared within the department to roll this out?
- Who is at risk of not making suitable rates of progress – what is being done to address this?
- Are there inconsistencies within the department data set? What are they? Why are they there? What is being done to address these inconsistencies?

3. Informed and effective marking and assessment.

Linked to data and progress is our use of assessment, marking and feedback. During observations I have looked at many books and folders. We have focused our work scrutiny this academic year and there are examples of exemplary practice in many areas of the School.

Where assessment is outstanding:

- Students understand the **assessment criteria** and how to apply them.
- **Self-assessment** and **peer assessment** is used accurately, effectively and regularly.
- Assessment tasks are **varied** and **support** the subject assessment framework and skills.
- Students have been given time to evaluate their own performance and identify what they need to do next to improve further.
- Assessment involves teacher review and agreement of the targets set by the student and **on-going triangulation** that they have been addressed or achieved.
- Progress not only been evidenced in assessment structures in classroom activities but also in books and folders.

The use of larger assessment tasks seems to be widely used across the School and many departments are using mark sheets with self, peer and teacher assessment opportunities. These sheets often include self-assessment boxes and spaces to set targets for improvement. In some cases again, this is clearly triangulated upon at a later date; but not always. We will be advancing this form of assessment and feedback used more consistently across the School.

Where marking is outstanding it:

- Gives **structured** and **directed** instruction for improvement or correction.
- Is **time efficient** and does not expect a teacher to mark and give feedback on every piece of classwork or homework.
- Gives a mark or comment on **key pieces** of class or homework.
- It reinforces **good practice** in work organisation and departmental expectation.
- It underpins and embeds the **School Literacy and Mathematics** policies.
- Is completed **regularly** so that it is relevant for the pupil.

4. Sustainable staffing with capacity to do the job.

Our staff are both our greatest resource and our biggest asset. We have a dedicated and committed staff; I value your passion, dedication, support, humour, comradery, insight, opinions and ideas. I made it clear when I spoke to you at interview that I want a staff body who are empowered and confident in doing their job; have the capacity to do it well and are accountable for their performance.

There are a number of staffing related priorities for the School over the next few years:

- Refinement and evolution of support staff roles to ensure the most efficient and effective support for teaching and learning.
- Capacity for teachers to focus on teaching and learning in their subject areas.

- Succession planning. The demographic of grammar schools tend to be particularly stable. Stability of staffing is a wonderful thing for a school. However, it often means that we experience “waves” of retirement and we need to plan and prepare for this.
- Staff development and progression. I believe that a school should grow leaders of the future and see it as a positive if we provide people with opportunities and experience that place them at an advantage for promotion either here or elsewhere. I also want to ensure that we are in the best possible position to recruit experienced and committed replacements. We need to have a commitment to growing our own teachers and invest in opportunities for initial teacher training.
- We need to remain vigilant in our budgets and staffing costs. I am not seeking a reduction in staffing but have to make it totally clear that expansion of staffing, particularly teaching staff is, in the current funding climate unlikely to change considerably. Each time someone leaves we will look critically at the post and the role and establish the best and most effective way forward.

5. A growing and effective Sixth Form.

I view the Sixth Form as the flagship of the School; the entity that embodies student leadership, role models, learning, progress, aspiration and achievement. But sixth forms are changing in many ways and funding changes will underpin so many aspects of sixth form evolution over the next few years. I want our Sixth Form to grow and develop in collaboration with our partner Spalding secondary schools so that together we can provide educational opportunities which mean that Spalding children have the opportunity to stay in Spalding for their sixth form provision.

There are several key issues:

- National changes in sixth form funding are having, and will continue to have, a significant impact on our school budget and therefore the choices we make.
- Recruiting suitably qualified and experienced staff is a national problem. South Holland is no different and we need to develop ways of attracting staff capable of teaching at KS5.
- We need to provide suitable progression routes for our own students and transferees from a range of different schools.
- We need to look carefully at course choice and options, particularly with smaller sized groups and explore collaboration to ensure that we can continue to support these subjects. I do not want to cut provision.
- Independent study, guided and supervised study and curriculum changes at KS5 are all high priorities within the national agenda for sixth forms. These issues need to be planned for and implemented effectively over the next few years.

6. A suitable and engaging curriculum

Curriculum change is upon us at all key stages. As a profession we have faced significant curriculum change a number of times over the years and no doubt future heads will say the same to their staff. It is time consuming yes, but also an exciting opportunity to review what we do and how we do it. We have a duty to ensure that our curriculum continues to meet the needs of our pupils and students in the most engaging, appropriate and legitimate way.

Priorities are:

- Planning and implementation of new subject specifications and examinations in all subjects across all Key stages.
- Effective, appropriate and inspirational programmes and effective delivery in Careers, PSHE and Citizenship.
- New assessment frameworks at KS3 and GCSE.
- Responding to national changes and developments as they occur.

These issues have been discussed with staff and governors over recent months and the six key areas of this vision and direction document are now a fundamental part of the structure of the whole school, departmental and pastoral development plans and will continue to be over the next few years.