Reflection on 5 Years’ Progress

I have been proud to be the Headteacher at BHS since January 2011 and am looking at retirement with mixed feelings: part of me will miss the students, staff and community greatly but another part says it’s time to spend more time with my family, friends and doing all the things we promise ourselves we will do one day. Having passed retirement age, this is now slightly overdue, and I have chosen the best time in the academic year for the school to hand over to Mrs. Fox.

Our current Year 11 arrived nine months after I started and together we have seen change both within the school and on a national level. In that time we have had our best results and then not so good, as national changes to GCSEs took effect. Now we are on a steady and strong upward trend that will see no limit in the future because it is built on the solid ground of achievement and progress. The LA, who monitor our progress, say in their latest report that I am leaving a ‘legacy of a rapidly improving school for the new Headteacher to build on’ and I am sure that we will go from strength to strength.

Our students are taught well and develop into well mannered, friendly, competent, assured people who continue to do well after they leave us. We will do very well at the next Ofsted as the evidence of our progress is clear to see.

Education changes constantly and has always been at the centre of decisions taken by governments who successively want to put their stamp on the future of our country. We therefore have to bend and sway to the demands of the DfE, Ofsted, national curriculum, statutory orders and the comparison to other countries in international league tables. Sometimes the fact that we are here to educate young people and equip them for an uncertain future as best we can seems to take second place to poorly judged and ill-informed data heralded as worthy of comparing schools, but children are not, and never should be, numbers.

Sometimes it can feel as though we are weathering storms that come out of policies over which we, as professionals, have had little say. At other times we are turning policy into practice only to find the goalposts have moved and we have to adjust rapidly. An instance of this is the overhaul of the assessment system currently underway in primary and secondary sectors. I was teaching when the GCE ‘O’ level and CSE existed separately and the confusion first caused when it became the GCSE. Some features of education are recurring themes. My own GCSEs are numbered, but 1 was the top grade, not the bottom, as will soon be the case.

The following pages are a reflection of what we have been doing at BHS for the last 5 years and the way in which we have striven to continue to be a great school for our students.

Mrs Cooper

SPECIAL THANKS ON MY RETIREMENT GO TO:

- the staff at BHS for their commitment and dedication to our school.
- The student body who work so hard and represent the school positively in many ways.
- The PTA for the extra resources they bring to the school.
- Head teachers at our Primary Cluster schools for their collegiate work and support of BHS.
- The Governing Body who work tirelessly for the school.
In 2016 we expect our GCSE results to continue to rise by at least 5% and hopefully more as our students are working so hard. Our goal is to make sure all students make the progress that is right for them.

Behind the results sit many individual stories. Some students leave with all A and A* grades, others work very hard to complete their schooling. Whatever the story, GCSEs are only the beginning. We have developed our pastoral systems at BHS to ensure that we are caring for the whole child and supporting the family whenever we can. We encourage independence, thoughtfulness for others and resilience. Young people need more than good results to achieve their goals in life and alongside these examination results, our students have left excelling in social skills, taking part in sport, music, drama, charity fund raising, caring for more vulnerable people, representing their subject, house and school.

Mrs. Cooper

SUBJECT SUCCESS IN 2015

- 100% IN 6 SUBJECTS
- 90% AND ABOVE IN 12 SUBJECTS
- 80% AND ABOVE IN 17 SUBJECTS
- BEST RESULTS NATIONALLY FOR FOOD TECHNOLOGY AND GEOLOGY
- 79% OF STUDENTS ACHIEVED 5+ GCSEs
- 99.8% OF OUR STUDENTS WENT ON TO MORE EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- WE HEAR EVERY YEAR OF STUDENTS DOING WELL AT 'A' LEVEL BECAUSE OF THEIR GROUNDING HERE
- ON AVERAGE OUR STUDENTS TAKE 9 GCSES

GCSE Examination Results

Since 2013 we have continued to rapidly improve GCSE outcomes for our young people. In 2015 67% of our students achieved 5 or more GCSE’s at grades A*-C including English language and mathematics. We continue to be one of the top schools in Stockport for students achieving the sought after EBacc suite of qualifications, with 37% of our students attaining the highly academic subjects of English Language, mathematics, sciences, geography or history and a modern foreign language.

Our sustained improvement in results since 2013 has been driven by high quality teaching and the school’s commitment to ensuring that students achieve results that show real progress from their starting points, building on the learning foundations set at our local primary schools. We believe this improvement in results will continue in 2016 despite the increased rigour now very evident in secondary school examinations.

Mr. Longworth
HOW HAS THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPED AT BHS?

Students study a range of subjects here and we have been determined to keep the choice broad for them. We have been committed to keeping a strong creative and expressive element to our curriculum so we have a brilliant Performing Arts department, we excel in Sport and PE and many of our students appear in national and international forums for both these areas. The full range of Design and Technology subjects are on offer. Spanish, German and French support our EBacc provision and our curriculum reflects academic rigour, with the unusual inclusion of Geology, Biology, Physics and Chemistry are taught as separate sciences from Year 7 onwards and we have strong performance in the Humanities. Computer Science is still relatively new and very popular. Along with Enterprise and new technology education we have developed popular courses for young people to pursue further when they leave us to become leaders in business.

Maths and English both continue to develop strength and progress. The English Department has been unsettled over the last few years due to unavoidable staffing issues but is now very stable, dependable and making excellent progress. They have embedded a number of changes in order to ensure progress for all students. Emphasis has been placed on a skills based curriculum which provides challenge, engagement and higher standards. As a result we are seeing an increasingly rapid rise in their progress rates and exam success. This year they are expecting their best results. They offer a wide range of support for pupils and extra curricular activities that strengthen skills and improve confidence, such as clubs for debating and creative writing, theatre visits and poetry competitions.

Ms. Joynson
DID YOU KNOW?

* Bill Lucas and Guy Claxton have worked with us through their Expansive Education organisation. Bill came and delivered staff training in 2013.

* Carol Dweck and her work on Mindsets has underpinned our work since Barry Hymer trained all staff here in 2014.

* Bramhall is a training provider and lead practitioner in Stockport for Restorative Approaches as adopted by Stockport Family.

* Mrs Cooper studied and later worked with the late, great educationalist Dorothy Heathcote which is where her belief in active learning and problem solving comes from.

* We have invested in training on the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme to further develop our staff to excellent standards.

* We worked closely in the Bramhall cluster of schools between 2011 and 2013 with Paul Ginnis, who wrote the Teachers’ Toolkit.

* We have focussed on developing Student Centred Leadership as proposed by Vivien Robinson.

* BHS is a member of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

“A successful teacher establishes a student’s expectations of their abilities but then dispels those expectations by telling them they can do better”- John Hattie, 2015.

Good teaching and learning underpins everything we do at Bramhall.

Teachers are committed to quality first teaching in all our classrooms. Our teacher training for the last 5 years has focused on cutting edge pedagogical practice. This coupled with the most recent professional whole school training (TEEP) is helping to further galvanise classroom engagement and support student progress. All teachers follow the ‘Mark-Plan-Teach’ cycle which leads to informed lesson planning and learning activities adjusted to the needs of individuals. Feedback on progress and how to improve is provided from student teacher dialogue and ‘Comment-Progress-Response’ marking. The expectation is that student’s respond to teacher feedback so that they know how to improve.

URBAN MYTH: THE POLICE DRUG ‘SNIFER’ DOG 1999

In April 1999, 17 years ago, the then Head teacher, John Peckham invited Greater Manchester Police to conduct a sweep of the school with their ‘sniffer’ dog. This action was taken as part of a whole school strategy to raise the awareness of the problems caused to the physical and mental health of young people by the use of illegal drugs. Mr Peckham told the BBC at the time, “We see this as being part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce the harm that drugs cause to young people”.

Fourteen years later, in 2013, we again asked the Police to support the whole school anti-drugs policy by bringing in the ‘sniffer’ dog. Apart from drugs education, guidance and counselling, our chief responsibility is to do everything we possibly can to make sure that our students are safeguarded. We were keen to ensure that young people did not come into contact with drugs at Bramhall High School.

Sadly there are still some people who think that these actions are indications of a drug problem at our school. That is not the case and the truth is that we are active in educating and counselling our students to keep them safe and as a consequence we are fulfilling our duty to them and their families.

Mr. Thomas
In 2011 we looked closely at our pastoral system. Knowing that the needs of students were changing greatly and that the incoming rigour for examination was going to cause even greater pressure on young people we needed to find a way of supporting families and students in a more personalised way.

Following research into successful systems and using experience from other schools, myself and the senior leadership team created the concept of four schools within the school as a way of enhancing our care and welfare programme whilst at the same time giving a forum for academic subjects to work more closely with each other.

The Houses were launched in 2012 after being given names and identities by the students. We changed the ties so we could identify which students belonged to which house and re-instated concepts of competition between them. Attendance, progress, sport, charity fund raising, Bake-Offs, Spelling Bees all take place as inter-house competition.

Staff roles to enhance the experience for students were created: Directors of House, Student Support Leaders, Behaviour Managers, Admin. Assistants as well as Progress Trackers, Curriculum Coordinators and Leaders in Learning. These posts and their holders have given great support and encouragement to students.

Most importantly, we created Student Directors, Student Leadership Teams and Subject Ambassadors whose contribution to school life has been truly fantastic.

Mrs. Cooper
What do students remember most about school? The unusual and brilliant experiences that leave a lasting impression.

I spent my childhood in Ghana and travelled extensively as a young teacher. As a Headteacher I have worked alongside leaders and other teachers in 9 different countries, including places as diverse as Finland and La Reunion. It is therefore natural to want to make sure students have the opportunity to learn through travel and at BHS we have further developed our overseas trips by adding to those already well established, such as the First WW Battlefields, Switzerland and Paris. We now also go to Berlin, Barcelona and Frejus as well as still keeping our bi-annual ski trips and music weeks: this year students go to Lake Garda.

We have developed a rich programme of learning outside the classroom which helps our students to be confident and interesting young people.

I couldn't be more proud of the tremendous memories created for our students by all our Departments, but two stand out in this respect: PE and Performing Arts.

During my time here we have established an annual whole school sports day that focusses on healthy competition between the Houses. The Department also has a special Awards Evening purely for sporting achievement.

Music and Drama provision have continued to grow stronger, with productions and showcases every term. These include the Christmas and Summer Music Concerts, Musical Production, Drama and Music GCSE evenings, Fairey Band evening, Halle Partnership work with our primaries and our peripatetic music provision.
SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SUPPORT

We have responded in an enthusiastic way to the SEND Code of practice and the clear focus on the personalisation of learning for students with barriers to their learning. The Personalised Learning Centre (PLC) is a school support centre created in 2012 for pupils. Over the last two years it has further developed its facilities (we call them hubs) to suit the very different needs of a significant number of children.

The Transition Pathway is a hub is for students who find transition to secondary school more challenging. These young people may also require additional support with English and mathematics. The intervention support helps the individual to progress at a faster rate and to catch up with their peers. The RAIL hub (Raising Achievement in Literacy) has a focus on improving progress with literacy whilst the RAIN hub (Raising Achievement in Numeracy) works to improve numeric skills.

This year we have opened the Cloud, a therapeutic hub for students that need extra nurture and help with their emotional intelligence. The final hub is Restart which provides a place for students new to Bramhall, or returning after longer-term illness, to catch up with their learning and at the same time benefitting from 1:1 tuition.

Alongside the intervention hubs we have centralised in the PLC the school receives external support from a variety of multi-agencies. Finally, our TAs have all received training giving them a clear pedagogical role supporting the learning of the individuals under our care.

These changes are greatly enhancing our work and helping us achieve our goal, which is to make sure that no child is left behind.

Miss Lewis

I wish everyone at BHS all the best for the future. Being Headteacher is a diverse and demanding job. It has had its challenges and joys, frustrations and rewards. It has never been boring!

Thank you for your support and encouragement. It has been rare for any day to not bring a smile or a laugh and I will remember my time here with great pleasure. I have every faith that this summer will bring even more success to our lovely school. Good Luck Year 11, (you have 4 more weeks to do than I), you deserve to do well.

Mrs. Cooper

DID YOU KNOW?

* Our cleaning contract costs us over £135,000 per year.

* We missed out on a new build because the funding stopped for Building Schools for the Future in 2010.

* We used to receive over £156,000 per year from the Department of Education for building maintenance, now it is £25,000.

* Life Leisure is not run by the school and we do not receive any letting money from the facilities.

‘Our challenge is to raise young people, all of whom have the appetite, capacity and confidence to face the unforeseeable challenges and uncertainties life throws at them’

Guy Claxton

This has been my aim and the central ethos to our school.

Mrs Cooper
SCHOOL TERMS AND CLOSURES
SCHOOL YEAR 2016/2017

MAIN TERM DATES

Autumn Term 2016  Tuesday 6th September 2016 –  Thursday 22nd December 2016

Spring Term 2017  Monday 9th January 2017  –  Friday 31st March 2017

Summer Term 2017  Tuesday 18th April 2017  –  Friday 21st July 2017

HOLIDAYS

Autumn Term 2016  Monday 24th October 2016  –  Friday 28th October 2016

Christmas  Monday 26 December 2016  –  Friday 6th January 2017

Spring Term 2017  Monday 20th February 2017  –  Friday 24th February 2017

Easter  Monday 3rd April 2017  –  Monday 17th April 2017

Summer Term 2017  Monday 29th May 2017  –  Friday 2nd June 2017

INSET DAYS

Thursday 1 September 2016
Friday 2 September 2016
Monday 5 September 2016
Friday 23 December 2016
Monday 26 June 2017

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Good Friday  Friday 14th April 2017
Easter Monday  Monday 17th April 2017
May Day  Monday 1st May 2017
Spring Bank Holiday  Monday 29th May 2017