

Information for Scrutiny Board

I have read the notes from the meeting and thought you may find the following helpful:

Support for Learning

We don't have a traditional pastoral structure. We have a Support for Learning Manager who runs a team of 18 Team Leaders (including 3 "seniors / office co-ordinators"), Family Liaison Officer and a Chaplain.

Students are members of "Teams" – these are actually Houses (as in the old public school model). Teams are vertical so you are in the same Team as your siblings and tutor groups are family groups, so families are tutored together.

Each of the 18 Team Leaders has responsibility for around 50 students but obviously this will be only about 20 – 30 families. This means that every family has one point of contact and that the Team Leaders know the family very well. They are loved by their students and are effectively "house parents".

Team Leaders are responsible for attendance, all aspects of guidance, physical, emotional and mental well-being, and Academy-home liaison. They support families through illness, bereavement, family breakdown and are the signposts to support services. It is not unusual for the Team Leaders to be involved in feeding and dressing the students, accompanying them to medical appointments etc. Team Leaders are not teachers or TAs and they come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some have post-graduate qualifications: some are single mothers from the Seacroft estates. They are on first name terms with their families and have a high status with the students.

This department in the Academy means that every single student and family is very well-known and issues are thoroughly understood.

All students in the Academy receive breakfast as part of the normal day's routine, and our chefs prepare exceptional high-quality food. Our take-up of dinners is over 90%. Students are looking a lot healthier!

Chef works with the Team Leaders as necessary and "food parcels" home are not unheard of. (My catering budget doesn't balance and I need to seek external sponsorship to maintain current levels, but governors and staff recognise the huge difference quality eating is making)

Supporting students

The Academy has a large number of very challenging students, including many who have been previously excluded from other Leeds schools, been in receipt of "alternative provision", or simply not attended school for a long time. The vast majority of our students have responded extremely positively to the ethos and organisation of DYCA and in a recent extensive and lengthy survey

of **all** students, amongst other things, they were asked how effective they thought the Academy was at the key outcomes. Results were:

	brilliant or good	satisfactory
support for healthy lifestyle	75%	20%
support to stay safe	75%	19%
support to enjoy and achieve	75%	20%
support to make positive contribution	74%	20%
support to prepare for future	80%	15%

DYCA has a clear “Removing the Barriers to Learning” strategy, which applies to behaviour in lessons which spoils learning and is about making the right choice. The language of personal choice and the ability to put right a poor choice are endemic across the Academy.

In addition to academic assessment, every 6 weeks students are assessed in each area on “Learning Power” – Resilience, Respect, Resourcefulness and Reflectiveness. This gives a total LP score, in addition to academic levels of attainment. Students understand that a high LP score is about their ability to learn and make further progress.

DYCA is moving to a 2 year Key Stage 3 and as part of the transition all students finishing Year 7 and 8 in May 2007 were assessed according to Learning Power and Learning Behaviours. 250 students moved to the Final year of KS3, regardless of age and 150 students moved to a Mid-Year KS3, again regardless of age. Attendance in the Mid-Year KS3 cohort is significantly lower than in the Final Year KS3 cohort, Team Leader support to the cohort is greater, class sizes are smaller and considerable progress is being made.

We have further identified a group of students in this Mid-Year KS3 cohort whose behaviour is so seriously disruptive to the learning of others and is such a major health and safety risk at lunch times that they are likely to be permanently excluded. We have placed them into a special class, known as the Principal’s Target Group. They attend the Academy from 7.30am – 11am each day and are taught by myself and my most senior colleagues. There are 15 in the class with 3 members of staff. They have breakfast and lunch in the classroom. They are escorted to the toilets if necessary. Despite this we have had 2 permanent exclusions from the group. The majority of these students are, however, responding exceptionally well and their parents attend a weekly “Caring and Sharing” meeting in the Academy along with some parents of students in KS4 on alternative timetables.

Permanent Exclusions from the Academy

Academic year 2006-07	14 in total
	6 for assault on staff
	3 for assault on student
	4 for assault on staff and student
	1 for extortion, robbery and violence

Curriculum Personalisation

We do not have “academic routes” and “vocational routes”. The KS4 curriculum is personalised for each student according to aptitude and ability.

From June 2008 KS4 will be a 3 year programme with 3 menus to select from.

- over 3 years 2 BTeC level 2 programmes
Adult Literacy and Numeracy
GCSE in Core Subjects
Work Experience
- over 2 years 1 BTeC Level 2 programme
Adult Literacy and Numeracy
GCSE in Core subjects
Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme
and one additional year of work experience
- over 2 years Mix of GCSEs and BTeC Level 2 programmes
GCSEs in Core subjects
and one additional year of AS / BTeC Level 3

It is unlikely any 2 students will have the same diet and the particular diet for each individual is determined in discussion with the Team Leader. The menu they are given to choose from is determined by our Data Team in discussion with Team Leaders.

DYCA Year and “Day”

Our academic year begins in June, immediately after the traditional May holiday. We work for 6 weeks and then take a 4 week summer holiday. By the time most students start high school, DYCA students have already had 8 weeks of KS3. We do this because KS2 ends with testing in May.

Our working pattern is 7 terms of roughly 6 weeks (although we do follow the traditional pattern from Xmas to Easter). This is to avoid the exhaustion and bad temper due to 7 and 8 week long teaching blocks (from students and staff!). The pattern is very popular with our parents and staff – the only complaint we get is that it is difficult with siblings in other schools. However, when further asked by a journalist recently whether they would prefer DYCA to be in line with the other schools, they replied “No, we want the other schools to come in line with DYCA”. One of the most popular aspects with parents and staff is the ability to take cheaper holidays.

The Academy Day is structured into 3 sessions. Session 1 lasts from 0835 to 1110 and includes breakfast in the restaurant. There is then form time from 1110 to 1150. Session 2 lasts from 1150 to 1450 and includes lunch in the restaurant. At 1450 on Mon – Weds Session 3 begins. This is extra-curricular and non-compulsory. Around 25%-40% students participate each night. All staff offer at least one Session 3. The classes range from all the usual

sporting and performing arts activities, to “dissection club” and “preparation for driving theory test”. There are also “Girls only groups”, revision classes, and Homework Clubs. On Thursdays staff are in meetings. The Academy Day finishes at 1635, with community activities taking place in the evenings.

Staff Turnover

In our first academic year we had 5% of teaching staff leave, (either during or at the end), but a further 3% of our teaching staff during that year were “agency” (none are now). We also had 5% of non-teaching staff leave during the same timescale.

We have had no queries or complaints from Trade Unions.

Support for Parents

In addition to the huge family support provided by Team Leaders, our PSA (known in DYCA as Family Liaison Officer) acts as the signpost to all agencies and support services, supports and counsels parents in distress and operates the following:

- “Caring and Sharing” group for parents of students with behaviour necessitating alternative timetabling. Weekly.
- Parents “drop-in” sessions after school and into the evening. Twice a week.

I hope the above information answers most of the questions asked by Board members. The issue of where the permanently excluded students now are is one I cannot answer. I also have no knowledge of the Extended Schools Co-ordinator (DYCA has a Community Plan which has come into operation only recently once the VAT problem – which only applied to Academies – was removed). I believe Pat Toner is looking into both these points for you.

Ros McMullen
Principal
David Young Community Academy

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