

22nd June 2018

Dear parents, carers and families,

Welcome to the final half-term of the 2017-18 academic year!

When I was a young teacher the final half-term of the academic year was the one we all looked forward to; with no Year 11 lessons to teach there used to be a perceptible collective relaxation as we drifted downhill to the summer break! I even remember once taking part in an impromptu game of cricket in the staff room during one of these additional 'free periods!' I can certainly confirm that in this, as in so many other ways, schools have changed massively in the past 20 years!

Not only are we as busy as we have ever been this summer term at KLA, if anything the pace of change, level of expectation and sense of workload is increasing as we head into July. I have much to share, so have taken this opportunity to write to you all to share some of the many things going on here at the school.

Firstly, we had our most recent termly inspection visit from Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) during the first week back – indeed Mr Mitcheson rang me on the very first day after the half-term holiday to let me know his team were coming! The inspection was very challenging, as they always are, and I am delighted to be able to share with you all his view that we continue to be making good progress in our journey out of Special Measures. His report is attached in full, and our monitoring inspection next term will be our last – at that point we should be able to provide enough evidence to be able to move out of Special Measures. I need to pay special thanks to our brilliant staff team who all work so hard every day, and who are very much responsible for the continued improvement noted by Ofsted yet again.

We have now reached a point where we could be close to removing the label of being a Special Measures school; all 4 monitoring inspection reports detail considerable improvements we have made to the quality of teaching, marking, standards of pupils' work, leadership at all levels (including our excellent student commissioners), governance, behaviour and pupils' progress. Whilst this is all impressive, none of it would be unusual to see in most schools – high standards should be the norm, and we are not aspiring just for KLA to be 'not a Special Measures school' – your children deserve much, much better than that. We are aiming to become the best school we can possibly be and our work is aimed toward doing just that, over the longer-term.

This report from Ofsted makes clear that although we are improving rapidly, there remain a few areas of our school that need to improve even more quickly – attendance, persistent absence and lateness and the poor, disruptive, selfish behaviour of a very small minority of students are the key ones. I agree absolutely with HMI about this, and we will be increasing our focus once again on those students who have low attendance (the national average is 95% for attendance – ours currently is 93%), who are frequently late to school for no good reason and, most importantly, those students who disrupt learning. We have significant plans already in place to deal with these issues, and we welcome parents' support in implementing these if your child is identified as being a cause for concern in any of these areas.

As well as a visit from the inspectorate, it has been a pleasure this week to welcome our new Vice Principal for Teaching, Learning and Assessment to KLA. Phil Bugg started with us on Monday, and he has already been energetically making his presence felt across the school. Phil is an experienced Vice Principal, having completed three years in post at Cromer Academy, and one who brings a proven track record in school improvement that will benefit KLA. I have asked Phil to focus intently on student attitudes to learning (including our expectations of timekeeping, equipment, uniform and behaviour) in his early days with us at KLA, and I look forward to seeing the impact of his work helping to improve these for all our students. We also have increased our team of Heads of Year as the school grows, and I am delighted to be able to announce that Emma Mann has been appointed as the new Head of Year for Year 9 in September, Amy Crowe as the new lead for Year 8 and Helen McGivern joins us in July from KES to take on

year leadership for Year 10. Debbie Germaney will lead Year 7 next year, and Bridie Defty will have the critical job of shepherding Year 11 through their final year. Congratulations to all in our new Year Heads team!

Last Friday we held our final leaving assembly for our outgoing Year 11 students. Mrs Westbury led a nostalgic look back over their five years with us beautifully, and the school already feels very empty without them. They have completed the exam season exceptionally well (Year 11 attendance for the past four weeks has been 99.6%!) working so hard to prepare themselves for their exams. I also need to place on record my grateful thanks to the teaching staff here who gave up weekends, evenings, mornings, holidays and every extra minute they could find to support our students into their crucial exams. We have our fingers very much crossed for their results!

As one year group leaves KLA of course, another arrives, and this half-term sees the transition process for next year's Year 7 students move up a gear. Debbie Germaney and Laura Tea continue to lead what I believe to be an excellent transition programme, and our popularity continues to grow. We had over 200 applications this year for 180 places, and expect to be oversubscribed again for 2018-19. This growth in pupil numbers does mean that we need to find additional teaching staff to teach them all, and we have been very proactive in finding those staff for next year. We have made a number of exciting new appointments and are in the nice position of being fully-staffed with specialist teachers in every subject for September.

Finally, we have recently been through a full audit of our safeguarding work here at KLA in the past few weeks. As expected, our care and routines for safeguarding and child protection were found to be of very high-quality, but I do need to let you know of one change that has been recommended that we make for September. The audit has recommended that we **close the side entrance (on the cycle path) in the morning**. This has been identified as a key action for us to do to close a potential vulnerability in our site security to keep our children safe. Whilst I appreciate that this will add a few minutes to some students' walk to the main school entrance, we have agreed to take this advice, and from September this entrance will be closed in the morning. It will open as usual at 3 p.m. for students to leave school.

So as you can see our work at KLA does not wind-down as we approach the end of the academic year! We continue to work hard to improve our school, and we believe with this inspection report that we are heading into the final leg of our journey out of Special Measures. We have been really grateful for the support we receive from almost all parents in our work, and the role that you play in this improvement. As always, if you are happy with the work we do please do tell others (including Ofsted's parent view website!) and if not, please let us know...we do take all parental views seriously, and do all we can to ensure that our parent body, like our student body, is happy, confident and relaxed about all aspects of KLA life.

With best wishes,



Alan Fletcher