



NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY
SAMWORTH ACADEMY

Thursday, 30 January 2014

Dear Parents and Carers,

Ofsted Report, Parents' Visits and Parents' Forum

Accompanying this letter is the updated version of our latest Ofsted report, based upon the inspection visit that took place last November. The inspection team raised a large number of concerns about the academy, and I am writing to inform you of the first steps we are taking to address the weaknesses identified by Ofsted. Our aim is not just to 'improve' the academy, but to transform it entirely, into the flagship school it was designed to be. If you are interested, I would also like to invite you to come and have a look around the academy during a normal school day.

At parents' evenings we can tell you about lessons, and I can write about improvements in letters like this one, but it is not the same as seeing it with your own eyes! For that reason, we are going to start a programme of visits for groups of up to ten parents at a time. If these visits prove to be popular, we will continue to run them throughout the rest of this academic year, and make them a regular feature of the academy. Not only will this give parents an opportunity to see the academy 'in action', it also gives more opportunities for you to raise concerns and ask questions face to face.

If you would like to come for a look around the academy, please complete and return the slip at the end of this letter to your child's mentor, or to reception for the attention of Mrs Claire Sarris. Mrs Sarris will contact you directly to confirm the timing of your visit.

There will also be a second Parents' Forum, on Thursday 6th March 6.00 – 7.00 p.m., which will include presentations on the main issues raised at the first forum, which were homework, and communication between home and school.

Changes and improvements at NUSA

Achievement of Pupils

The structural changes we have made to the pastoral system and to the curriculum are all designed to improve pupils' progress and achievement.

Mentor groups are now made up of pupils from the same year group. Heads of Year will now take their year group through to the end of Year 11, in order to focus more clearly on the key events for their cohort. Your child's new mentor should have contacted you to introduce themselves as your first point of contact, and to give you an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns. If this is not the case, please feel free to contact your child's Head of Year, and they will ensure you are contacted. The timetable was re-written over the Christmas holiday, to allow the re-distribution of teachers into their specialist areas, and to allow us to address concerns raised by Key Stage 4 and 5 pupils about their options.

Quality of Teaching

We now have a rolling programme of lesson observations and training sessions for teachers. Our teachers have been working on developing the quality of their lesson planning, and observations are showing a gradual improvement in standards. Teachers have been provided with more information about the pupils they are teaching, to enable them to set more challenging work.

We have started to re-organise pupils into ability based groups. We will review all pupils' progress groups every time we collect progress data, which we send home to you on a written report. Some pupils will move groups at these times, to try to keep them in classes where the work is being set at an appropriate level.

Executive Headteacher: John Tomasevic B.A. (Hons) Econ. M.Ed. N.P.Q.H. N.L.E.

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Behaviour and Safety of Pupils

The changes to the pastoral system and the timetable are also starting to have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour, and many pupils are showing that they want to be part of the new NUSA. Unfortunately, there are still instances of unacceptable behaviour, which we will continue to challenge and sanction in a fair and balanced manner. We believe that no pupil has the right to adversely affect others' education, and we will continue to work in a determined manner until standards of behaviour are consistently high in all lessons.

Training for teachers will also focus on managing behaviour effectively, and we are working to improve the consistency of expectations, so that the same rules apply in all classrooms.

Pupils' attendance remains a concern for some pupils, and I would ask for your support in ensuring that pupils attend school as often as possible.

Leadership and Management

The entire staffing structure of the academy is being reviewed. There have been changes of leadership personnel, and roles and responsibilities. The timetable re-write enabled us to put teachers back into their specialist areas, and we have already started to recruit new teachers and leaders who will play a key role in moving the academy forwards.

We have introduced new expectations concerning the collection and the quality of assessment data, and performance management systems will hold teachers to account for the progress made by pupils in their classes.

The processes that guide and support pupils as they make choices for GCSEs, BTECs and A levels will be entirely different from previous years. All pupils will be supported by mentors, heads of year and school leaders. Pupils will be given a much more open choice of the subjects they would like to follow and every effort will be made to meet their preferences. Where it is not possible for a pupil to follow their preferred courses, they will be supported through the process of changing their options, to ensure we help them to follow their chosen career pathway.

I hope that this letter has given you a flavour of the initial steps we are taking to improve every facet of the education we provide for pupils. If you would like to come in and visit the academy during the day, please indicate your availability below by ticking any dates that you could attend:

<i>Parent request slip to visit NUSA - FAO Mrs C Sarris</i>	
Name & Contact details:	Child's name & Mentor group:
Date:	Available? ✓ or ✗
Monday 10 th February 2.00 – 3.00 p.m.	
Wednesday 12 th February 9.00 – 10.00 a.m.	
Tuesday 25 th February 2.00 – 3.00 p.m.	
Wednesday 26 th February 9.00 – 10.00 a.m.	
Friday 28 th February 9.00 – 10.00 a.m.	
Monday 3 rd March 2.00 – 3.00 p.m.	
Tuesday 4 th March 9.00 – 10.00 a.m.	
Thursday 6 th March 2.00 – 3.00 p.m.	

Yours sincerely,



**Mark Watts,
Head of School**