



Moorside High School

Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions

October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

At the end of the last academic year, I wrote to you regarding the set changes for English classes outlining the rationale for this decision. It was agreed that we would carry out a trial to ensure that this was the right decision to make. Since my letter to you, we have carried out two parent surveys, two pupil surveys and a teacher survey.

Alongside the surveys, we have measured the impact of the trial through the following measures: Learning walks which have assessed the quality of teaching, the consistency of the curriculum delivered, the level of challenge offered to pupils, as well as the behaviour for learning that is presented in the lessons. We have carried out regular book reviews from a range of abilities to assess the quality of work produced; from the books we have picked up the pupils' attitude to learning by the content and presentation, showing how much care they have put into their work. This often reflects engagement and the quality of extended writing including the level of challenge demonstrated by pupils.

We are extremely proud of how our pupils have demonstrated our school values of CARE. In particular, the resilience that they have shown in learning challenging concepts that previously they would not have been exposed to, if we had not made significant changes to our curriculum and how we approach teaching.

Having worked closely with the Senior Leadership Team, in a recent review of the faculty, Mr Davis expressed the following view on the situation:

"The English team have been a leading faculty in the drive for increased standards across Moorside High School. Colleagues have thought creatively for the benefit of all students and have been fully committed to a highly aspirational ethos that has been created within TEAM Moorside. All students will be challenged to achieve their very best potential." Mr Davis Executive Headteacher.

In conclusion to our trial, the evidence suggests that the trial has been successful and we will continue with the current mixed ability classes in Y9. Our rationale for this is as follows:

Pupil Voice

Pupils were selected from all previous groupings and across a range of abilities. The main findings were:

- 78% of pupils stated that the work in their English lessons is the right level of challenge.
- 74% of pupils stated that behaviour in their English class is good with a further 8% stating it was excellent taking this to 82%.
- 72% pupils stated that the quality of teaching in their lesson is good with a further 10% stating it was excellent.

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In order to assess the understanding of challenging concepts, pupils were asked two higher level questions as part of the survey. This was to ascertain their level of understanding based on content they have had delivered:

- 80% of pupils answered “What is a patriarchal society?” correctly.
- 58% of pupils answered “What is a meritocratic society?” correctly.

This clearly demonstrated that all pupils were able to learn challenging concepts, with over half of those involved in the survey being able to respond to the higher-level challenge question. We truly believe this is a true reflection from across the board.

Parent/Carer Survey

Parents/Carers responded to the survey using a link provided via text on a Microsoft Form. The results showed that

- 42% of parents and carers stated they were supportive of the mixed ability groupings in English.
- 16% of parents and carers stated that they had a neutral opinion of mixed ability groupings.
- 42% of parents and carers stated they were concerned about the mixed ability groupings in English.

As you can see, these results demonstrate that there was not a firm preference, but a balance of opinion.

On behalf of the English Department, we would like to thank you for your continued support, it is important to us that we do listen and respond to all stakeholder voice. Whilst we appreciate that for a small number of parents this is not the desired outcome, we feel a fair and diligent process has taken place which has enabled us to come to this conclusion.

As a faculty, we are very keen to instil a love of learning, especially creative writing and reading. We are proud of the wider curriculum activities that we have in place including; a Debate Club with Ms Wright; a Classics Club (mythology) with Miss Powell; Creative Writing with Mr Howson and Cake and Classic Literature Club with Mr Greenhalgh (this one is always the most popular for some reason!)

We are looking forward to the big book exchange in November alongside our continued work with our staff, students and parents, to ensure students leave Moorside High School with the success they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Adele Ghelichi

Director of English

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