

Message from Angela Wright, Chair of Governors

I recently met with Andrew Whittick, Assistant Head with lead responsibility for Careers Education and Guidance at Crestwood. We were reviewing the careers programme provided for all students on both campuses and checking it against the new 8-point Gatsby Benchmark introduced by the Government for all schools in January 2018. We were also talking about Andrew presenting a workshop in the Autumn to the Governing Body, in order that we fully understand our statutory responsibilities, alongside our wish for all to have the best preparation we can provide to support their progression to further and higher education, training and work.

Having spent my working life developing education and business partnerships and supporting schools and colleges to build their careers education programmes, I was confident that Andrew and the team at Crestwood were delivering a high quality programme and all the benchmarks were being met. But as we checked all 8 Benchmarks, I found myself reflecting on our Year 11s currently finishing their GCSE exams, and preparing to leave Crestwood at the end of the month. I thought about our programme of careers in years 7, 8 and 9 which is predominantly delivered through Philosophy and Ethics tutorials, integrated into the subject curriculum or delivered as inspirational enrichment activities inside and out of school, e.g. STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths). The University of Southampton and Universities Network both provide a targeted programme of aspirational workshops with the aim of encouraging all of our students to realise that higher education study is accessible by everyone.

This programme continues into Key Stage 4 but with the added benefit of a personal programme of guidance interviews undertaken by independent careers advisers employed by Hampshire Futures. Year 10 students also benefit from work experience with local employers, with many having tasters and visits to local colleges, training providers and universities with a growing emphasis on starting to think about their post 16 choices.

In Year 11, the heat is turned up as students attend post 16 provider events and careers fairs to inform their progression pathways. During this final year, they have dedicated careers education time built into their timetable, to enable them to perfect their CVs and college/apprenticeship applications, write their personal statements, hone their interview skills and secure their September places. The challenge, as we know, is that this is also the time when the heat is on as they begin their exam revision, finish their final pieces of coursework and a 100 other things that seem to be equally as important. An extremely stressful time if "time" is not managed well.

The majority of students will progress to a Sixth Form College or Tertiary College and, despite the Government's marketing of apprenticeships, only a small percentage will give this a serious consideration. A pity really because many would flourish in an apprenticeship and would enjoy earning and learning at the same time. I promise not to get on my soap-box about that topic here, but would encourage parents and students to continue to look at local labour market information to inform career plans. It is important that students are well informed about job market entry routes and requirements, apprenticeships and training opportunities as well as college and university courses. To obtain more information, you can use Careers Companion www.careercompanion.co.uk username and password (*crestcareers*) and Fast Tomato (www.fasttomato.com sign up using the code crco) which are online resources packed with information about careers and labour market information. Alternatively you might want to look at the Hampshire Futures website, the National Careers Service website or even the website for the Solent LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership.) All have information about the Hampshire jobs market and where new opportunities are available.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all students the very best of luck with their exams. I really hope you gain the grades that you are hoping for and that your time at Crestwood has been an excellent springboard to the next chapter of your book.