**Monitoring Visit**

**22nd February 2022**

Governors Attending: Jane Swettenham (JS)

 Katharine Boulton (KB)

The focus of the visit was the school’s career’s provision and the student leadership and house system. The second part of the visit focused on safeguarding and inspection of the SCR which involved only JS due to the sensitivities of matters discussed.

JS and KB met first with Carole Herman (CJH) and then with CJH and Andy Cooke (AC). The school’s career’s programme is led by Ayda Kadem (AK) who is currently on maternity leave. She is supported by administrator Lisa Utton (LU) part of whose role is to develop links with external providers. She works with local industry and local employers. AC line manages careers. AC confirmed that the school meets the Gatsby benchmarks. There is careers input from year 7 to year 13 in an age appropriate way. Governors would be observing a soft skills workshop for year 7s. This was covering areas such as team building and time management. The careers programme is in part delivered through assemblies and during form time by form tutors. Year 10 students have the opportunity to take part in a practice interview day. The school holds an annual careers fair. However it is important that students and parents engage and attend the fair to access all the support and guidance on offer. Specialist talks are also arranged for 6th Form, the most recent being on Law which involved JB and his colleagues. Unfortunately the construction talk had to be cancelled but will be rearranged. The year 11 conference is an excellent way of providing students with tailored support. The higher education conference will also be taking place again following its cancellation caused by the pandemic. Year 12 work experience is now back up and running. Employer engagement is key but many smaller and medium size companies do not always have the resources to support.

The expectations from OFSTED are attached to this note. All schools are expected to provide effective careers information, education, advice and guidance. There are eight Gatsby benchmarks. Some are quite similar to each other and there is a degree of overlap. They include for example, the provision of a stable careers programme, addressing the needs of each pupil, experiences of the workplaces and encounters with further and higher education. AK and LU have done all they can to keep the programme running as effectively as possible despite the challenges of the pandemic. Year 11 is the current focus. The school draws on advice from the Essex careers advisor. It was noted that a new link governor for careers would need to be appointed. JS confirmed that she would address this. There was a discussion of how best to use alumni to support and enrich our offer further. The PE department have strong links with alumni which the school has benefitted from previously. CJH confirmed that Matt Sheriff is also very good at this. It is important that the careers programme is delivered in an age appropriate way. The skills workshop sessions for year 7s are delivered two class groups at a time to keep the numbers manageable and ensure that all students are engaging.

Governors observed the skills workshop in progress. It is run by Access, an initiative of Brentwood Borough Council and is free. The students were given advice on team building, leadership, the importance of communication and CV building. Students were engaged, answering questions and fully immersed in the activities.

Governors then met with Jamie Rigg (JR) and Jess Matthews (JM), house co-ordinator and four members of the student leadership team. We were updated on the progress of the new house system and listened to individual presentations from the students. We watched a video that had been put together by students explaining the new house system. JR explained that the system is built upon the 3Rs - the pillars of behaviour. (respect, responsibility and ready to learn ) and the 3 Cs representing our cultural beliefs (challenge, contribution and collaboration). The student leadership and House system are an extension of this. Marcie explained that students had applied for the roles and been interviewed. The Head of House is a 6th form position. KS 3 has house captains and year 10 House Leaders. All students spoke of how they felt a part of the house system and felt the new model was much better. This was because it was put together in collaboration with students. They had chosen the names of the four new houses which they felt better represented their values now. They felt the new house system was an effective part of student voice. Timi felt it had made him more confident speaking in public. All students agreed that taking on the positions of house leader had made them more self-confident. The students described the range of house activities which included sports and performing arts activities and a big quiz. There is also charity fundraising with each House choosing which charity to support. Leila and Katie spoke of how the house system encouraged competition. CJH invited the students to be part of the student panel for the appointment of her successor, a request that was met with enthusiasm. Governors thanked students for their time.

Further discussion continued with JR and JM. JR confirmed that for one student leader the positive impact had been remarkable in terms of confidence and resilience. This was an example of impact that could not be seen through data. JR confirmed that they would continue to work upon fully embedding the house system and encouraging more staff involvement.

JS and KB then fed back to CJH. Governors were impressed with the comprehensive nature of the careers programme and were pleased to be able to speak to students who were impressive and a credit to the school. It was clear that the new house system was popular with students and was playing an important role in not only supporting the school’s culture and behavioural pillars but was developing students’ leadership skills.

JS checked the SCR with KW. No concerns.

JS then met with CJH and DJB to discuss safeguarding. JS attended staff safeguarding training session.