

Dear Parents and Carers

I have now had a half term to settle into my role as Principal here at Outwood Academy Hemsworth and I wanted to take the time to write to you as I would like to share my initial observations. Prior to joining the Academy, I was told that the team of staff at the Academy were strong and that they worked extremely hard in order to support all of the students every day, which indeed makes them very special and this ethos has been abundantly clear to me from day one.

During my short time as Principal I have had the privilege of being able to visit many of the lessons taking place each day throughout the Academy and I am delighted to have seen lots of fantastic learning taking place across all subjects. Our teachers are working hard to ensure that students are engaged in their lessons and more importantly making good progress in their learning. Alongside this the Academy's Pastoral, Safeguarding and Inclusion Teams are also working hard to support students in attending more regularly, helping them to manage their behaviour effectively and removing any barriers to enable students to access their learning but most importantly ensuring that they are kept safe and are happy to be in the Academy.

As parents and carers, you can be proud of how well the students have represented both the Academy and their families. They have been welcoming to me as the new Principal and have been eager to discuss what they feel is going well and also how they would like to see the Academy develop and improve. Through visiting lessons and being out and about around the Academy, I have seen first-hand how engaged students are in their lessons and how hard they are working to make progress and be successful, which is fantastic. This is especially evident in the work ethic of our students in Year 11 who are busy preparing for their GCSE exams this year. They have shown tremendous focus and drive in their learning and this has been commented on by a wide range of Academy staff. Beyond lessons it has been great seeing their commitment to their success by attending after Academy intervention sessions, both in person and via online tutoring as well as attending the half term Academy extra booster sessions. Attendees have worked hard during these sessions in order to maximise their learning and taken advantage of the opportunities staff offered during this time.

As with every school there are things that we need to work harder on to improve further. The overall attendance of the Academy is not strong enough and at the end of the last term the Academy finished at just below 89%, this is around 2% below the National Average which is 91% and is nowhere near the pre-covid average of 95%. I know that Mr Allington and the attendance team are working very hard to improve this and we will be in touch in the coming weeks to share our plans for further improvement with you. There will be a continued focus on embedding the basic expectations set out by the Academy which include being punctual, wearing the Academy uniform correctly and students ensuring that they always have the right equipment with them, showing that they are ready to learn from the outset.

Unfortunately, at times our students are not meeting the high expectations that we believe parents and carers would want the Academy to set for all, as we prepare them for a life beyond the Academy. By ensuring that these basic principles are in place we feel that our students will have the opportunity to thrive both in and outside of lessons and these will be a key focus throughout the coming half term and beyond.

Throughout this first half term I have been impressed by many aspects of the provision for students here at the Academy. As I joined Outwood Academy Hemsworth I was told that it was a special place

to work and that it very quickly becomes a place where you feel privileged to be a part of, this is borne out by the number of staff who have joined and stayed at the Academy for a number of years.

There will always be areas that we want to be better and improve and as a team we will strive to achieve this. I believe that the students here at Outwood Academy Hemsworth are already receiving a good education, this is particularly true in their lessons and also through the additional learning opportunities they are offered.

I hope that in the coming half term I will have the opportunity to meet with many more parents and members of the Academy community as we continue to work together to build our Academy into one that we can all be proud of and where our students thrive and achieve exceptional outcomes.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Pape', written in a cursive style.

Mr J Pape
Principal