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Ofsted—it's a 'first' for Coulsdon Sixth Form College

- Do you have any news or a forthcoming event which would be of interest to S7 colleagues? Contact Sharon Kemp at s7enquiries@gmail.com and we will add it to the next newsletter and the S7 website.

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Following the “remarkable transformation” reported by Ofsted in November, Coulsdon Sixth Form College has done it again - but this time it's one for the record books. A team from the Government watchdog undertook a full inspection of the College between the 25th and 28th February. The inspection covered all aspects of the College's provision including the quality of teaching and learning (especially focussing on English, Mathematics and Science), students' results and the effectiveness of leadership and management.



The astounding success, since the take-over by Reigate College in March last year, has now been further endorsed by a “first” from Ofsted inspectors. Steve Oxlade, Executive Principal of the Reigate and Coulsdon College Federation explained: “No school or College has ever improved so much, so quickly and been awarded such high grades in a full inspection. Ofsted was incredibly thorough, observing almost every teacher, and has now officially not only declared the College out of special measures but concluded that quality is so good that they will be monitoring us from afar from now on, just as they do at Reigate.”

Brett Freeman, the new Principal at Coulsdon since January, added: “Ofsted has seen what we have achieved and recognised that this is something quite unique; I have to tip my hat to them because they scrutinised everything that we do. I was especially pleased that teaching was praised so highly with many teachers graded *outstanding* by the inspectors. We've all worked so hard to achieve this and now we can say with absolute confidence that there is nowhere else locally that provides the range of courses at the quality we guarantee at Coulsdon.”



Brett Freeman

The report, now published, described the College's students as behaving with “*unfailing courtesy*” and describes leaders and managers as being “*highly effective in transforming the ethos of the College, raising aspirations and promoting high standards*”. The grades awarded were all “good” with the exception of *outcomes for learners* – and even this is no longer a cause for concern as exam results this coming summer are predicted to be excellent.

So how did the College do it? Steve Oxlade reflects on a year at Coulsdon: “How did we do it? Well that's a question the Department of Education, Ofsted and just about every other College in the country is asking me at the moment. It was just over a year ago that I first set foot in the College and it was immediately apparent that we needed to make substantial changes. The staff have been magnificent and the students are delightful but they had both lost their way and needed re focussing on the things that really matter. Running a successful College is really quite simple; there are only three things you have to get right - teaching, systems and relationships; everything flows from these three fundamentals. We tackled all three at once using the Reigate College blueprint. The final piece of the jigsaw was Brett Freeman agreeing to join us as Principal. Brett has the drive and dedication to now take us to where we belong – and that is the very top. This is the only sixth form in the whole borough that offers a broad enough curriculum to attract aspiring doctors, dentists, vets and lawyers as well as nurses, travel agents and sports therapists – and just about everything in between! We use one word to describe our approach to being the best – *relentless* – and it has served us well, but this is just the beginning.”



Steve Oxlade



S7 SUPPORT STAFF CONFERENCE 2014: 7th JULY



We are delighted to be able to offer another Support Staff Conference this year.

This will be on Monday July 7th at Collyer's in Horsham.

The day will consist of an address from David Adelman, the Chair of the Consortium, followed by two workshops of your choice and then meetings of people with similar positions in the colleges in the afternoon.



We have received almost 140 registrations and are looking forward to meeting colleagues on what is certain to be a fantastic day.

A word from the S7 Manager

This has been another successful year for S7 and the addition of Collyer's and Coulsdon College has been a very welcome breath of fresh air for us. We were all delighted with Coulsdon's OFSTED result and as a group of 7 very successful colleges we continue to be a shining light in the 16-19 education system.

The Leadership Programme has run for the 12th time, this year. We can now say that the majority of Heads of Department in all the colleges have been through this programme. The addition of a Senior Leadership programme was somewhat of an experiment originally, but the evaluations have been so positive, with several of the previous delegates going on to get Senior Management posts recently, that we are embarking on a third year of the programme in June. Paul Rispoli, the retired Principal of Reigate College, has been instrumental in the devising of this programme and we are indebted to him for his insights and experience.

Several courses have been oversubscribed this year and we are beginning to have to run more than one of some training days, which is excellent. There have been welcome additions to the portfolio, such as Mental Health First Aid training for teachers, Grade One lesson training and Proachieve training.

The meetings continue to be received as valuable and informative at all levels and in all areas, and we are pleased to be able to offer another Support Staff Conference this year. David Adelman is stepping down as the Chair of S7 at the end of this academic year. We have all benefitted enormously from his experience and knowledge of the Sixth Form College sector and his utter belief in the S7 brand, and we are extremely grateful for his hard work as Chair, over the last three years.

Sharon and I are now looking forward to working with Dan Dean, the Principal of Esher College, who will be taking over the role in September.

Anna Loveday, S7 Consortium Manager



Current S7 meeting groups:

- ◆ Principals
- ◆ Vice/Assistant Principals
- ◆ Staff Development Managers
- ◆ Student Services Managers
- ◆ Equality and Diversity
- ◆ Finance Directors
- ◆ Learning Support Managers
- ◆ Admissions
- ◆ Adult Education
- ◆ Attendance Officers
- ◆ Bursary Administrators
- ◆ Careers/Student Progression
- ◆ Clerks to Governors
- ◆ ESOL Group
- ◆ Exam Officers
- ◆ IT Managers
- ◆ Learning Facilitators
- ◆ LRC Managers
- ◆ Marketing Group
- ◆ MIS Managers
- ◆ Personnel/HR Group
- ◆ Receptionists



S7 in the Community — Volunteering Reading Scheme by Jon Carr, HoD History & Politics, Godalming College

Godalming College's Reading Scheme, now in its 5th year, provides a great example of how our students can engage with and help make a difference in their local communities.

Modelled on a similar nationwide scheme Godalming's programme places students in one of five partner infant schools. There, once a week and for two terms, the students work with a small group of pupils who need extra help with their reading. The scheme was conceived for the mutual benefit of college students, local infant school students and to facilitate a more socially cohesive learning community across the age groups in Godalming. When so much of our time at college is spent in such qualification-focused ways it was also designed to facilitate the development of 'soft skills'. Our partner schools are all within walking distance so that any college student can volunteer. We arrange slots which dovetail with availability on their timetable so it doesn't impact their studies.



With around 60 students volunteering this year and four members of staff involved in running the project the scheme is firmly embedded into the culture of both the college and the schools we work alongside. We hope that we're set to make a long-term difference to the lives of local learners in our community. Early evidence from participants suggests that's just what is happening.

The success of the scheme is exemplified by testimony from many of our excellent volunteers. They remark on the enthusiasm they're igniting in the learners and their surprise at becoming such powerful role models. One student volunteering at Busbridge Junior School says, *"Some of the children clearly reacted to working with someone who was recognisably closer to their age. Several of them were willing to talk to me as if I was one of their friends, and I think this boosted their confidence when reading. I had the 'cleverness' of their teacher, but without being 'big and intimidating' so they felt more comfortable relaxing and reading to me."*

Another volunteer at Green Oak remarked on what she got out of volunteering, *"I didn't want to leave my Otters after they had achieved so much in a year. Reading with them became a part of my week and I will never forget their friendship or the memories of my year with them."*

There is also emerging evidence that the scheme is playing a role in expanding the horizons of both sets of participants in the scheme. A volunteer at Moss Lane School reports that, *"when I told them I was a college student, several were excited about the prospect of going and learning the things I had told them about!"*

As for the volunteers, many have commented that it provides a, *'great way to start volunteering,'* and that it has helped them to realise they can make a difference in their local communities. Some even comment that they, in turn, take encouragement from the younger students! One volunteer at Moss Lane said, *'the perseverance shown by the readers in learning a new and unfamiliar skill was quite inspiring.'*





S7 Careers — promotion to Assistant Principal by Mike Finn, Assistant Principal Woking College



Mike joined Woking College as Assistant Principal (Pastoral) in January 2014 having been at Reigate College previously since 2006. Mike started his educational career at that time as an NQT and completed the S7 NQT programme, known as the Teachers' Toolkit Training programme. He went on to work in various curriculum and pastoral management roles until his final role at Reigate as Faculty Director for pastoral care. Alongside this, Mike studied a part time MA in education management.

Of his new role Mike says, 'I am very excited to be joining Woking College as Assistant Principal. There is a real buzz about the place! I look forward to working with Martin and the team to keep moving the college forward through a period of continuously improving results, growth and campus development. I had a very happy eight years at Reigate College - progressing from NQT to Faculty Director. Steve and the team were incredibly supportive and I will always be thankful for the opportunities they afforded me.

I have now completed my first term in the post. I am lucky to be working with such a fantastic team, who have been very patient whilst I learnt the ropes! I feel that progressing my career within S7 makes such a leap much more comfortable. I have very much appreciated the support of other S7 Assistant Principals and the 'Student Services Managers' group, where we discuss strategies to best support, safeguard and manage learners.'

S7 Visits and Exchanges Programme

With 7 colleges belonging to the Consortium you are not alone. You might wonder how similar college departments deal with a particular spec. You may be interested in a system or process used at another college. In S7 it is simple to arrange a visit. Send an email with your query to Sharon Kemp (s7enquiries@gmail.com) and we will get the ball rolling, put you in touch with the relevant people and stay in touch with you along the way.



The feedback from visits to other colleges is always overwhelmingly positive. Here is a recent note following a visit from Woking to Esher:

"It was such a valuable experience and Becky was extremely helpful, supportive and organised resources for me to take away with me. It has made me really grateful for the links we are able to form with other colleges!" Lorna, Woking College





We would like to thank the following colleagues for contributing to this issue of the S7 newsletter:

- ◆ Coulsdon College
- ◆ Jon Carr, Godalming
- ◆ Mike Finn, Woking

Any value to S7 courses? Let the feedback decide.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the Teachers Toolkit days and have recommended other fresh teachers from Collyer's to do the same."
Rebecca, Collyer's, Teachers' Toolkit Training

"Relevant and interactive, whilst not intimidating."
Taken from New HoDs' Training evaluations

"This is the first training course I have attended in nearly ten years as a teacher that has been genuinely useful for my career aspirations."
Taken from Aspiring HoDs' Training evaluations

"Thank you so much for the excellent training you put on today. It really was useful - infinitely more so than any "paid for" training I have been on."
Matt, Woking, Aspiring HoDs' Training

Summer Term S7 Courses and Events

- 21st May—Senior Managers' Day
- 5th and 6th June—Senior Leadership Programme 2014/15 Days 1 and 2
- 26th June—Leadership Programme 2014 Final Day
- 3rd July—Student Council/Union Day 2014
- 4th July—Grade One Lesson Training with Bradley Lightbody
- 7th July—Support Staff Conference 2014
- 8th July—ProAchieve Training

A final note from the Chair

The new S7 with seven rather than five colleges is working very well. Staff from both Collyer's and Coulsdon are fully involved in S7 events and hopefully benefitting from and contributing to the collective experience of our different sixth form colleges. As ever there is a lot going on as this newsletter testifies. In particular, another Senior Leadership programme starts this term and we have a Support Staff Conference in July. Sixth form colleges are very much under the cosh at the moment with steep cuts in funding and curriculum reforms to A level and GCSE. Working together in a consortium provides a very good opportunity to share ideas and plans on how to cope with these challenges and it also provides mutual shoulders to cry on.

I will be standing down as Chair of S7 next year and Dan Dean, Principal of Esher College, will take over. Also, Jackie Johnston, Principal of Collyer's, will retire at the end of the year and Sally Bromley, who has worked as Vice and Deputy Principal at various colleges including BHASVIC in Brighton will be the new Principal. We wish Jackie the very best in her retirement.

I am sure that next year will see S7 continue to thrive as an organisation.

David Adelman, Chair of S7

