The King's Academy – Context (September 2019)

Overview

Since its opening in 2003 as the second 11-19 school in the, now six-strong, Emmanuel Schools Foundation, The King's Academy has made exceptional provision for students in Coulby Newham and the surrounding areas of south Middlesbrough. The vision of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation is to provide excellence in academic achievement for students of all abilities within a biblical Christian framework that allows for personal, spiritual, moral and social development. Provision is fully inclusive with a highly diverse intake, valuing all students and staff equally.

Of great importance for our students is that they would seek truth (finding answers to their big questions about identity, life and its purpose) and develop excellent characters (learning about ethical decision-making, and serving others). We apply Christ's teaching of servant leadership, and the well-known motto of 'serve to lead', as our model and guide.

The school is very popular with parents and is very heavily oversubscribed, leading to the increase in intake whereby 240 students have been admitted into Year 7 since 2018. Admissions criteria recognise the value to the *whole* school of admitting children of staff who have worked at the Academy for at least two years, or sooner where a member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

Ofsted has consistently graded the Academy as a 'good' school in all four inspections since opening, including most recently in January 2017. Students' achievements in 2018 were excellent at A-level, with 90% of students gaining places at their first-choice universities and half of these being with Russell Group institutions. At GCSE, and despite a cohort with high levels of disadvantage and SEND, progress was around the national average, showing highly significant year-on-year improvement across every measure. 2018 GCSE thresholds were the highest in the Academy's 15 year history with over two-thirds of students gaining 4+ in English and Maths GCSEs, and nearly half gaining 5+ in both subjects.

The school's growing population of 1,200 students includes 5-10% who are supported through a specialist SEN resource base being Deaf and Hearing Impairment (DHI), Visual Impairment (VI) and Higher Learning Needs (HLN). The proportion of students supported with a Statement of Special Educational Need or EHCP is around triple the national average, with students being exceptionally well integrated into mainstream provision. The proportion of students who are disadvantaged, and therefore eligible for Pupil Premium is above national average at around 40%. Whilst identifying and addressing students' difficulties, there is an overwhelmingly pervasive culture of the highest expectations of all students. A programme of continuous investment and improvement in the infrastructure and facilities means that the 'built environment' reinforces the message of high quality and respect to students and staff.

Curriculum and Timetable

The Academy operates setting for all core subjects. English, Mathematics and Science lessons account for approximately 50% of curriculum time, each with time varying slightly in each Key Stage, and Religious Studies lessons are part of the compulsory curriculum.

Students are able to choose from a broad range of GCSE and A Level subjects (and vocational equivalents) for study at Key Stages 4 and 5 respectively, with a highly personalised options process operating for each student. Courses such as the Prince's Trust Achieve provide well for the most vulnerable learners. The school has been increasing the offer of vocational courses, now with a particular focus on the Sixth Form. A programme of study in the Sixth Form for lower ability students, and in particular those from the SEND resource bases, is under construction.

Students all study for 29 x 50 minute periods per week, with the day starting for students with their form tutors at 8:30am. Students finish at 3:40pm except on Fridays which has a 2:50pm end to the school day followed by 50 minutes of either staff training or departmental meeting / training time – these alternating fortnightly.

Students make GCSE course choices during Year 8, which they then refine later in Year 9 by deselecting one option and with the vast majority being expected to select History and/or Geography. All students who are able to study German or French are expected to do so.

In all year groups students follow a programme of Tutor Reflections (covering ethical questions around the week's focus, and PSHCE topics). A programme of Daily Reading Time (5 x 20mins / week) is in place for students in all year groups. Where appropriate, this is supported by additional phonics sessions, a Reciprocal Reading Programme, a bespoke reading engagement and reading recovery programme as well as Accelerated Reader.

For students with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs, the curriculum model allows students to access resourced provision as well as mainstream lessons. All students with additional needs have access to a counsellor (contracted by the Academy) and to in-school study support.

Extra-curricular provision is significant, with all students given opportunities to take part in academic, sporting, drama, music and arts based activities, either through Academy or House representation. The House system allows for some twenty-four competitions over the course of the year in a range of sporting, artistic and academic activities. Vulnerable students are given additional opportunities to help build co-operative skills and self-esteem. A full programme of sporting fixtures takes place in football, hockey, and netball, with a growing number of fixtures in rugby and athletics. Sportsability sessions are well attended each week by both disabled and able-bodied students. Duke of Edinburgh programmes at levels (Bronze – Gold) are run annually, and we are also delighted to have been selected as one of only twenty schools nationally to have a Royal Marines CCF unit, which is over-subscribed in the demand for places from our students.