

Rugby Free Secondary School: Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) - 2024/2025 Academic Year

Autumn Term: September 2024 - December 2024

Context 2024-25:

Rugby Free Secondary School is part of a four-school Academy Trust (Triumph Learning Trust), alongside its sister school, Rugby Free Primary School, Courthouse Green Primary School, and Alderman's Green Primary School.

Rugby Free Secondary School opened in 2016 in a derelict Primary School building a few metres down the road from its current building. Initially, the school opened with a STEMM ideology, with the original Headteacher placing high value in Music and the Arts, and advertising the school as a viable alternative to the two Grammar schools in the area, without the need to pass the 11+ examination. In 2019, the school received an 'Inadequate' judgement in all four Inspection areas, with key feedback being as follows:

- There is too much variability between teachers and departments.
- Teachers do not plan lessons consistently well to meet the needs and abilities of pupils, especially the middle-ability pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct are often too low.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching has lacked precision and accuracy.
- Teachers do not routinely apply school policies.

This Ofsted Inspection precipitated a change in Headteacher and Senior Leadership, and the school moved into its new and current building in 2020, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Following successful monitoring visits and an excellent Remote Education Inspection, the school was graded 'Good' in all areas in June 2021, being one of the few schools in the country to make the double-jump from 'Inadequate' to 'Good'. This Ofsted report stated the following:

- There is an ambition and complexity to the curriculum which allows students to achieve well.
- The curriculum is well-planned, well-sequenced, and largely well-implemented.
- HPA and MPA students know more, remember more, and can do more. Teaching is effective in helping to support these groups.
- The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of individual students. A consistently good quality of questioning was a key facet of this.
- There were clear examples of students working in greater depth, so that students arrive at the same end-point, but in different ways.

In September 2021, the school's Sixth Form opened its doors to a small number of Year 12 students on a combination of A Level, Vocational and Level 2 pathways.

In February 2023, the current Headteacher took charge, and a new Senior Leadership Team was formed, following the departure of the previous Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. The school's reputation continues to go from strength-to-strength in the local community, with over 600 applications from Year 6 students (222 first choices, 37 appeals) and 338 applications to Sixth Form. These are the highest numbers on record since the school's inception. In the 2024-25 academic year, this was further supported by a record 1138 visiting the school for Main School Open Evening, and 633 visiting the Sixth Form for Sixth Form Open Evening.

In recent times, the school's demographic has changed somewhat, with some of this due to geographical factors. As the school has increased in popularity, the school takes in more students from Rugby, and less from Daventry and the surrounding villages such as Wolston, Weedon and Flore. This has changed the profile of student intake, with nearly 60% of the school's students experiencing at least one form of deprivation, whilst 37% of students live within areas that have higher-than-average levels of crime. The school also has a higher-than-average number of students with SEND needs, EAL needs and students who are eligible for Free School Meals. As a direct consequence of the school's excellent reputation for SEND provision, an SRP (Specialist

Resource Provision - Communication & Interaction) was opened in September 2023 in conjunction with the Local Authority. This provision was further extended in September 2024, and now hosts 20 students across three classrooms, whilst a smaller SEMH SRP was opened in September 2025, hosting eight students.

Due to the school's popularity, a current challenge relates to space. The last two academic years have seen considerable growth in the Sixth Form; as a result, Trust Leaders are in discussions with the Local Authority regarding the possibility of a new Sixth Form block in order to ease some of these spacial pressures.

In a recent parents and carers survey (July 2024 - 295 respondents), stakeholders demonstrated their pleasure with the school, with the key headlines being as follows:

- My child is happy at this school: 86%
- My child feels safe at this school: 89%
- My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively: 83% (including no bullying)
- The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved: 80%
- There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school: 90%
- The school lets me know how my child is doing: 84%
- My child does well at this school: 83%
- My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school: 90%
- I would recommend this school to another parent/carers: 89%

In addition to this, our Year 5 Open Morning in July 2024 sold out (400 tickets) within 48 hours, whilst our Open Morning Tours in September 2024 also saw another 120 prospective students, parents and carers visit the school.



Quality of Education 2024-25:

Intent:

The curriculum at RFSS allows teachers to deliver their subject content in depth allowing for the acquisition of knowledge and skills across all subjects offered at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. We operate a two-and-three-quarter year Key Stage 3, with the final term of Year 9 given over to students beginning GCSE studies, in order to take into account the EEF's research into the Covid-19 pandemic, which outlined that the West Midlands region is classified as being a 'highly affected' area. Whilst we recognise that this research may now be a little outdated, the levels of stakeholder satisfaction, and the impact this has had on outcomes, means we have maintained this.

The aim of the curriculum is to develop students' knowledge, skills and understanding to apply what students know, remember, and can do with increasing fluency and collaboration whilst developing personal qualities reflected in our school values, linked to them being 'set for life'. Literacy is at the heart of what we do, as we seek to develop students who are confident readers, writers and orators.

All students follow the National Curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, with 13 qualifications across Key Stage 3, and 27 qualifications across Key Stage 4. Recently, we have widened our curriculum offer to include both French (from Year 7), Hospitality and Catering (Year 9 Option) and Psychology (Year 9 Options), following feedback from students, parents and carers. At Key Stage 4, Business Studies, Statistics and Computer Science have also been introduced in recent years, due to changes in context and stakeholder voice. At Key Stage 5, students can choose from 29 qualifications (inclusive of English and Maths Level 2 Resits), with 66% of this offer being within an academic pathway, and 33% being in a vocational pathway. We also offer EPQ for all students, and an opportunity for some students to undertake GCSE resits in English Language and Mathematics.

As a consequence, 90% of parents and carers feel that the subject range on offer within the Main School and Sixth Form at RFSS is good.

Research into national averages re: subject time allocation has led to an increase in time for Humanities in particular (the new Religious Studies and the WCC SACRE being instrumental in this), whilst PSHE is now taught by tutors, in order to support the profile of the subject, positive relationships and effectiveness. This has had a positive impact, as noted by our external School Improvement Adviser in a recent external review.

From Year 9, curriculum pathways are implemented through the Options process. This means that some students undertake one less option than their counterparts. This is done in conjunction with parents and carers. One key focus area is to ensure the provision these students receive allows them to access their other studies, in terms of literacy, numeracy and careers provision. However, the number of students in this pathway is slowly reducing, as the 'achievement for all' culture develops further.

Due to an increasing number of EAL students and the continuation of a rise in students with higher SEND needs, bespoke pathways are utilised to ensure that students select option subjects that best fit their needs and skillset for adulthood, in order to ensure that our curriculum offer is both ambitious and gives all students the knowledge and cultural capital that they need to be 'Set for Life'.

All subject areas have reviewed and adapted their curriculum intent using a variety of contextual information such as the Key Stage 2 question level analysis, whilst using research and contextual data from our 'Beyond the School Gates' report and the Educational Endowment Foundation in order to ensure that the curriculum fits the needs of our students, and our community, at a time in which students' socio-economic profile is changing fluidly. Work is ongoing to ensure that sequential links between KS2 and KS3 are explored and embedded further, with our colleagues at RFPS, CGPS and AGPS.

The curriculum is reviewed termly (three times per year), with Directors of Learning making amendments based on the key learning that students can know, remember and do, and the key learning that they need to revisit. Other amendments take place in response to information released by the Department for Education, Ofqual, and/or examination boards, with the current focus being on the Sixth Form Qualifications reform, which is set to impact on our subject offer. This holistic approach has led to a refinement of the curriculum documents used for 2024-2025, in order to show the development and sequencing of knowledge and skills across a seven-year period, from Year 7 through to Year 13.

With regards to Key Stage 5, the curriculum offer has provided continuity from the previous academic year. There are different pathways available for students who have differing levels of attainment upon entry. Entry requirements have been more stringent this year than in recent years, for the wide-range of subjects we offer. The average points score on entry is rising, with the current Year 12 group being the highest APS on entry in the history of the Sixth Form.

Implementation:

Most teachers 'present subject matter clearly', when delivering subject content. Evidence from Deep Dives, Learning Walks, Work Scrutiny, and external reviews show that 72% of implementation is typically 'Secure' or better. One area of focus is to ensure that Year 7 and Year 8 students in particular, have access to our most effective practitioners, whilst assessment for and of learning is a key area for focus across all Key Stages - there has been a large body of work that has gone into this. More work is required on ensuring challenge for all, particularly HPA students. The appointment of a new HPA Lead (now within SLT) is key to this.

A waded approach to intervention for staff who need additional support was introduced in September 2024, and there are currently two members of staff receiving informal support following identification in Quality Assurance episodes. These research-based bespoke CPD methods for key staff who are not always typically secure in their teaching will ensure that these members of staff receive a deeper and more varied package of support, along with Walkthrus support and signposted blogs and articles.

A key area of focus is ensuring effective implementation equates to high-quality outcomes, particularly at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Much like the national picture, Disadvantaged, SEND and Males are all focus sub-groups. Separate Year 11 and Year 13 action plans are in place to ensure that there is a laser-focus on these two year groups. However, Key Stage 3 is the key to foundational knowledge that supports GCSE and A Level outcomes, and work on assessment protocols, linked to curriculum end-points, is already having significant impact.

Students are assessed through an assessment system that has been developed to summatively assess 'how pupils have developed detailed knowledge and skills across their curriculum studies,' and how successfully this has been 'committed to long-term memory.' The assessment process incorporates both academic and pastoral interventions as a consequence of assessment data, so that those students who are 'not ready for their next stage' receive appropriate interventions in both facets. Following each assessment, there is a set of criteria for different stakeholders to implement and undertake. As a result, 83% of parents and carers feel their child does well at RFSS.

In terms of both intent and implementation, we recognise that a laser focused approach to literacy is essential, in line with the EEF's post-pandemic research, that states: 'Literacy in particular is a key issue, with decoding and fluency being the two central issues. Methods for the consistent teaching of reading, writing and oracy are required.' We have ensured that Literacy is a key facet of our Teaching and Learning policy, but also our Quality Assurance processes.

Deep Dives from show that implementation is effective in Maths, English, History, ADT, Digital Communications, Drama, Social Sciences and Health & Social Care. Science is improving, and the new curriculum is starting to bear fruit. Geography is also a subject that requires additional work, and a Lead Practitioner has been appointed in this area in order to raise standards following the departure of the previous Subject Lead for Geography - again, the School Improvement Adviser noted the positive change in a recent visit.

Whilst teaching is often 'designed to help pupils to remember long-term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas,' a significant area of focus is about ensuring that all students are resilient, self-regulating learners, and are equipped with strategies about how to learn, and understand how to accelerate their own learning. This is particularly pertinent at Key Stage 3, with the EEF stating: 'Year 7 and Year 8 students are not 'secondary ready' in terms of both readiness for learning and attitudes towards learning.' A new assembly and tutor time programme was designed for 2024-25, taking into account this research, and the voice of staff and students.

One other priority area is home learning provision, which has received mixed feedback through stakeholder voice. Senior Leaders have worked with the PCAB to formulate homework provision plans, and this is an area of focus for this year.

The final focus for the 2024-25 academic year is to continue to build on our professional development offer, in order to ensure that staff have the expertise, experiences and time in order to ensure that these methods and strategies become commonplace within the classroom. An amendment has been made to the PD strategy for this year, with CPD sessions having a more concise input from leaders, whilst there is more focus on subject pedagogy. Good practice is also shared weekly by different members of staff through the weekly Teaching and Learning briefing session, which takes place every Wednesday morning.



Behaviour & Attitudes 2024-25:

Students are 'committed to their learning', and their attitudes towards school are largely positive, with students equipped with some of the tools to enable them to study effectively. Where attitudes are not as positive, much of this is down to 'students starting Secondary school whilst behind mostly in Maths and Reading' (EEF), and targeted support is put in place through both academic and pastoral lenses. Relationships are at the heart of everything we do here, which is underpinned by our tagline of 'Relationships Start With You' and the restorative and trauma-informed approaches (TIAAS) we have adopted.

Good work and exceptional work-ethic linked to the school values is celebrated weekly, through assemblies and a dedicated slot with the Headteacher, who meets with these students to celebrate their success. In addition to this, the RFSS blog and social media channel also celebrates excellent work, and outlines what has taken place at the school in recent times. Termly Rewards Assemblies with subject and pastoral rewards also take place, with students being praised for excellence from their relative starting point.

Data shows that there are gaps evident with specific sub-groups, where there appears to be lower levels of motivation. On average, SEND and Pupil Premium have around 2% less positive points than their non-SEND and non-PP counterparts. Where aspirations are lower, this is often linked to careers and a lack of knowledge in terms of what students are wanting to achieve upon leaving school. There is a particular focus on the difference between male and female attitudes to learning and aspirations, with boys' achievement groups Disadvantaged students and SEND students are prioritised when careers interviews take place as a consequence of this. On the whole, 81% of parents and carers believe the school has high expectations of our students, both inside and outside of the classroom. However, work needs to be done to enhance the aspirations of both students and parents/carers, with several content to ensure that they achieve 'what is needed', as opposed to what their true potential is.

Whilst suspensions have risen over the course of the previous academic year (in line with the national picture), we are below the national average on both a monthly and yearly basis. In 2023-24, our suspension rate was the lowest of the comprehensive schools within Rugby, whilst our PEX number (2) was also below all other comprehensive schools in Rugby. We believe this is down to the relationships that exist within the school community, and due to our restorative approach. On the whole, students' 'attitude to their learning are positive', and this is reflected by 80% of parents and carers recognising that the school ensures students behave well. In addition to this, 81% of parents and carers believe that students consistently embody the values of the school. It is these approaches that meant that we were recognised by the Department for Education in September 2024, who visited the school to recognise us a beacon of good practice in this area.

Attendance has fluctuated, in line with the national picture, and we have begun to work with Inclusive Attendance, who are supporting us in strategies to raise attendance. We have also appointed a new Senior Attendance Champion to support with this work. However, students who are EBSA have reduced from 19 to 11, which foregrounds the success of Quality of Education and Behaviour & Attitudes strategies working symbiotically to ensure that these students are having needs met more consistently in classrooms, and through interventions and timetable adjustments. Much of this is due to the 'positive and respectful culture' that has been cultivated between students and staff, along with targeted support through the attendance, Student Support and SEMH teams. Quality Assurance and CPD has taken place around the quality and effectiveness of Tutor Time, and expectations, and some staff are receiving bespoke support, as this is an area intrinsically linked to attendance.

The vast majority of students are on time for school and on time to lessons. Punctuality is monitored by the attendance officer who signs in students who are late. We have recently introduced a punctuality policy (4 and Door), which has reduced lateness to lessons by around 50%.

There is a positive environment within school, centred on our school values, in which peer on peer abuse is not tolerated. Instances of aggression, discrimination and derogatory language are dealt

with quickly and effectively. Bullying is treated as a safeguarding issue and investigated by DSLs and Heads of Year. 83% of parents and carers are satisfied with either bullying not taking place, or having it dealt with quickly and effectively.

Feedback from student and parent surveys also highlighted the fact that students are aware of how to access help, how to identify if bullying has occurred and feel that it had been dealt with appropriately. The PSHE programme includes a unit for all year groups on various types of bullying, the impact of it and how to access support. Additionally, there has been a unit added around mental health, in order to correlate the two things. Much like the national picture, there is work to do on the provision to support mental health at RFSS, and an additional SEMH Mentor has been recruited in an attempt to offer further support to students. However, the significant rise in mental health issues means that another may be required.

Personal Development:

The Personal Development offer at RFSS centres around our ideology of ensuring that students are 'Set for Life', meaning the whole-child is holistically developed and prepared for life beyond RFSS. This programme incorporates for key areas: 'Health and Wellbeing, Community, Independent Living and Employability', in order to 'prepare students for further success'.

Within our 'Set for Life' curriculum, we also teach our students 'Skills for Life'. This encompasses the five LORIC principles, leadership, organisation, resilience, initiative, communication. Education and industry partners, including the CBI and the National Careers Service have produced lists of desirable qualities for the workplace and the five LORIC attributes have been selected as the most representative skills across all the research. The LORIC sessions in our tutor time programme focus on introducing students to these skills, encouraging reflection and deepening students' understanding.

The provision for students' SMSC development is strong, 'extends beyond the academic', and features in all aspects of the 'Set for Life' programme via dedicated PSHE lessons and other subject areas. PSHE continues to be taught by tutors this year, and has a planned Deep Dive and Quality Assurance scheduled for this academic year, in line with other subjects, further to this we are increasing the provision for staff CPD related to PSHE. The PSHE curriculum tackles both local and national issues.

The provision for after-school enrichment clubs has developed significantly, with clubs in sports, music, arts, chess, board games and robotics all popular. As a consequence, 90% of parents and carers are satisfied that their child has an available club that they can attend, and that the offer is wide-ranging. Attendance is tracked through Absolute Education.

Our RFSS Set for Life Roadmap outlines what students will receive at each stage of their life at RFSS, linked to both the Bell Foundation Learner Profiles and internal contextual information and data. This is also linked to PSHE.

Heads of Houses have planned the entire 2024-25 academic year in terms of events and competitions, in order for students, parents and carers to be able to plan for these. These include Spelling Bees, Debates and inter-house sporting fixtures. House Events are tracked and carefully linked to the ways in which they are designed to develop character, motivation and self-efficacy.

Ofsted highlighted that there is a culture where students see difference as a positive thing, and that discrimination is not tolerated. Areas of strength in our work are related to sexuality, gender and disability, and students feel safe at RFSS (89%).

There has been an increase in the number of BAME and EAL students attending the school which provides a fantastic opportunity to further celebrate our cultural and religious beliefs. This is supported by our Cultural Lead. We have a group of 'Cultural Ambassadors' in school who successfully led our first cultural celebration day at the end of last academic year. The school provides students with meaningful opportunities to understand how to be reasonable, respectful, active citizens, who contribute positively to society. In PSHE and through 'Set For Life', students are learning how to become active citizens in the wider community, whilst also being prepared for 'life in modern Britain'. However, there is a little more work to do on promoting healthy eating.

Careers is an area of focus for us, and we have partnered with Careers Torch, in order to ensure that students have high-quality access to CIAEG provision. This is significant for SEND students, as they now receive more frequent careers opportunities.

There has been a marked improvement in showcasing the talents of students outside of school. The recent 'RFSS celebrates' email account has been pivotal in helping us to celebrate the achievements of our students; there has been an increase in parents and carers informing us of significant achievements. The wider school community is made aware of these successes through our social media channels. Students have been made aware of other students who have been successful, with most recent showcases around footballers, synchronised swimming and

basketball achievements. Other students' successes are regularly showcased in assemblies and through tutor Huddle, which take place on a weekly basis.

Finally, there is a significant push to ensure the Student Leadership Team, including Head Students, are more prominent around the school. They are becoming increasingly involved in school life, supporting with the implementation and running of the Rewards Shop. The Student Leadership Team meet on a half-termly basis and their student voice is integral in shaping the future direction of the school.



Leadership & Management 2024-25:

School and Trust Leaders set ambitious goals for staff and students in all areas including aspirational targets for: behaviour, attendance and standards, expectations, and achievement. Leaders at all levels are unequivocally clear that their desire is for a 'high-quality and inclusive education' for all, and this has been the case for some time, now. As a direct consequence, 89% of parents and carers said they would recommend the school in a recent survey.

High standards are reflected in admission numbers for the 2024-25 academic year and a recent Year 5 Open Morning attracted 400 visitors to the school, as our reputation within the local community continues to grow and develop. In addition to this, our inclusive approach is further exemplified by the expansion of the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP), which hosts 20 students with communication and interaction needs. There are also high numbers of students with an EHCP within the Year 7 and Year 8 cohorts in particular, which is providing a challenge in terms of both quality and quantity of provision. We have worked closely with SENDAR to tackle these challenges collaboratively.

There is a clear culture of safeguarding at RFSS, and this has intensified further with the rebranding of the Safeguarding Briefing to Student Spotlight, whilst Senior Leaders, the attendance lead, the safeguarding lead and the newly appointed AHT for SEND and Inclusion meet weekly to discuss safeguarding issues and concerns.

A major area of focus for the school has been examination results, at both GCSE and A Level. The GCSE Progress 8 estimated score is +0.13, whilst the Average Grade at A Level was C+. Attainment also rose to 43.53 at GCSE, whilst the APS for Year 13 moved to 31.71. Pupil Premium progress was positive, leading to us being invited to speak at a ResearchEd Conference in October 2024. As the school grows and develops, developing and sustaining an achievement culture is key to future success; this includes parents and carers. In particular, more work needs to go into motivating Disadvantaged, SEND and Male students, whilst HPA students have also traditionally underperformed. Incorporating increased levels of challenge and support into our curriculum and assessment models has been the key driver of work undertaken by Senior and Middle Leaders in preparation for this academic year. EAL continues to be an area of strength, whilst our EBacc entry percentage and APS is on an upwards trajectory.

We have developed a more personalised approach to professional development using the Great Teaching Toolkit as a self-assessment tool, and the Walkthrus collection to underpin classroom practice. We have developed a waded approach to Professional Development to ensure we meet the needs of staff at all levels, including within SEND & Inclusion and the SRP team. This has been further supported by our stance to 'focus on improving subject and pedagogical knowledge' by giving more dedicated time to subject CPD, as opposed to whole-school CPD.

The appraisal process is robust, targets are linked to individuals' areas of need and whole school areas for development, and correlates directly to professional development. We have had 22 staff pass an NPQ within the past 18 month window, which is something we are incredibly proud of.

The disadvantaged gap has narrowed over the past year, but will continue to be a focus in all aspects of school improvement and will also feature as a prominent part of the aforementioned appraisal process for this year. EAL are also a key sub-group, and numbers are increasing. An EAL school is in place, and supports students with their reintegration. SEND will always be an area of focus, as will the significance of adaptive teaching when faced with the high numbers of SEND students on roll at RFSS.

Changes have been made this year to ensure that staff workload and wellbeing is more of a priority. A staff wellbeing group has been formally relaunched, whilst assessment and whole-school calendars take into account the rhythm of the year, to ensure that staff aren't in weekly meetings. There has also been much more of a 'You Said, We Did' approach, due to the new forums in place. In a recent staff survey, staff noted the following:

- Senior Leaders and/or Line Managers attempt to manage my workload: 63% (Up 7% from previous year)

- I feel supported by Senior Leaders / Line Managers to be flexible around working arrangements, childcare and events etc: 81% (Up 16% from previous year)
- There are forums and processes in place for me to raise or feed back my views: 73% (Up 17% from previous year)
- I feel valued by the school: 74% (Up 31% from previous year)

A final area of focus this term is ensuring that Quality Assurance is a facet of what we do at all levels, and this, along with CPD, informs next steps and improvements, so there is symmetry between all processes, with clear next steps for staff at all levels.



Sixth Form:

The Sixth Form is now in its fourth year of existence, with 100 students in Year 13, and 119 students in Year 12 currently on roll. Our aim is to be considered as the leading comprehensive Sixth Form in the local area in all key measures (attainment, progress, destinations, retention & Maths & English retake progress).

Much work has been done to ensure that the curriculum suits the needs of the learners, reflecting the cohort of students and the context of the school. We offer an extremely broad range of subjects for a Sixth Form of our size, including academic, vocational and mixed pathways, as well as a Level 2 programme, providing students who do not initially achieve Level 3 entry requirements to progress to A Level study, on a 3-year pathway. We are now looking to ensure that our course and curriculum offer is stable year on year, allowing us to deliver the highest quality provision for our students consistently. 88% of current students said that they are happy in the Sixth Form in the last round of student voice, with 86% stating that they believe the Sixth Form prepares them well for their next steps in life. During the Sixth Form review that was conducted in April 2024, inspectors stated that “The curriculum is inclusive and ambitious for all students. As student numbers have increased over time, the sixth form curriculum has developed so that it can accurately respond to the particular needs, interests and abilities of all students. The vast majority of students are learning the different subjects across the curriculum very well”.

As stated earlier, results moved from an Average Grade of C- to C+, reflecting the standard of teaching and learning in the Sixth Form. Results supported the excellent practice that had been observed in Social Sciences, English, Digital Media, Health & Social Care and EPQ, and these subjects must have their practice showcased and shared with others. Science and Maths both improved significantly, and performed in line with other subjects.

We allocate very generously with curriculum time, with 10 hours per subject, per fortnight. This has had a contribution to positive student outcomes, as well as many departments running effective intervention sessions, either after school or in free periods. The Sixth Form team will also continue to run a ‘boundary leapers’ programme, aimed at the lowest achieving students in the Sixth Form in terms of progress, this will be focused on core skills, rather than subject content, such as study skills, organisation, revision techniques etc. Inspectors commented that this support was “extremely successful in contributing to particular students achieving higher grades”.

Level 2 English and Maths retake outcomes were strong in 2023-24, with English a particular highlight. Progress: English +0.82. Maths +0.44. Both departments exceeded national averages in terms of progress and pass rate (76% and 38% respectively).

We have concluded our first set of UCAS applications extremely successfully, with 100% of students successfully achieving places at their chosen universities. Students are supported effectively in their applications by tutors and mentors, who have been received training on how to do this. We also run trips to the UCAS fayre and local universities on an annual basis. The next step for our careers programme, is to expand our provision with more effective support on other progression pathways, e.g. apprenticeships or employment. This will be particularly important as 66% of our cohort have indicated that they want to go to university, while 24% are seeking apprenticeships following their Post 16 education (10% of students are unsure on their next steps). We have a new careers service for this academic year who will bring links to local providers, as well as increased number of employers for careers events and guest speakers for assemblies. We also have a dedicated work experience week, in the final week of term in Year 12. 92% of students undertook placements last academic year, but we are aiming for this to be 100% in summer 2024. To assist with this, we will be investing in virtual work experience placements for students who are unable to gain relevant work experience placements themselves.

The current student leadership programme in the Sixth Form includes prefects, a student council, reading buddies, form reps and subject mentoring in subjects such as Maths and Physics. However, the profile of these students must be raised, so that they have more of a presence and serve as effective role models to lower school students. Students will now be given additional prefect responsibilities and be used more regularly to mentor younger students in lessons, we will

also be launching a reading buddies scheme in tutor time, where Year 12's will be reading with selected students from Year 7 & 8.

In terms of teaching and learning, practice is in line with the whole school model, and teachers are encouraged to use the same teaching and learning strategies as lower school, to give consistency and aid the transition process for students. The standard of teaching at post 16 is quality assured during the curriculum deep dive process, with regular lesson observations and learning walks being completed. During the Sixth form review inspectors said "The quality of teaching across subjects in the Sixth Form is predominantly very effective. The team of experienced KS5 teachers have strong pedagogical subject knowledge and a deep understanding of examination specifications. They plan the sequencing of learning in individual lessons and across groups of lessons logically, incrementally helping students to deepen knowledge and practice skills".

This is also reflected in student voice surveys with 97% of our students indicating that they believe that staff are experts in their subjects and 92% claimed that Sixth Form lessons are well planned and delivered. The next steps in terms of development is to create more opportunities for independent learning within Sixth Form lessons and to embed more challenge for HPA students (the two are often closely linked). CPD has been delivered to DoL and the wider staff body on both of these areas by the Sixth Form team, with good practice shared between many departments. However, the impact of this has not yet been seen in all lessons/with all students, which is a vitally important challenge to effectively prepare our students for their next steps.

Linking to HPA students, another wider aim of the Sixth Form is to develop a culture of independence in our students. We timetable independent study lessons on to student timetables and have delivered CPD on independence and interdependence in lessons. However, the evidence of impact of this is not yet evident.

We have offered a successful enrichment programme, with 14 different activities on offer to students. This offer is greatly appreciated by our students and prepares them well for their next steps, as well as providing them valuable skills and experience that can be written into their personal statements. Our next steps are to develop more HPA academic enrichment activities e.g. wider reading/research, competitive admissions, debating club etc. Inspectors commented that "The rich range of enrichment activities are very popular and students value them as key learning opportunities which support them in developing life skills".

Our pastoral curriculum is constantly evolving, but has received extremely high praise from external reviewers this academic year, and last. This programme is delivered in tutor time, assemblies, mentoring and drop-down days. This curriculum has been developed to include all statutory information from the RSE guidance around topics such as mental health, sexual health, online safety etc. The curriculum is amended several times each academic year to respond to incidents and requests from students, via the student voice forum, as well as to stay in keeping with the local and national context. Feedback from the review was that "Leaders have created an exceptionally supportive, positive and purposeful climate for Sixth Formers to learn in. Relationships between students and their teachers are highly positive and mutually supportive. Staff know their students well and students are clear that staff are also available to provide academic and personal support, when required".