



Guildford County School

SPECIALIST MUSIC COLLEGE

Headteacher Jack Mayhew MA, BSc (Hons)

11th September 2018

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome Back

It gives me great pleasure to write this first letter as your new Head of School. I sincerely hope that you had a restful and enjoyable summer break and that you are enjoying the late summer warmth that lingers still.

I expect that I will meet with many of you in my new role over the coming weeks and months. Jack Mayhew is very much still a part of the leadership structure here at County, but I am now leading the school on a day-to-day basis. I am hugely excited for the year ahead, not least because of another record breaking summer of exam results; once again beating national performance figures. As you may have seen from our website, 80% of students gained 9-4 passes at GCSE in both English and Maths, with almost 70% doing the same at grades 9-5. Over 40% of all grades were at 9-7 and early indications also suggest that our GCSE students achieved almost one grade higher on average across their subjects than the national average. A similar picture emerged at A-level, where almost 40% of all grades were A and A* grades, with almost 70% of all grades being A*-B and almost 90% at A*-C; putting County in the top 10% of schools nationally. Needless to say, we shall not be resting on our laurels and will be working tirelessly this year to support all children to achieve their very best.

What is special about County, though, is the value that we place on educating the whole child, seeking not just the best possible academic outcomes, but also looking for opportunities in a range of other key areas. Music remains in our soul and we have already seen 20 new members arrive at our Boys' Choir from the new cohort of Year 7. Year 7 have all made a superb start to their time at secondary school and I very much look forward to watching them grow, learn and have fun at County over the next few weeks; not least at the Year 7 BBQ on the 20th September that will again this year be organised by our terrific Sixth Form students.

To give you a flavour of what is to come between now and the half term break: the Science Department are leading both the Lower School and the Sixth Form in two separate residential weekend visits; Mr Briggs and his team will be away to the West Country on Silver DofE; GCSE Business Studies students will be visiting Thorpe Park; the Drama Department will be leading a back stage theatre tour in London's West End; Upper School students will begin to be offered independent careers advice; the School Sponsored Walk takes place on Friday 5th October, following an early closure of the school so that we are able to prepare for Year 6 Open Evening on Thursday 4th October; Mrs Griffin will be hosting our annual Harvest assemblies; House Rowing will be setting sail in the Main Hall on October 11th; we will be welcoming visitors from a partner school in the Netherlands. Along with an informal Music concert, various Welcome Evenings and Year 11 Parents' Evening on October 18th, this promises to be a very busy and successful period of school life.

As a part of my work as Head of School, I am responsible for developing our strategic vision, alongside other members of the Leadership Team, the wider staff and our Governing Body. As such, I share with you overleaf a copy of our strategic priorities for 2018 / 19. We continue to work on ensuring an appropriate level of challenge for all students; maintaining our focus on achievement for all; we will provide all of the students with the highest possible levels of support; and all of this will take place within inspiring facilities, hoping this year to commence work on our new Sports Hall.

Until we next meet, I wish you all the very best.

Yours faithfully,

Steve Smith
Head of School

GIVE • CREATE • SUCCEED

Choral Patron: Howard Goodall CBE | Patron: Julian Lloyd Webber FRCM | Boys Choir Patron: Roger Black MBE

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Excellence for Everyone: Guildford County School Strategy 2016-20



PURPOSE

We are a school entrusted to provide our students with the best all-round education in the country

VISION

To be an outstanding school where students are happy, achieve success and strive to fulfil their potential

Context

Students and parents deserve a school that educates the whole child and nurtures them to exceed expectations and broaden horizons.

Demands and expectations are increasing while financial resources are decreasing. We will meet these challenges by working together, providing a varied and balanced curriculum, investing in teaching, holding hope for every child and cultivating a culture of aspiration for all.

We will improve outcomes, foster ambition and ensure students embrace the challenges and opportunities of the world that awaits them.

Performance 1



New national performance indicators and tougher expectations of school performance are being implemented.

Curriculum and Assessment 2



Curriculum and assessment regimes are changing nationally. Students are expected to study more curriculum content and in a particular range of subjects, while being assessed with different grade structures

Equality 3



GCS is facing a rising demand for places from an increasingly diverse socio-economic community, we expect an additional 125 students over the next 5 years and must ensure educational achievement is

Learning 4



Learning is our core business, despite a changing educational context we must maintain our focus on improving classroom quality, teaching innovation, rich educational experiences and student centred learning

Our strategic goals - 2018/19

1. Challenge

Inspire students to excel through challenging and encouraging them to greater heights

- To support this goal in 2018/19 we will:
- GCSE - 35% grades 9-7, PG-0.5
 - A Level - 33% grades A*-A, 60% A*-B, AL-PS 2
 - EBacc success 67% strong pass and 60% standard pass
 - Focus on 'Deliberate Practice' in order to raise the level of rigour in the classroom
 - Bring Learning Squares back into departments, embracing curiosity and renewing our focus on the County Dozen in order to personalise teacher CPL
 - Achieve the 'NACE' challenge and to improve outcomes for the most able
 - Colleagues achieve external qualifications in order to develop classroom effectiveness
 - Establish an Aspirational Pathways programme to support Sixth Form students

2. Achievement for All

Irrespective of starting point or background all at County make transformational progress

- To support this goal in 2018/19 we will:
- Raise achievement for Pupil Premium and SEND students to secure a positive value added, PG-0.25
 - Support SEND students through strategic leadership and deployment of the SEND team
 - Embed DRIVE Time at all levels, to include Intra-MAT and cross-school QA
 - Develop systems to give teachers and leaders full ownership of student achievement
 - Use assessment to inform exceptional teaching practice and student learning to result in student outcomes in the top 5% nationally
 - Implement an EAL and Literacy strategy to improve progress of students with limited English attainment
 - Use Family Learning to strengthen home / school links

3. Support students

Enable all students to be successful in a changing world

- To support this goal in 2018/19 we will:
- Increase attendance to above 95% and reduce persistent absences amongst all groups of students to 1.5%
 - Promote the House System, House Families and the CARE strategy and invest in systems to support the mental health of both students and staff
 - Deliver a Careers programme to support Sixth Form students to gain access to university and / or employment
 - Develop all aspects of student leadership across the school
 - Deliver exceptional careers provision, as evidenced by the 'Quality in Careers' accreditation
 - Roll out the MEDALS initiative to recognise success in the broader curriculum, including SMSC
 - Accelerate our Music Specialism to maintain high standards locally and shape national provision
 - Deliver a PG-HE offer to meet the needs of all children

4. Inspiring facilities

Provide learning spaces of excellence and inspiration

- To support this goal in 2018/19 we will:
- Provide for 20 additional school places each year until 2021
 - Begin construction of the Sports Hall to enhance participation in sport
 - Use digital technology to improve learning and parental support
 - Increase earnings revenue to c. £35,000
 - Plan for a new performance space
 - Refurbish the Sixth Form toilets
 - Improve and develop SEND facilities
 - Make best use of resources across the MAT estate
 - Review and improve school clearing
 - Review and enhance site security
 - Refresh corridor and communal spaces

