



4th January 2018

Gateways School Strategy for the Future

Dear Parents and Guardians

Planning for the Future

Over the course of the last year, the Governors have been actively engaged in a strategic planning exercise intended to determine the development priorities for Gateways to 2030 and beyond. Indeed many of you have been engaged in this exercise and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your valuable contributions which have informed our future direction.

Gateways Strengths and our approach to Education Success

During the strategy exercise, the key strengths of Gateways were consistently identified as our small classes, the teachers' knowledge of every pupil as an individual, the pupils' knowledge of each other throughout the school, not just in their own year group, the teachers' subject knowledge and the overall size of the school which enables the teachers to maintain a close working relationship with each other for the benefit of the pupils.

Independent research has shown that each of these strengths is closely linked to the one factor which impacts most on pupil outcomes - teacher effectiveness. 14 – 18 pupils per class is the ideal range, according to the most recent research on the effect of class size on improving pupil outcomes. Indeed the same research goes on to say that, once a class reaches 22, it might as well have 30 or more pupils in it, so much is the teacher effectiveness reduced.

The consistently high value added results at Gateways, which places us in the top ten schools nationally every year, is direct evidence of our high teacher efficacy. We are **the only school in the greater area** to deliver average class sizes in the ideal 14 – 18 pupils range.

The Governors have concluded that their first commitment to you as parents is to prioritise school resources to maintain an average class size within this optimum range. This will allow us to continue to offer **a personal education for each pupil** rather than a "one size fits all" impersonal experience.

Developing Gateways for 2030 and Beyond

The **vision** at Gateways is to maximise the ability of, and opportunities for, each pupil using our average class size of 14 – 18 pupils coupled with excellent teaching. All our pupils benefit from this common vision.

Gateways has to date, been a school very much of two halves – the co-educational Prep School and the single sex High School and Sixth Form. Our oldest boys are now in Upper 2 (Year 5) of our Prep School and Dr Johnson has been liaising with potential senior schools for those boys, as have their parents.

Headmistress: Dr T Johnson BSc (Hons), PhD, PGCE

Our boys and girls are clearly thriving in the very special environment that is the Gateways Prep School. We have therefore decided to allow boys to continue into the High School from September 2019, so that they too can benefit from the Gateways approach to success in education. We also recognise that this is attractive logistically for busy parents.

In making this change we will honour the commitment we made to those parents who have already chosen our High School because of its single sex nature. Therefore, we will proceed in an evolutionary way and simply allow the boys to transfer to Upper 3 in September 2019 and then to move through the remainder of the school as they progress from year to year. We expect to recruit boys into Upper 3 for September 2019 and to recruit both boys and girls into Upper 3 for subsequent years. We are not proposing to open single sex year groups in the High School to boy applicants. Therefore if your child is currently in year 6 and above, they will continue to be educated in a single sex cohort for the remainder of their time at Gateways.

Having taken this decision, we will begin to consult with parents of children currently in Upper 2 and below, regarding the educational model we will offer to their children as they move across to the High School. Dr Johnson will share news of that consultation with you all in due course.

This is an important change for Gateways School and one which Dr Johnson is very well equipped to lead us through given that during her time at Cheltenham College she oversaw their transition to full co-education in very similar circumstances.

Investment in Facilities

Our strategic plan also envisages investing further in school facilities, both to meet the obvious needs of accommodating boys, over time, in the senior part of the school, as well as to develop and enhance our provision for the benefit of all our pupils. I look forward to sharing news of this facilities strategy with you as we develop it in detail over the course of the next 18 months or so.

Next Steps

Our strategy is long term and evolutionary in nature. There is plenty of time to discuss how best to implement our plans. We have found our discussions to date with members of the Gateways community to be most helpful. We would like to continue this process during 2018. Specifically, we would like to invite you to the following Q & A events with us:

Wednesday 31st January: 7.30am – 9am: Parents of pupils in Year 6 and above

Wednesday 31st January: 9am – 10.30am: Parents of pupils in the Prep School or the Nursery

In the meantime, if you have any immediate questions, please have a word with Dr Johnson, Mrs Titman, Mrs Wallis or Mrs Wood.

It is certainly an exciting time to be part of the Gateways community and I thank you for your continued support of this very special school.

Yours faithfully



Robert Barr
Chair of Governors



Dr Tracy Johnson
Headmistress