

The Dean Academy Update

Sponsorship

As you will recall, Prospects have decided to withdraw from sponsorship of schools. We met on Wednesday 11th June with two representatives from the Department for Education. They share our overwhelming concern to provide a solution that best meets the needs of our students and ensures that the quality of education continues to improve without interruption.

There are a number of options to explore including: The Dean Academy linking to a national sponsor; becoming a stand alone academy with support from an outstanding school; sharing governance. There are also other models to explore. We will write to you again when we have a clear range of options to consider and clear explanations as to how they might work. In the meantime, we would like to reassure you regarding the day to day running of the academy. In terms of the leadership and management of The Dean Academy at this time, your child will not notice any changes or deterioration in the quality of the education we provide; in terms of the services provided by Prospects, they continue unaffected until a new structure is found. We will continue to keep you updated as the situation develops; when we know what options are available for consideration, we will be inviting views from parents/carers.

Funding

Sponsors do not provide funding for academies; the Education Funding Agency (EFA) provide funding for academies. Funding comes to the academy via the sponsor but we would reiterate that they are not the source of income for the academy and our funding is not affected by the current situation.

Why are Prospects withdrawing from sponsorship?

Prospects have not withdrawn from sponsoring The Dean Academy because it is in 'special measures'. The Dean Academy is not in 'special measures'. It currently does not have a category; we expect to be inspected either before the end of the summer term or early in the autumn; if you go to the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk) and look at The Dean Academy, you will see the last report dated May 2013 outlining that we have made reasonable progress as a new academy. That is the only judgement Ofsted has made to date. Prospects have withdrawn from sponsorship completely i.e. from all six of the schools they have been sponsoring; it is not because of anything to do with their relationship to The Dean Academy. It is clear from the statement that they released (available on our website) that their decision was taken because of the geographical spread of the six schools they are sponsoring and the decision made by the Department for Education not to allow Prospects to acquire more schools at present.

School uniform

We know that some parents have been anxious about school uniform. I would like to stress that we have no intention of changing the school uniform; there is no need to because we will be continuing as The Dean Academy. In addition, the vast majority of the feedback that we have received regarding our uniform has been hugely positive.

Other news

We have recently completed a two day review of the academy in preparation for our next Ofsted visit. The review was undertaken by a recently retired HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector) and two

additional external observers including an Ofsted inspector. I would like to share with you some of the judgements they made about The Dean Academy:

‘Behaviour and safety are good. Students’ behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and they report feeling safe and supported’.

‘Leadership and management are good. The principal and vice principal are determined in their resolve to bring about improvement. There is strong leadership and management at senior level and in the core subjects.’

‘Teaching is stronger.’

Our students said to the inspector: ‘there has been a massive improvement in the quality of marking’.

The most important judgements will come when Ofsted next visit but the review has reinforced what we know about our academy, our students and the quality of the education we are providing.

The Summer Term

The final term of the year looks set to be very busy. In addition to traditional events such as Sports Day, Year 10 being out on Work Experience and year 9 students being out on an outward bound trip to Bude, this year is the first that we will be holding summer exams for all year groups. With changes to GCSEs and greater reliance on final exams, it is important that all students become confident in sitting exams. It is also the best opportunity we have to gauge the overall progress each student has made in their subjects during the year. You should by now have received a timetable for exams but if you can’t find it, it is on our website (www.thedeanacademy.org).

We invite year 6 students who will be joining The Dean Academy in September to visit us to help them to familiarise themselves with the site, staff, students and the daily routine. We also invite year 5 students to visit us to find out what life is like at The Dean Academy and they have the opportunity to take part in a variety of enjoyable activities.

As part of these events, we also invite all year 5 and 6 students and their parents/carers to a fun evening packed full of events, activities and food! There is some serious business; uniform can be bought and other preparations made for September. Please do join us if you have a year 6 or 5 child; last year was great fun and this year looks set to be the same!